



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

Corso di Laurea magistrale (*ordinamento ex
D.M. 270/2004*)
in Scienze del Linguaggio

Tesi di Laurea

—
Ca' Foscari
Dorsoduro 3246
30123 Venezia

English native speakers learning Italian as a foreign language: an analysis of errors

Relatore

Ch. Prof. Graziano Serragiotto

Correlatore

Ch. Prof. Paolo E. Balboni

Laureanda

Silvia Cecconello
Matricola 808894

Anno Accademico

2011 / 2012

Index

1. ERROR IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

1.1. The concept of error in foreign language learning

1.2. Analysing errors

1.2.1. *Error detection*

1.2.2. *Error location*

1.2.3. *Error description*

1.3. Errors in oral and written tasks

1.4. Conclusion

2. ANALYSIS OF MISTAKES

2.1. Research description

2.1.1. *The type of data*

2.1.2. *Method of recording*

2.1.3. *Who (learner)*

2.1.4. *To whom (addressee)*

2.1.5. *About what (activities)*

2.2. Analysis of data

2.2.1. *Method of analysis*

2.2.2. *Data*

2.2.2.1. *Phonological data*

2.2.2.2. *Lexical data*

2.2.2.3. *Grammatical data*

2.2.2.4. *Register data*

2.3. Conclusion

3. THE CAUSES OF ERRORS

3.1. Why do learners commit errors?

3.2. Learning variables

- 3.3. The causes of errors
 - 3.3.1. *Phonological errors*
 - 3.3.2. *Lexical errors*
 - 3.3.3. *Grammatical errors*
 - 3.3.4. *Register errors*
- 3.4. Conclusion

4. REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

- 4.1. The correction of errors
- 4.2. The proposal
- 4.3. The activities
 - 4.3.1. *Phonology*
 - 4.3.1.1. *Single sounds pronunciation*
 - 4.3.1.2. *Word stress*
 - 4.3.2. *Lexicon*
 - 4.3.2.1. *False friends*
 - 4.3.2.2. *Word formation*
 - 4.3.2.3. *Grammar of the words*
 - 4.3.3. *Grammar*
 - 4.3.3.1. *Articles*
 - 4.3.3.2. *Adjectives*
 - 4.3.3.3. *Verb tense*
 - 4.3.3.4. *Verb moods*
- 4.4. Fossilization
- 4.5. Conclusion

Introduction

This dissertation consists of an analysis of errors made by English native speakers in Italian as their foreign language. They are a group of students attending the second year of the University of Bristol (Uk) during the current academic year (2011-2012).

Starting from the data recorded in two months in their classes, I will classify their errors into categories and analyse the possible causes for them. This is in order to identify which areas of the Italian language are more difficult to English native speakers.

Furthermore it will certainly help teachers understand where the students have reached and will also help set the syllabus for future language work.

In the last chapter I will suggest some activities to correct those errors.

CHAPTER 1

ERROR IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

In this first chapter I will consider the meaning of “error” and the different approaches one can have towards it. Then I will consider how errors can be analysed.

1.1 The concept of error in foreign language learning

Anytime we speak our native language it is inevitable to commit errors. It could be because of memory lapses or physical states and we are immediately aware of them and we can correct them. It is therefore logical to think that it is inevitable to commit errors also in foreign language learning.

Corder¹ states indeed that we have to expect the learner to commit errors, as we commit them even in our mother tongue. However he adds also that in second language learning errors can be of two types, he distinguishes in fact between the concept of error and the concept of mistake:

“It will be useful (therefore hereafter) to refer to errors of performance as mistakes, reserving the term error to refer to the systematic errors of the learner from which we are able to reconstruct his knowledge of the language to date, i. e. his transitional competence”.

In both cases there is a deviance from the norm, which is the target language, but he links mistakes to performance and errors to competence. In case of mistakes, the learner

¹ Corder, S. P., 1967:167

should be able to correct his/her own deviances, he is immediately aware that he intended to produce another form. They are similar to the lips of tongue we occasionally produce in our first language: they happen even if our knowledge is correct and complete. This is why they are of “no significance to the process of learning”. Conversely errors are not self-correctible, they don’t happen occasionally but systematically: anytime the learner produces a certain structure. They are of great importance to the teachers, as they provide a feedback about the learner’s knowledge of his/her L2.²

What is important to notice in foreign language learning are errors, as they show the language level of the learner, they are systematic and used in a coherent way. The teacher can therefore use errors as evidence to check learner’s improvement.

Although this intuitive distinction between errors and mistakes, the researcher’s task is not easy. Pallotti³ states that as a matter of fact “a category vanishes into the other one” because the learner’s language system gradually evolves and two different forms can coexist for a long period.

According to this point of view, the concept of error is much more positive than it was in the past years.

In the 1940s and 1950s scholars followed the theory of behaviourism. Any behaviour, including learning a language meant for them to get into the habit of doing it, through the repetition of the same sequences.

Error was seen as something negative that the teacher had to try to avoid. As Pallotti⁴ claims: “Old behaviourist theories understood errors and negative habits, to extirpate as soon as possible”. According to this view, the mother tongue was considered as an obstacle to the progression in the foreign language. So they started to compare the first and the second language in order to predict difficulties and find out strategies to avoid errors. This is known as contrastive analysis (CA).

It was then in 1960’s that Chomsky claimed that the child who is acquiring a language is not just getting into a habit, but he is discovering its rules. This is due to the input (the

² Gass, S. M., Selinker, L., 1994:102

³(Translation from) Pallotti, G., 1998: 313

⁴(Translation from) Pallotti, G., 1998:314

language he hears every day) and also to his innate language faculty (LAD: language acquisition device). As a consequence, also the acquisition of the foreign language could not be seen as a habit to get into. The mistake was now starting to be seen as a sign that learning was taking place.

It was in the 1960s and 1970s that CA was replaced by error analysis (EA). EA's concept of errors was much more positive as it was seen as the way the learner verifies his hypotheses about the language system. The mother tongue was supposed to be just one of the possible causes of errors.

It is finally with Selinker in 1972 that we have the concept of "interlanguage". He states that learners create a language system, seen not as a deficit one, but as a system of its own with its own structure. It is not fixed, but it is always changing to become more similar to the target language. So it is influenced both by the target language and the mother tongue. Although errors could be seen as deviances from the target language, from the learner's point of view they show his/her level of interlanguage. That is why nowadays errors are seen as something positive, because they show that the learner is actively involved and second language learning is taking place. They are essential steps which permit the learner to build up his/her interlanguage.

In fact language acquisition could be seen as a line that goes from level 0 of competence to native speaker's competence⁵:

NO COMPETENCE ----- NATIVE
SPEAKER'S COMPETENCE
(INTERLANGUAGE STEPS)

The line shows that there are many steps that the learner has to pass to reach the target language. These steps can be summarized as follows⁶:

- 1st step, PRAGMATIC MODE: the learner uses pragmatic strategies such as gestures, referring to context, asking for active cooperation.
- 2nd step, SYNTACTIC MODE: grammar starts to replace pragmatics.

⁵ Cattana, A., Nesci, M. T., 2004: 24

⁶ Lo Duca, M. G., 2003: 232

- 3rd step, POST-BASIC MODE: morphology and syntax based strategies are the most used.

This is seen as a natural order of steps, which happens also if a spontaneous acquisition of language, because the acquisition of a language is a natural process. It occurs in fact also if the student does not attend a formal instruction. So this order cannot be changed, but the teacher's role is important to facilitate the way from the L1 to the L2.

Summarizing we can say that the focus changed from the L1 and LS to the student himself. This new approach has important consequences in language teaching, as the teacher should not see the error as something negative, but as something positive and inevitable to reach the target language.

1.2 Analysing errors

The procedure of analysing errors includes different steps, which we will explore in this section: error detection, location, description, classification. Let us see each of these steps in detail.

1.2.1 Error detection

Error detection means to spot errors, being aware of them. However it is not always obvious what we have to consider as an error or not. For example "Ho telefonato a Anna" instead of " Ho telefonato ad Anna": one might say it is an error, one might accept it. This demonstrates that the concept of error is not something definite. Thus it is important to be aware that there are different ways to approach them, depending on different criteria. Cattana, Nesci⁷ explore in detail these criteria:

- *Criterion of correctness*: sentences have to follow grammar rules. The problem with this criterion is that grammar rules are context-free. We have to integrate this criterion with the following ones to see the whole picture.
- *Criterion of appropriateness*: grammar is just a part of all the linguistic system. This criterion approaches language as a communicative tool among people, so it has to follow social norms: each speech act has to be appropriate for its interlocutors, the

⁷ Cattana, A., Nesci, M. T., 2004:38

context in which it is set and its purpose. It means it has to be sociolinguistically and pragmatically appropriate.

- *Criterion of comprehensibility*: we have an error just when the interlocutor cannot understand the message.
- *Criterion of subjectivity*: it is often the case that different teachers correct different mistakes. It is therefore important for the teacher to consider this aspect.
- *Criterion of flexibility*: a correct attitude towards errors is a flexible one. It means that one has to be aware of the different criteria the problems related to them. One has to balance all of them, considering also to centre the student and the context in which he/she is.

1.2.2 Error location

Error location involves saying where the error is. However some errors are not just localized in a word, but are spread throughout the sentence. It is harder than to define them.

1.2.3 Error description

Depending on the learner's interlanguage level, we can categorize errors in three different groups⁸:

- *Pre-systematic errors*: the student fails because he doesn't know the rule and he has no idea on how to correct it.
- *Systematic errors*: the student is learning the rule, he is discovering how it works making hypotheses and trying to verify them. He can give some partial explanation on how the rule works.
- *Post-systematic errors*: the student is perfectly aware of the rule but he makes errors because he still needs practice.

This view shows how errors detection can be illuminating on the learner's learning improvement.

⁸ Cattana, A., Nesci, M. T., 2004:55

We could also classify errors according to the taxonomy of linguistic categories:

- *phonology*
- *morphology*
- *syntax*
- *lexicon*

It is a useful way to categorize errors, but it has to be integrated with other taxonomies, as it doesn't consider errors dealing with sociolinguistics and pragmatics.

Another taxonomy that can be used is based on the superficial strategy⁹.

- *Choice*: the choice of one element does not fit within the other ones in the sentence.
- *Misformation*: the learner doesn't produce the word properly, the phenomenon of regularization happens quite often.
- *Omission*: the learner omits certain words, usually functional morphemes.
- *Addition*: the learner overuses certain rules and applies them twice in the same sentence.
- *Misordering*: it concerns the order of the words in the sentences.

In this analysis I will consider all these approaches and condense them, to have a final all-comprehensive view on the students' errors, taking into account all the possible variants.

1.3 Errors in oral and written tasks

There are four main skills to develop in language learning:

- Listening
- Reading
- Speaking
- Writing

Listening and reading are called "receptive skills": the students receive information from a source; while speaking and writing are called "productive skills": the students produce some language.

⁹ James, C., 1998: 106

Errors can occur in all of these categories, however it is quite difficult to detect errors in the receptive skills. So I decided to focus my attention on the productive skills.

However there is a difference on errors happening in speaking or writing. In speaking one has no time to plan sentences, language is more spontaneous. In writing instead one has the time to think carefully about grammar rules, the choice of words and most of all, one has time to go back and correct some mistakes. As it would be problematic to combine oral and written data in one single analysis, I decided to focus just on speaking, which is the skill I could observe more during Italian classes.

1.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I gave the theoretical background of the whole research. I started from a brief summary of the main points of view on learners' errors, from behaviourism, to Chomsky's language acquisition device and to Selinker's interlanguage.

Then I presented different ways of approaching errors: Cattana and Nesci's criteria, the linguistic categories and the linguistic strategies. It is from this basis that I will analyse the oral production of the students of Bristol University.

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF MISTAKES

In this second chapter I will describe the research I conducted and then I will analyse in detail the errors committed by the students.

2.1 Research description

The purpose of this research is to gather information on the major areas of difficulty for these students. It is meant to be a description of these students' interlanguages, analysing different factors involved in L2 acquisition. Furthermore it is not meant to be a sterile contrastive analysis, but a guide to better the teaching of Italian for the students to gain higher levels of proficiency.

A teacher will find here what are the main difficult topics for an English-speaking class. He can therefore be prepared and expect certain areas of the Italian language to take more time to be acquired and to expect certain problems for each area of the language.

In the next sections I will describe all the situational factors of my research, following the table in Tarone and Liu 1995¹⁰.

Situational factors	Description
Type of data	Naturally occurring; oral.
Method of recording	Pencil-and-paper record and audio recording.
Who (learner)	3 groups of students attending the second year of the University of Bristol (UK).
To whom (addressee)	To the teacher/ among themselves in small groups, including the researcher.
About what (activities)	Conversational activities.

¹⁰ Ellis and Barkhuizen, "Analysing learner language", 2005:25.

Where (location)	University of Bristol, department of Italian language.
When (time)	Between the 21 st of February and the 22 nd of March 2012. Three classes a week, each of them was 50 minutes long.
Planning time	They had planning time when they were checking their homework, but there was no planning time in the conversational activities afterwards.

I will now comment briefly on some situational factors.

2.1.1 The type of data

I will focus my research on oral data, without taking into consideration any written performance. This is in order to investigate free speech performance.

There are different reasons why I have chosen to select just oral data. First of all I needed to select a field of investigation which was not too wide. Secondly I find these data interesting as they are spontaneous and they reflect the actual knowledge of the students. During free speech in fact the students do not have any dictionary or other help to check their doubts. On the other hand written data can be misleading because when students write, they have access to dictionaries and their grammar books.

Free speech happened within the whole group or within small groups. As a consequence I will consider the errors generalizing for the whole group, without any detailed information about each single subject.

When collecting learners' language samples, the researcher can choose between two approaches: "non-intervention" and "intervention". The first method requires the researcher to be in class, observing and audio recording. The second method requires the researcher to provoke language with specific purposes and through specific tasks: reading out loud, structured exercises, guided compositions, games or any guided activity to stimulate language.

This research deals with an uncontrolled output. The researcher did not prepare any task. However, as their speech was recorded in class, it cannot be considered totally as “uncontrolled output”. As a student is in class, he feels at least a little bit of pressure and fear of making errors. Furthermore, they had to follow the teacher’s activity, so they were not totally free, for example of changing the subject of discussion or of avoiding certain words or structures.

2.1.2 Method of recording

The method of collecting data is a key factor in second language acquisition research. It is important in fact that it does not interfere with the nature of the sample.

In this research I combined two methods: pencil-and-paper recording and audio recording. I audio recorded the class to be able to transcribe it later on. However I did not have microphones, so it was sometimes difficult to catch every single word recorded, as the classroom was sometimes noisy. This is why I also observed the class and kept field notes.

This means that the researcher was physically present during classes. Ellis and Barkhuizen¹¹ claim that “the researcher’s presence can have an effect on the naturalness of the language produced”. However as I was a student, they did not seem to be intimidated, as they saw me as a friend, not as a researcher. This friendly atmosphere helped them to forget that I was there to collect data.

2.1.3 Who (learner)

The students were attending the second year of the University of Bristol (UK) during the current academic year (2011-2012), between the 21st of February and the 22nd of March 2012.

I recorded 12 classes, including 3 different groups. There are in total 30 students. They are all English native-speakers. They are all 20 or 21 years old. They are all in their second

¹¹ Ellis, R., Barkhuizen, G., 2005:28.

year of University, studying Italian and a second language, which can be either French, Spanish or German. Only few of them studied Italian for their A-level exams. So the majority of them started last academic year (2010-2011) as beginners. The class can be considered a pre-intermediate level of Italian.

Although gender is not relevant to the purpose of this study, it should be noticed that the majority of the students are females.

2.1.4 To whom (addressee)

The students had to speak to the teacher, to the whole class or in groups.

A class had a female teacher and the other two classes had a male teacher. Both of them are quite young and successfully try to build a positive and relaxed atmosphere. So even if the students had to speak to the teacher, they were actually relaxed, with no fear of making mistakes.

2.1.5 About what (activities)

They did conversational activities such as role-play games, discussions and presentations in front of the class. They were all based on the materials included in their booklets.

An example of the materials used in one of the classes is added in the appendix.

As we can see from the appendix, the first part of the class includes a video to be seen and some questions to be answered. It is supposed to be done at home, as homework. In class they used to check the answers orally, with the teacher.

After that comes the section "Discuti!". This is a set of questions which are discussed in class, usually in small groups. There are two images as well, they work as inputs to generate discussion.

After “Discuti!” there is a role-play activity. It is provided with a box of useful words as prompts. Students work in small groups and they can choose among four different situations. Each of them give the students some prompts.

2.2 Analysis of data

In this section I will give some theoretical background on the method I used to conduct my analysis and on the way of transcribing data. Then I will present the actual analysis of data.

2.2.1 Method of analysis

In my analysis I will combine a quantitative and a qualitative approach. I will indeed quantify data by the use of tables and numbers, and then I will try to interpret them trying to understand the learners’ behaviour and highlighting aspects which may be revealing.

Following Ellis and Barkhuizen¹² I choose not to transcribe the whole recordings, but just the extracts in which I detected the errors. This was in order to save time, as transcribing is time-consuming. Furthermore, I was just interested in errors and not in correct sentences.

As a method of transcription I choose to use standard orthography, including phonetic notation for single sounds in the phonetic analysis.

Finally, as a layout, I choose to insert the errors in tables. I did not mention the author of each error, as it was not relevant to this research.

Tables include a column of errors on the left-hand side, which are paired with their correct version on the right-hand side. Contextual information is given when needed.

As the classroom was noisy, it was sometimes not possible to hear clearly what the students said. In this case the sentence was not considered.

¹² Ellis, R., Barkhuizen, G., 2005:28.

2.2.2 Data

In the next section data are divided into different groups, in order to describe them. I choose to base the categories on the descriptive grammar of the Italian language. As Ellis and Barkhuizen¹³ suggest, I developed “a set of descriptive categories for coding the errors that have been identified” and then I recorded “the frequency of errors in each category”.

2.2.2.1 Phonological data

In this section I will present the phonological errors committed by the students, according to different categories. The phonological problems they had regarded in fact two distinct areas: single sounds pronunciation and word stress.

Table 1. illustrates all single sound pronunciation errors made by the students.

PHONOLOGY: SINGLE SOUNDS PRONUNCIATION	
ERRORS	CORRECT FORMS
/k/esto	/Ku/esto
Ghia/k/o	ghia/t ʃ/io
/s/intura	/t ʃ/intura
me/l/io	me/λλo/
Hanno biso/n/io	Hanno biso/ηηo/
Co/me/ciale	Co/m:er/ciale
A/r/abiato	A/r:/abiato
Pen/z/ate	Pen/s/ate
Utili/z/ato	Utili/d'dz/ato
Caratteri/z/ato	Caratteri/d'dz/ato
/z/one	/dz/one

¹³ Ellis, R., Barkhuizen, G., 2005:60.

Alte/z/a	Alte/tz/a
Intelligen/Dz/a	Intelligen/tz/a
ini/s/iato	ini/tz/iato
produ/cs/ione	produ/tz/ione
Esposi/s/ione	Esposi/tz/ione

Table 1.

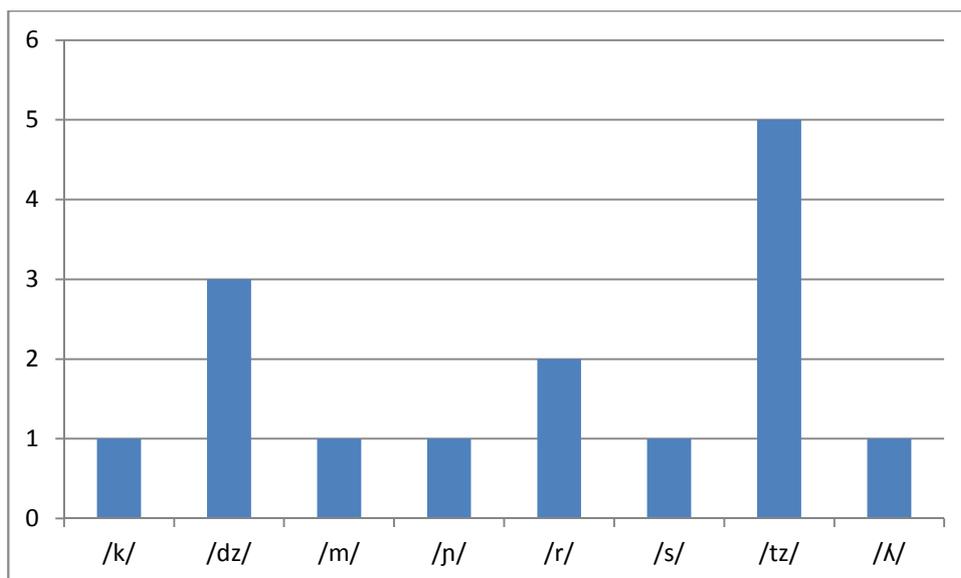


Chart 1.

As we can see from chart 1. /tz/ and /dz/ are the most difficult sounds for them. The reason behind this data is that there is no English equivalent of those phonemes.

As R. Gusmani (in Gauci)¹⁴ states: “Students tend to substitute a phoneme of the foreign language with the most similar one found in his/her mother tongue.”¹⁵ The phonemic inventory differences can cause in fact confusion, not only in production, but also in the perception of the sounds. So we have chosen now to investigate just production, but comprehension can also lead to errors.

This is in fact a very frequent phenomenon in second language acquisition. As a consequence, there are certain sounds that are found in the English phonemic chart, but are slightly different from the Italian ones: /t/, /d/ and /r/. The sounds in the two languages

¹⁴ Gauci, P.”, 2008.

¹⁵ Translation and summary from Gauci, 2008: “Sono qui raccolti alcuni casi emblematici del fenomeno della sostituzione per assenza di fono: si tratta del fenomeno per cui si sostituisce il fono della lingua straniera con quello nella propria lingua che più si avvicina: fenomeno di integrazione fonologica per sostituzione per approssimazione.”

have different articulatory characteristics regarding the position of the tongue. The Italian /t/ and /d/ are dental stops, while they are alveolar stops in English. In practice in Italian the tongue is slightly forward, towards the teeth. If the students fail to do this, they tend to pronounce them in a more “English way”.

On the other hand the Italian /r/ is a trill, while the English /r/ is an approximant. This is particularly evident when pronouncing words such as “trasporto”, where /t/ and /r/ are combined together.

However the data show a degree of variability. It was sometimes evident that students were aware of these phonemic differences, trying to modify their pronunciation. As Odlin¹⁶ suggests, “modifications often (...) result in approximations that are neither fully native-like nor target-like”. Thus the sounds they produced may sometimes be more “Italian” or “English”.

Besides single sounds pronunciation, there is another difficult area in phonology, that is word stress.

First of all I will explain the regularities we have in the Italian words.

Italian words can be divided into different categories:

- *apocopated words*: the accent is on the last syllable and it is written. For example: “falò”;
- *words having the accent on the penultimate syllable*, for example “divano”;
- *proparoxytone words*: they have the accent on the third last syllable. For example: “tavolo”;
- *words having the accent on the forth last syllable*. For example: “telefonale”.

However the majority of words are the apocopated ones.

Table 2. Illustrates word stress mistakes.

PHONOLOGY: WORD STRESS	
ERRORS	CORRECT FORM
Coetan/'e/i	Coe/'ta/nei
Schizofr/'e/nia	Schizofre/'ni/a

¹⁶ Odlin, T., 1989:113.

espan'd/a/rsi	es/'pa/ndarsi
Enf/'a/si	/'En/fasi
Fac/'i/le	/'Fa/cile
Com/'i/ci	/'Co/mici
Dol/'la/ri	/'Dol/lari
a/'ra/ba	/'a/raba
Lin/'e/a	/'Li/nea
/'Me/ta	Me/'ta/
/'pe/ro	pe/'ro/
Hanno /'po/tere	Hanno /po'te/re
F/'o/llia	Foll/'i/a
M/a'nia	Man/'i/a

Table 2.

I grouped the errors into different categories. In this section I will discuss some of the findings:

- some words are believed to have the accent on the penultimate syllable instead of being proparoxytone: *espanarsi*, *facile*, *comici*, *dollari*, *linea* and *araba* do have a word stress on the third last syllable, but are pronounced as if the stress was on the penultimate syllable.

This is the main problem the students have with word stress. According to my observations, the cause of these errors is that most of the Italian words have the accent on the penultimate syllable and proparoxytone words are seen as exceptions. In addition to that it must be observed that they do not have any problem with apocopated words, as the stress is written on them, but they have no hint to tell where the accent is on the third last syllable, instead of the penultimate one. It is natural to overgeneralize and take for granted that the accent is on the penultimate syllable.

- “*Meta*” and “*però*” are read as /'meta/ and /'pero/, whereas they are apocopated. “*Meta*” and “*pero*” are actual words in Italian, so the cause could be a confusion between the two words.

- In the word “schizofrenia” the student did not recognise that the word is divided into 5 syllables: schi-zo-fre-ni-a, with a hiatus, but read it as if it had 4 syllables: schi-zo-fre-nia. This led him to put the accent in the third last syllable, instead of the penultimate one.
- Conversely in “coetanei” the student did not recognise that there is no hiatus in “ei”: co-e-ta-nei. This led him to put the accent in the last syllable, instead of the penultimate one.
- Finally there are cases such as “potere”, “follia”, “mania”, whose accent is on the penultimate syllable, but are taken as proparoxytone ones.

If we take a look at Chart 2. we can see that majority of the errors were made because of overgeneralization. Both proparoxytone and apocopated words can be misleading, because they are often read as if the accent was on the penultimate syllable. We have in fact a total of 14 errors, where 9 errors are due to this kind of overgeneralization.

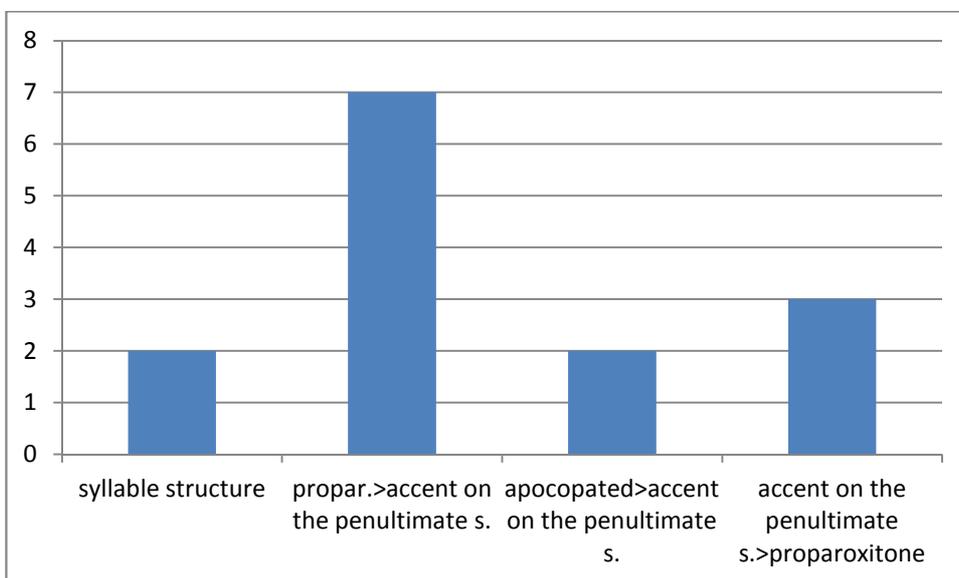


Chart 2.

Pallotti¹⁷ states that phonology is the main linguistic area that is influenced by the mother tongue. These data prove that this category is a very difficult one. Even if the students were very good in all the linguistic areas, phonology was always something that make

¹⁷ Pallotti, G., 1998: 61

them “sound foreigner”. As we have seen, this is due to phonemes pronunciation, word stress and also some prosodic phenomena such as rhythm and intonation, which will not tackled here.

2.2.2.2 Lexical data

I analyzed lexicon, categorizing errors into different groups: false friends, word formation, gender, other language interference, idiomatic expressions, analytic expressions. I will now present in detail each of these areas of difficulty.

- *False friends* are those words which have a similar spelling in the mother tongue and in the target language, but different meaning. It is the most common error in lexicon. It must be said that false friends are more problematic in speech production than in comprehension, as they are easily understood when they are into their semantic area.

LEXICON: FALSE FRIENDS		
	ERRORS	CORRECT FORMS
Buono/bene	Le sue intenzione erano bene La qualità è bene Penso si abita molto buono È una cosa molto bene	Le sue intenzione erano buone La qualità è buona Penso si vesta molto bene È una cosa molto buona
differente>diverso	Trova i dottori differenti Accenti differenti Quando aveva 13 anni era un po' differente	Trova diversi dottori Accenti diversi quando aveva 13 anni era un po' diverso
	Due tipi dei usatori Come sarebbe la vita senza cellulare? Sarebbe molto male. Vestito formale la camera Era innervante	Utenti Come sarebbe la vita senza cellulare?Sarebbe brutta. Elegante Videocamera era snervante

	Non possono comunicare / non può comunicare	Non riescono a comunicare/non riesce a comunicare
	Sono molto popolari	Sono molto diffusi
	La medicazione	La sanità

Table 3.

We can note from Table 3. that students have a particular problem with “buono-bene” and “differente”.

They tend to use “bene” instead of “buono” and vice versa. I reckon this is due to the fact that both “buono” and “bene” correspond to the same English word, which is “good”. Although they had a specific training to learn when “buono” or “bene” occur, this seems to be a difficult error to avoid.

The same thing can be said for the use of “male” and “brutta”. In particular, they tend to extend the meaning of male, as they do not have any English correspondent of “brutta”.

Also the category of “differente” falls into false friends. It is very common in fact to hear the word “differente”, meaning “different”.

It must be said however that the use of generic words is a very popular communication strategy in second language acquisition. The use of common words leads the learner to make himself understood, even if the language he/she uses is imprecise.

- *word formation*: errors such as “ascolto” instead of “ascoltato”. As Nesci and Cattana¹⁸ claim, this is the prove that acquisition is taking place. Of course it is not the only reason. I guess they are “attempts”: even if the students did not remember the word, they tried, managing to communicate successfully. They probably did not learn the word properly, to be able to recall it.

LEXICON: WORD FORMATION	
ERRORS	CORRECT FORMS
Molto passionato	Molto appassionato

¹⁸ Cattana, A., Nesci, M.T., 2004:35

Clarietà	Chiarezza
governo	Governo
La sua ricchezza è valutata	la sua ricchezza è valutata
La maggioranza	La maggioranza
Una spreca di tempo	Uno spreco di tempo
Desidero	Desiderio
Bolliero	Bollitore
Ha regolionato	Ha regolato
Ho ascolto	Ho ascoltato
C'è un controverso	c'è una controversia
Il medico austrio	Il medico austriaco
Corriere	Correre
Sensibilizzazione	Sensibilizzazione
Problemi naziali	Problemi nazionali
Arme	Armi

Table 4.

- *grammar of the words* : knowing a word entails not only to be able to recall its form, but also its grammar. Italian words are problematic for these students, as they have to learn their gender, which does not exist in their mother tongue. Most of the times in fact, they recalled the word, but not its gender and this is evident in the wrong use of the article, as in “il capitale”, or preposition, as in “nella cinema”. Sometimes they also change the ending of the word, as in “successa”.

LEXICON: GRAMMAR OF THE WORDS	
ERRORS	CORRECT FORMS
Una partita politica	un partito politico
Mi piace gli apps	Mi piacciono le app
Molte abite	Molti abiti
nella cinema	Al cinema
Successa	Successo
Altre stilisti/Le stilisti	Altri s./ le s.e.

Milano è il capitale della moda	La capitale
---------------------------------	-------------

Table 5.

- *other language interference*: these errors are due to the other language the students were learning. In these examples we can see that Spanish is the only language present. It is not by accident that we have Spanish, which is a romance language, as Italian is. The closeness of these two languages causes confusion.

LEXICON: OTHER LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE	
ERRORS	CORRECT FORM
Magnana	Mattina
Reina	Regina
È una buona vista	Sta bene
Acqua	Acqua

Table 6.

- *Idiomatic expressions*, as the students do not know typical Italian idioms, they attempt and fail. These are fixed expressions, which are almost impossible to guess.

LEXICON: IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS	
ERRORS	CORRECT FORM
I rischi sono più pericolosi	I rischi sono più alti
Nei giorni dei nostri genitori non esisteva quella parola	ai tempi dei nostri genitori non esisteva quella parola

Table 7.

- *Analytic expressions*: the use of a paraphrase instead of the actual word. This is a successful communication strategy, showing the lack of appropriate words.

LEXICON: ANALYTIC EXPRESSIONS	
ERRORS	CORRECT FORM
studia la scienza del computer	studia informatica

Table 8.

2.2.2.3 Grammatical data

This section includes the different areas of grammar I choose to analyse: articles, adjectives, pronouns, prepositions, verbs, adverbs and subject-verb agreement.

Table 9. presents articles' errors.

Even if the input is necessarily very rich of articles, this area of grammar is difficult in Italian L2 acquisition. This morpheme conveys indeed three functions: gender, number and definiteness. The difficulty of this category is to combine together these three different features.

GRAMMAR: ARTICLES	
ERRORS	CORRECT FORMS
Sul facebook	Su facebook
Nostro cibo	Il nostro cibo
Miei amici tutti hanno avuto molti cellulari	I miei amici
Il twitter	Twitter
I line	Le linee
Il stilo	lo stile
I stilisti	Gli stilisti
A. ha fatto i vestiti neri e grintosi	A. ha fatto vestiti neri e grintosi
I attori	Gli attori
Ha scoperto che ha cancro	Ha scoperto che ha il cancro

Table 9.

We can group articles' errors into the categories:

- *Articles' omissions*: the most omitted articles are *il* and *i*.
- *Articles' overuse*: the overuse involve articles such as: *il* and *i*, which are the most frequent and unmarked ones. In fact they tend to substitute *il* with *lo* and *i* with *gli*. This show that they have almost good command of the articles system, as the choice of gender and number is right.

Furthermore it should be noticed that they do not seem to have problems with the choice between definite and indefinite articles, as I registered just one error, where the definite variant is used in place of the correspondent indefinite variant. I did not find any other indefinite articles error. As Ramat¹⁹ claims, this kind of articles have more phonetic consistency, which leads to fewer errors in production.

I will now present the errors of adjectives.

Table 10. presents all the errors of adjectives in the nominal phrase (NP) and in the verbal phrase (VP).

GRAMMAR: ADJECTIVES		
	ERRORS	CORRECT FORM
In the NP	Gli altri punizioni	Le altre punizioni
	Altri squadre	Altre squadre
	Nuovi collezioni	Nuove collezioni
	Competenze imprenditoriale	Competenze imprenditoriali
	C'erano tanta sfilate	C'erano tante sfilate
	Molte donne elegante	Molte donne eleganti
	In questi foto	in queste foto
	Ci sono molti gente negli Usa	C'è molta gente negli Usa
In the VP	Sono tanto costoso	Sono tanto costosi
	Abiti che sono sempre elegante	Abiti che sono sempre eleganti

¹⁹ Giacalone Ramat, A., 2003: 56

I professori non possono essere severe	I professori non possono essere severi
I miei compagni erano matte	Le mie compagne erano matte
Le due aule sono tanto lontano di un altro	Le due aule sono molto lontane l'una dall'altra
È difficili di trovare un equilibrio	È difficile trovare un equilibrio
Sono favorevole	sono favorevoli
Siete sicuro?	Siete sicuri?

Table 10.

As for the NP, we have in total 9 errors, including quantifiers, adjectives preceding and following the head noun and demonstratives.

They seem to have problems with feminine adjectives, especially plural ones. They tend to substitute it either with masculine plural or feminine singular. This means that they tend to pay attention to gender and number, but sometimes they fail to match both of them in the same item.

As for the VP, we have 9 errors on adjectives as predicative adjective and just one error on a past participle.

They seem to have problems more with masculine plural than feminine, however, there are mistakes involving all gender and number features.

Table 11. presents pronouns errors.

GRAMMAR: PRONOUNS	
ERRORS	CORRECT FORM
Qualcuno lui ha detto	Qualcuno gli ha detto
Non mi piacerebbe fare un rimborso	Mi scusi ma non posso darLe il rimborso
Dice che posso l'aggiungere su facebook	Dice che la può aggiungere su facebook

Table 11.

Similarly to Ramat²⁰, we can see that gender and number agreement is not a problem in pronouns. We have actually few errors regarding pronouns.

As it should not be an easy category to acquire, I wonder whether this is an omission case.

I mean that students tend to avoid pronouns deliberately. As a strategy, it leads to make fewer errors, but fewer usage of pronouns as they lessen the attempts.

Table 12. presents verb tense errors.

GRAMMAR: VERBS		
	ERRORS	CORRECT FORMS
Verb tense	Era divertente	È stato divertente
	Penso che se sia legalizzata	Penso che se fosse legalizzata
	Partirò adesso!	Parto adesso!
	Era tradotto	è stato tradotto
	Non potevo vedere il video	Non ho potuto vedere il video
	Quanti specialisti aveva consultato in tutto?	Quanti specialisti ha consultato in tutto?
	Quando era piccolo ha voluto essere un medico	Quando era piccolo voleva diventare medico
	Non ho pensato che	non pensavo che
Verb mood	Credono che ci sono	che ci siano
	Il genitore non vuole che suo figlio è chiamato deficiente	Che suo figlio sia
	Penso che le terapie alternative forniscono solo placebo	Penso che le terapie alternative forniscano solo placebo
	Sembra che ha un rapporto un po' più buono con i medici alternativi	Sembra che abbia un rapporto un po' migliore con i medici alternativi
	Io sto facendo la prima parte	Io faccio la prima parte
	Gli abbiano ditto	Gli hanno detto
	Spiega che i consumatori siano a rischio	Spiega che i consumatori sono a rischio

²⁰Giacalone Ramat, A., 2003:62

	<p>Come pensi che i bambini imparare una lingua?</p> <p>(Non ho pensato che) i numeri sarebbero così grandi</p> <p>Che va a morire</p>	<p>Come pensi che i bambini imparino una lingua?</p> <p>Non ho pensato che i numeri fossero così grandi</p> <p>Che morirà</p>
--	--	---

Table 12.

The majority of verb tense errors are concentrated in the use of present perfect and imperfect. Students tend to extend both tenses.

This is probably because English has a correspondent form for both of them, but their use is slightly different distributed.

However it is important to note that the phenomenon of overuse of a form happen only among tenses and moods. There is no overuse of forms internally of the paradigm (such as “io studiare”): as Ramat²¹ claims, this errors happen only in the first steps of language acquisition. So we can affirm that these students’ acquisition is beyond the basic steps.

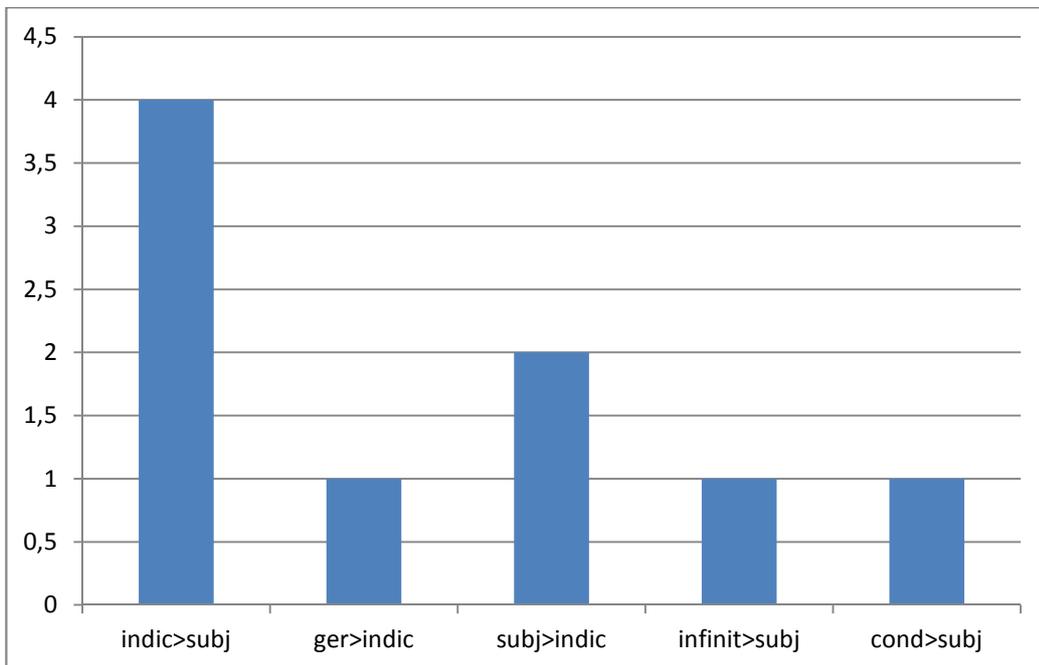


Chart 3.

²¹ Giacalone Ramat, A., 2003:93

The most important thing to note about verb moods is that students often overuse indicative. This mood often replaces subjunctive.

Subjunctive is a very difficult mood, acquired only in the very advanced levels of acquisition. However we can find also the opposite phenomenon: in two sentences subjunctive replaces indicative. This is due to a hypercorrection attitude, as in the sentence: “spiega che i consumatori siano a rischio”, in which the learner was probably confused by the presence of “che”. They are used in fact to relate the use of subjunctive to “che”, as in “penso che”/ “sembra che”.

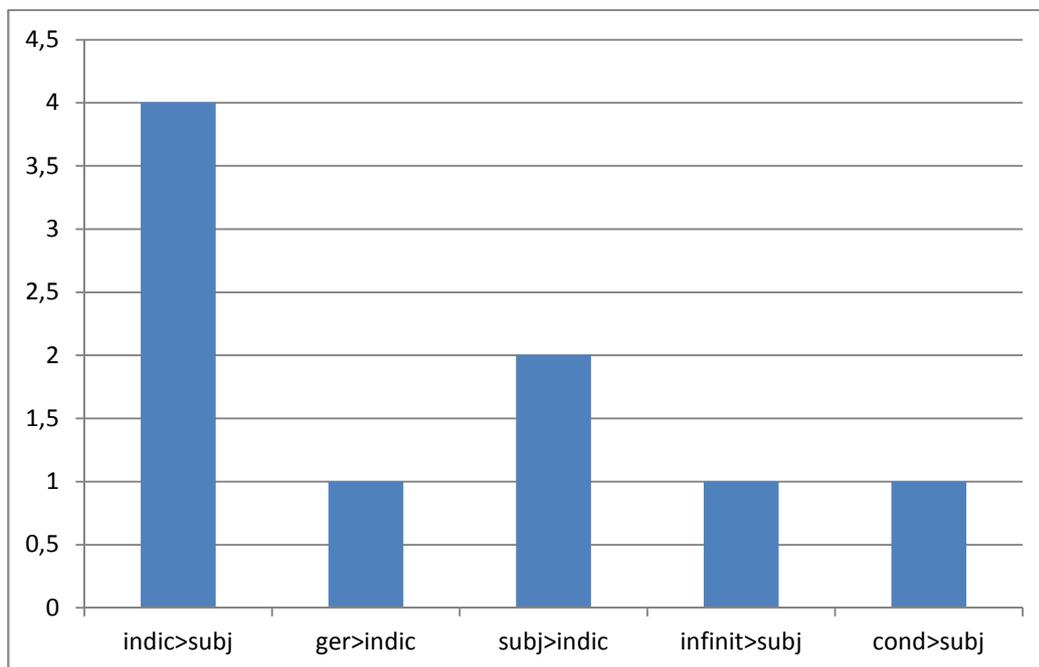


Chart 4.

Finally we have an interesting case of autonomous structure formation: “Gli dicono che va a morire”. In this case the student was completely unaware that this structure does not exist in Italian, but it is a loan translation. She was actually translating from the English “They tell him he is going to die”, which perfectly corresponds to “Gli dicono che va a morire”. She was paying more attention to communicating than to the grammatical structure.

Verbs involve also auxiliary verbs and we have few errors in this category as well.

GRAMMAR: AUXILIARIES	
ERRORS	CORRECT FORMS
I rapporti hanno cambiato	Sono cambiati
Sono rotto le gambe	Ho le gambe rotte
La potenza delle donne ha aumentato	La potenza delle donne è aumentato
Ha passato di moda	è passato di moda
Non mi avrei mancato il face book	Non mi sarebbe mancato face book

Table 13.

Auxiliaries are never omitted, but their selection is also subject to errors. Most of the times it is “to have” auxiliary to be chosen in place of “to be”. This is probably because it is transferred from the English “to have”.

Table 14. presents prepositions’ errors.

GRAMMAR: PREPOSITIONS		
	ERRORS	CORRECT FORM
Simple prepositions	quindi lei ha deciso di fare qualcosa più severo	quindi lei ha deciso di fare qualcosa di più severo
	bisogna di vivere un po’	bisogna vivere un po’
	C’è meno di comunicazione faccia a faccia	C’è meno comunicazione
	È possibile da riuscire	È possibile riuscire
	Ci siamo abituati di avere quella barriera	Ci siamo abituati ad avere quella barriera
	Ha aiutato di trasformato	Ha aiutato a trasformare
	In Milano	a Milano
	la vita reale per la vita virtuale	la vita reale con la vita virtuale
	Dipendenti su face book	Dipendenti da face book
	Va a diversi medici	Va da diversi medici
	Difficile a fare	Difficile da fare
	Quando premo il bottone per messaggi	Quando premo il bottone dei messaggi

	Una ragione per il suo successo Mangiamo a ristoranti A California Di più c'è anche il rischio di ammalarsi di schizofrenia	Una ragione del suo successo Mangiamo nei ristoranti in California In più c'è anche il rischio di ammalarsi di schizofrenia
Prepositions combined with a definite article	Mondo di basket Del nazionale Capitale di moda Da 2009 Ispirazione di giocatori famoso	Mondo del basket Della nazionale Capitale della moda Dal 2009 Ispirazione dai giocatori famosi
	Una persona che è a moda Somiglia il beige È stato ispirato ai paesi In moda Possono avere molti problemi con il cervello	Una persona che è alla moda Somiglia al beige È stato ispirato dai paesi Alla moda Possono avere molti problemi al cervello

Table 14.

Simple prepositions are often subject to be wrong in learners' productions. They are omitted or overused few times, but the most common mistake is to choose the wrong preposition. There is a variety in the wrong choices, including almost all the simple prepositions.

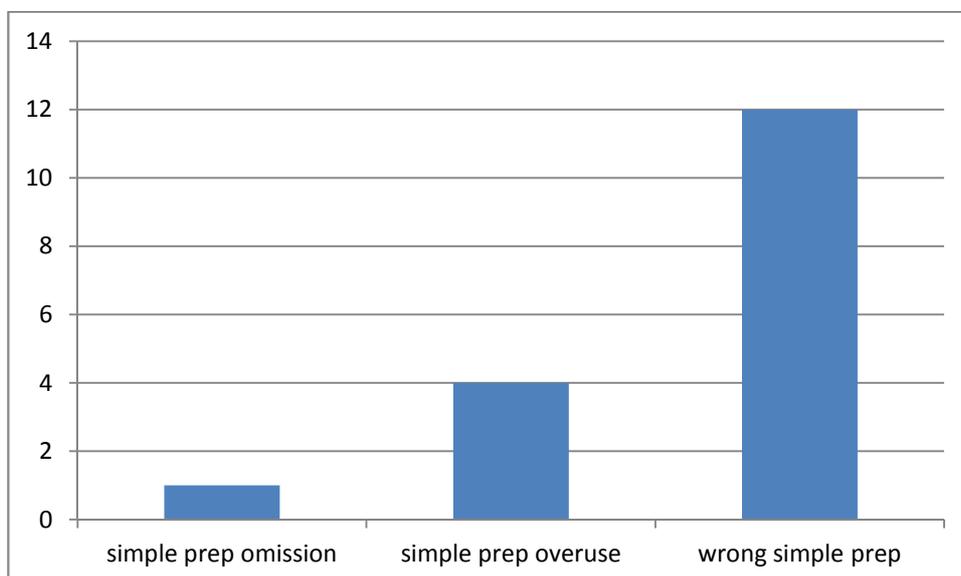


Chart 5.

On the other hand prepositions that combined with a definite article are often omitted. Usually students replace them with a simple preposition (di, da, a) or an article (il).

Table 15. presents adverbs' errors.

GRAMMAR: ADVERBS	
ERRORS	CORRECT FORM
solo mando i messaggi a mia madre	mando i messaggi solo a mia madre
Uso facebook sempre	Uso sempre facebook
Mi piace lo stilo della regina, perché sempre indossa lo stesso	Mi piace lo stile della regina, perché indossa sempre lo stesso
Sempre presentano	Presentano sempre
La gente comprerà i vestiti sempre	La gente comprerà sempre i vestiti
Anche penso che se	penso anche che se
Non poteva dormire perché sempre si grattava	Non riusciva a dormire perché si grattava sempre
I professori non possono fare questo più	I professori non possono più fare questo

Table 15.

Adverbs are often put in the wrong place. As we can see the most wrongly used is "sempre". However, this is actually because "sempre" was just the most used by the students.

What is more interesting to note here is another phenomenon. Learners usually tend to put the adverb before its correct position.

There are cases such as: "solo mando i messaggi a mia madre", in which the adverb raises to end up before the verb. There are other cases in which the adverb raises and ends up just before the object. For example in the sentence "uso facebook sempre".

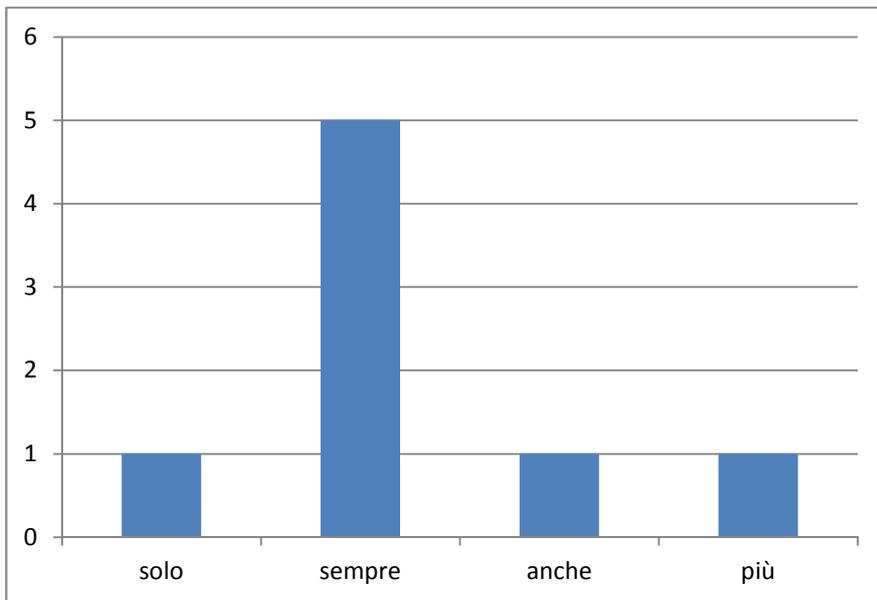


Chart 6.

Table 16. presents errors about subject-verb agreement.

GRAMMAR: SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT	
ERRORS	CORRECT FORM
L'altro professore hanno già scritto le note	L'altro professore ha già scritto la nota
Non c'è abbastanza soldi	Non ci sono abbastanza soldi
Per chi fumano più di 50 spinelli all'anno	Per chi fuma più di 50 spinelli all'anno
Ci sono i droghi	Ci sono le droghe
Chi fuma più di 50 spinelli all'anno sono più probabili di	Chi fuma più di 50 spinelli all'anno è più a rischio di
Loro che piacciono facebook come una forma di vojerismo	Ad alcuni piace facebook come forma di vojerismo
C'è altri che piacciono facebook come una forma di comunicazione	Ad altri piace facebook come forma di comunicazione

Table 16.

In these sentences in fact subjects and verbs do not agree in number.

There is a specific problem with the verb "piacere", which has a funny sentence structure.

2.2.2.4 Register data

Knowing a language involves not only the topics we have seen so far, but also a sociolinguistic competence. It means to be able to use the language correctly in each situation.²²

The Italian language varies according to the register, to the topic and to the medium used. The errors found in these data are focused on register.

The main difference between Italian and English is that Italian has a courtesy form to be used in formal situations. “Lei” is used instead of “tu” to address older people in formal situations and causes confusion in English students as they do not have any correspondent form.

	REGISTER	
	ERRORS	CORRECT FORMS
Courtesy form	Ho chiederti di partire Tu non devi essere andato in Italia!	Se ne vada! Lei non doveva venire in Italia!
	Stai zitto! Puoi darmi un po' di soldi? Che vuoi? Non vado a darti i soldi Tu non devi essere andato in Italia	Stia zitto! Posso avere un rimborso? Prego? Non Le do indietro i soldi Lei non doveva venire in Italia!/Poteva restarsene a casa!
Lexicon	Voleva che la femmine indossassero tette	Donne Seno

Table 17.

We can see from table 17, that most of the errors are located in the “courtesy form” section. The use of “Lei” is something that students did not learn.

It is very important for them to learn the importance of using the “Lei form” correctly, as they can unintentionally offend people.

The other section includes two items of lexicon. These words were too informal to be used in a formal situation, such as a university class. From the point of view of a native speaker,

²² Balboni, P. E., 1999: 94

it is a very bad error to commit, worst than many grammar errors. This is because it can cause embarrassment among people.

2.3 Conclusion

In the end of this chapter we can have a look on what are the most difficult areas of Italian for these students.

Certainly all aspects of phonology are hard to achieve, as well as false friends in lexicon and function words in grammar.

Phonology is obviously a difficult area. Even at very high language levels a learner usually sounds “foreigner” mostly because of phonological problems.

False friends are by nature a tricky area at all language levels.

Categories such as articles and prepositions demand a great effort from the students, as they have to combine many features in only one morpheme. Furthermore, these categories do not convey the meaning of the sentence, so the students tend not to concentrate on them when their first aim is communicating.

Another problematic area of grammar is agreement. It involves not only subject-verb agreement, where singular and plural do not always match, but also adjectives and articles, which in the learners’ productions do not always match with the head noun of the NP.

In the next chapter I will propose some activities to correct the errors in these categories.

CHAPTER 3

THE CAUSES OF ERRORS

In this third chapter I will explore the causes of the errors committed by the students. But why is it important to investigate them? This analysis will raise awareness on the nature of errors, in order to find better strategies and activities for the students to reach higher proficiency levels in the foreign language.

3.1 Why do learners commit errors?

It is well known that the mother tongue influences the output in the foreign language. Ortega²³ recalls that this phenomenon has been called in many different ways: transfer, crosslinguistic influence, or interference. The latter one is seen as an old one, so I chose to use just the word “transfer”, to avoid any possible confusion. It is in fact an intuitive concept, defined by Balboni²⁴ as the phenomenon of transferring the previously acquired competences on the competences which are being acquired at that particular stage of foreign language learning. This influence can be of two types: positive, when it helps the acquisition, or negative, when it slows it down.

Ortega²⁵ states also that transfer can be based not only on the differences between the mother tongue and the foreign language, but also on misleading similarities, that is learner’s perceived distance and his own judgement of transferability. In other words, the learner perceives that the two languages are different, however when it comes that they are actually similar, the learner is likely to suppose that it is not true and ends up of making errors. Psychological factors such as this one can be crucial in his/her errors, or choice of words and structures.

In particular, the most important psychological factor is the so called “affective filter”²⁶, which is a psychological barrier caused by negative emotions such as anxiety and fear of making mistakes, especially in front of the whole class. It is worth taking it into account as

²³ Ortega, L., 2003:31

²⁴ Balboni, P. E., 1999:105

²⁵ Ortega, L., 2003:32

²⁶ Balboni, P.E.,

it can influence not only the errors learners commit in the single class, but also the whole learning process. This is why most of the recent teaching methods are focused on avoiding the raising of this filter.

Furthermore when we analyse the causes of the errors, there are many variables to take into account. These variables are of various nature: the L1, the L2, the learners' age, the area of the L2, the proficiency level, as well as psychological elements. Odlin²⁷ refers to these influences as "mutually interacting forces". All of these forces are of different origin and interact with each other, so transfer is a complex phenomenon to be explored. I will therefore try to explore the nature of the causes of each area of errors, taking into account all the variables that can influence the learners' output.

Nesci and Cattana²⁸ reflect on the impossibility of conducting an error to one single and reliable cause. As there can be many causes of various nature, this analysis will be an hypothesis of the main causes of the learner's behaviour. One way of investigating the reason behind a certain behaviour is to ask directly the students, why they produced these errors. However there are two problems within this approach. First of all it is not always possible for the students to recall the situation in which they made certain errors. Secondly they can sometimes give the researcher good insights of the psychological phenomena, but sometimes they cannot give appropriate explanations, as errors involve both conscious and unconscious psychological aspects. Thirdly, we do not have the possibility to interview the students, so we will try to make plausible hypotheses, where possible.

Furthermore, it is important to notice that errors are most of the times involuntary. Students do not behave illogically and do not want to fail, especially considering that they are in class in front of the teachers and other students. It is therefore worth investigating the reasons behind their errors considering the whole situation, not just the student himself. This approach is an essential aspect of a teaching methodology, which considers the students the centre of the process of learning a foreign language.

²⁷ Ortega, L., 2003 :41

²⁸ Cattana, A., Nesci, M. T., 2004:99

3.2 Learning variables

Nesci and Cattana²⁹ summarize all the possible variables influencing the learning of a foreign language and could cause errors in the learner's production.

There are five elements relating to the students themselves:

- Who is learning;
- Mother tongue;
- Other known language;
- Culture;
- Communication and learning strategies.

Beyond these factors they make a list of "new" elements, which influence their learning:

- The foreign language;
- The teaching method;
- The place where they learn.

I will now consider these variables with respect to the students involved in this experiment, checking whether they confirm Nesci and Cattana's theory or not.

- Who is learning (I will include in this section the variable of the learning strategies).

There are different variables in the learners themselves.

The first one is age. Adults do not learn a foreign language as children do. Pallotti³⁰ states that adults are generally able to understand abstract rules, to use their own learning strategies and to think about their own progress in learning. This is because their L1 is already fully developed. Conversely children are not already aware of their learning strategies, but do use memory more. However it seems that children tend to acquire the foreign language using the same processes used for the mother tongue. This acquisition is more similar to the first language acquisition, leading them to commit developmental errors, which is not the case with adults.

²⁹ Cattana, A., Nesci, M. T., 2004:81

³⁰ Pallotti, G., 1998 :289

The students of this experiment are adults, so we will not expect developmental errors.

Another variable which is connected with age, is motivation. Motivation can be defined as the energy that leads the students to enrol in a language course and to attend it till the end. Adults and children are different also with respect to motivation. Adults' motivation is more intrinsic: they usually enrol in a language course because they think they will have some advantages, on their career for example. On the other hand children do not decide themselves to be enrolled in a language course. Their motivation is based on the fact that they enjoy what they do, this is why children courses are focused on playful activities.

The students of the university of Bristol autonomously chose their degree, which involves the studying of Italian for four years, including a semester abroad. They expect to learn and reach high standards of Italian language. So it is worth taking into consideration that their motivation is very high, as they decided to invest lots of time and money in this course.

Another relevant factor to be considered is memory, which is both the capacity of storing items and of recalling them³¹. Students need to memorize lots of words, structures and rules. If their memory is not well trained to work at the top of its capacity, students will necessarily produce more errors. In the case of the Italian language the storage of an item includes not only its form, but also its gender. It is worth highlighting here also that memory storage include receptive and productive items. Students usually know more words at a receptive level, which means that if they encounter those words they can easily recall their meaning, but if they are asked to produce themselves those items, they cannot. Items enter in the short memory, which has limited capacity and lasts for a short period of time. Memory is part of cognition, which includes also attention. When voluntary attention is paid to a specific item, it starts to be processed to pass to a deeper level of memory, which is called long-term memory. So attention plays a key role in the storage of lexicon.

³¹ Begotti, P., 2010:53

Furthermore we have to take into account that there are individual differences, such as the different types of intelligence³², the different learning styles, personality features. Each individual carries in fact his/her combination of personal characteristics, including different intelligences and ways of approaching the same task. In this case we are not focusing on a single person, but on a group of people. In each group the results cannot be homogeneous, because there are necessarily individual differences that lead the students to different levels of proficiency. I will therefore try to highlight the major characteristics of this group, however the conclusions will necessarily be general considerations.

A significant individual variable is gender: the large majority of the students are female. It is universally true that women study languages more than men and they probably have a higher aptitude towards it. It is also true for this experiment, as the majority of the students are female.

- The mother tongue.

It is well known that the typological distance is a crucial factor in language learning. For instance, for a Spanish native speaker it is more difficult to learn Japanese than Italian. This is because Spanish and Italian are very similar.

In this case the distance between the mother tongue (English) and the target language (Italian) is not so close, however both languages have Latin influences. They share for example the same alphabet, the same word order (SVO) and lots of vocabulary.

- Other known language(s).

The previous knowledge of any language, even if it is not the mother tongue can influence the target one. It is necessary to consider that these students do know other languages, most often French or Spanish. However they are not homogeneous in this aspect: some of them study French, other study Spanish, Portuguese or German. So we cannot generalize for the whole group. However it must be said that the knowledge of any language contributes to the global linguistic

³² Gardner, in Balboni, 2008: 30-34 (for a comprehensive explanation)

baggage. This means that it is easier to learn a new language, if we already know one or more. Thus their knowledge of any language will facilitate their task.

- Culture.

I will especially consider the study culture. It is worth having a look on the English study culture, which is different from the Italian one.

First of all they lack of formality. The atmosphere is generally very positive and relaxed. Teachers are usually very approachable and this is most appreciated by students. The university provides in fact many social spaces and common rooms on campus, where students and teachers can meet. This implies that students generally do not fear the teachers, but are used to be considered a peer. This has the important consequence that students tend not to suffer of anxiety, which could stop or intimidate the learning process.

Secondly, classes are small (usually of 12 people) and offer great opportunity for discussion. Students are asked to participate and cooperate in class, which means that they are always actively involved. This is actually supported by the theories of Carl Rogers, an American psychologist, who discovered that adult learning is successful if the person is actively involved and he/she feels that what he is learning is necessary. Furthermore they are also used to be asked to develop their own critical thinking. Consequently it will be very important for them to reflect on the causes of their errors, which they are already used to do.

- The foreign language.

In this case the foreign language is Italian. Italian has a richer verbal morphology, richer agreement elements. It is therefore obvious that we have to expect some errors, such as the courtesy form, or the noun-adjective agreement.

- The teaching method.

First of all it is important to clarify that the researcher cannot give a comprehensive view on this topic, as it is wide, to require a dissertation itself.

I will therefore just describe the main features of the teaching method used by these teachers.

The teachers focused on oral production.

They used a booklet, which contained several articles, images and songs as inputs.

This was a positive aspect, as they were authentic materials, through which students could learn not only grammar and vocabulary, but also culture. It is actually very important to include authentic materials in a language course, to maximize the quantity input during the class. This aspect could influence the learning process, as the more authentic input they receive, fewer errors they will make in the long term.

- The place where they learn.

The place where these students learn is the university of Bristol. They learn Italian as a foreign language. This implies that the input they have is limited to the class and the amount of work they are expected to do at home. This kind of input is obviously less rich compared to learning a language in the country where it is spoken. Consequently the students are more likely to commit errors. They should be highly motivated not to be discouraged and they should possibly to spend a period of time in the country of the target language.

We shall also consider the place where they have learnt previously. The group is homogeneous also on this respect, as they all come from different English high-schools and took their A-level exams. Students who take A-level exams and are admitted to university usually aim to a high instruction, have high motivation and lots of time to study.

3.3 The causes of errors

I will now give a brief comment and some hypotheses on each linguistic area of error, choosing just the area with the higher quantity of errors.

3.3.1 Phonological errors

- Regarding single sounds pronunciation, /tz/ and /dz/ are the most difficult sounds. The reason relies in the mother tongue: English does not have any equivalent of them. Students need a specific training to be able to produce them.
- Regarding word stress, the most common errors involve proparoxytone words, taken as words with the accent on the penultimate syllable. For example: “comici”. The cause is the target language: Italian words usually have their accent on the penultimate syllable and proparoxytone words are exceptions. As there is no graphic hint of the exceptional accent position, if the student does not know that specific word, they are likely to fail.

3.3.2 Lexical errors

- False friends are caused by tricky words, whose form is similar in the L1 and the target language, but the meaning is not. Although students are aware of the existence of this category, it is still difficult for them to recall the right vocabulary.
- After that we have word formation and the grammar of words. I reckon all these categories of errors are due to memory gaps. Students probably did not store the vocabulary properly and they have problems to recall them, including all their features.

3.3.3 Grammatical errors

- Articles are misused a lot. However we have to consider that the Italian article system is quite complicated to be automated, so the cause is the actual difficulty of the target language.

- Adjectives are an area of great difficulty, mostly because of their agreement. English is not so rich of number and gender agreement as Italian. This typological difference leads students to fail.
- Verb tense, especially the use of present perfect and imperfect, are likely to be misused. The different distribution of these two tenses causes confusion.
- Verb moods can be mistaken, usually indicative appears instead of the subjunctive. However subjunctive was probably still a difficult step to be acquired so they used the communicative strategy of simplifying a complex structure, in order to communicate.
- Prepositions are often omitted, overused or wrongly chosen. They are usually a very difficult topic in any language.

3.3.4 Register errors

- Register errors such as the misuse of the courtesy form “Lei” or the use of informal words in a formal context are due to the fact that they learn Italian as a foreign language. In the artificial linguistic environment of the class it is less evident that such errors are of great importance. It is easier for an L2 learner to acquire such competences.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen the various situational factors that can influence the production of any learner, which include personal factors related to the learners' identity, such as their mother tongue, culture and cognitive elements and other external factors, such as the language they are learning, the teaching method that has been used. We have checked in what way they affected the language of the students recorded in the University of Bristol.

In the next one we will start from the analysis of the different causes of their errors, to create *ad hoc* activities.

CHAPTER 4

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

The aim of this chapter is to propose some activities to correct the errors seen in the previous chapters. Errors are seen as a source to better students' competence, therefore they are not ignored, but used as an input to reinforce the most difficult areas of language.

4.1 The correction of errors

The correction of errors has been a debated topic in SLA (Second language acquisition) research for a long time.

Pallotti³³ gives a summary of this debate, stating that there are two main views, based on the effectiveness of correction.

There are researchers who think that correction is not useful (Truscott, Krashen) because it grows anxiety and disaffection towards the L2 in learners. In addition, if teachers focus just on form and not on the usage of language, students' fluency will be inhibited.

On the other hand there are good reasons why correction can be considered useful (Carroll and Swain, Johnson). It can be a formative activity, if it is not designed as a mere correction on form, but as the process by which the students become aware of the mental processes causing the mistakes.³⁴ Correction is also useful to avoid the risk of fossilization, which happens when a learner keeps repeating the same mistake several times, until it becomes very difficult to extirpate³⁵.

Schmidt³⁶ stresses instead the importance of noticing. This theory includes certain steps: first of all a student has to note a certain structure, then he will give importance to it, and finally he will acquire it. So the correction has the role of telling the students what is not possible in the foreign language and let them note what is the right structure to be learnt.

³³ Pallotti, G., 1998:315

³⁴ Lo Duca, M. G., 2003:248

³⁵ Balboni, P. E., 1999:44

³⁶ Schmidt, 2001

Although correction happens not only in class, but also in a spontaneous acquisition of the language, it obtains even more importance in the noticing theory because it is meant to be a thorough and systematic feedback.

However Pallotti³⁷ suggests a selective correction. The teacher has to select what and when correcting. For example if a correction can inhibit a shy student, who is trying to communicate, it would be better to avoid stopping him/her speech. Furthermore, there are certain strategies to let the students know that he/she made a mistake.

4.2 The proposal

The aim of this chapter is to propose some activities to correct the errors found in chapter 2.

These activities are meant to work as corrective feedback, to let students know what is wrong in their production and to give them the possibility to improve it through these activities.

These activities aim in fact to give the students a reinforcement opportunity, including negative feedback. The final aim is to gain a metalinguistic knowledge, letting students know about their errors and guiding them to reflect about them. It produces a deeper awareness on particular linguistic structures, which become easier to remember. When we learn a language, it is important to store structures properly. If we reflect about it, it will be easier to store it.

This kind of feedback happens in a delayed time, as it was not possible to analyse their errors in real time, nor propose them activities in class, as their course plan was not variable. Also it does not include any mark, to avoid anxiety.

This approach undermines that the students are centred, they are the protagonists of their learning. Moreover they focus on their mental processes and not just on products. The development of those processes is of great importance, as it is an ability they can exploit anytime by themselves.

³⁷ Pallotti, G., 1998:315

Each activity focuses on one topic. This is in order to avoid confusion. It is very important to give clear corrections, letting students know exactly what is wrong and showing them that there is a way to improve. Each activity focuses only on one topic also to avoid demotivation. Motivation is in fact a very important element to consider in language teaching. Overloading the students with negative feedback can demolish their motivation and slow down the whole process of learning.

I identified some specific problems from the analysis in chapter 2. This is because the activities must be explicitly targeted on specific problems.

After an analysis of all the errors committed by the students, I selected just some of them to be corrected. I based my selection criteria on the quantity of errors committed for each area, on the language level, the acquisition sequences, the students themselves. This was in order to select systematic errors, and to leave all the mistakes due to some situational factors, such as stress and tiredness, which are not so important in the corrective feedback.

To be more effective, the activities are build using words and sentences taken from the students errors.

I propose different kind of solutions: exercises and activities. Balboni³⁸ describes the teaching techniques, dividing them in these two groups. Exercises involve the manipulation of language structures and aim to their fixations.

On the other side we have activities, which are based on creativity. They usually involve a problem to be solved by the students.

Correction can be explicit or implicit. This proposal consists of an explicit correction because it focuses directly on the errors detected in the students productions. Explicit corrections are dangerous for psychological reasons: the risk is to make the students think they failed and to raise their anxiety. However, as it is a group research, it involves the whole class and not the single individuals. So it should not have this effect.

³⁸ Balboni, P. E., 2008:7

I will propose activities and exercises to be done both at home and in class. They are meant to be done alone, in pairs, or in small groups. This is to promote peer correction, which is psychologically less risky than teacher correction. They could also be done within the whole class, if needed.

4.3 The activities

What follows is the actual proposal of the activities.

There is an brief comment on the rationale of each activity. There is also a table, that summarizes the main characteristics of the activities.

4.3.1 Phonology

4.3.1.1 Single sounds pronunciation

The aim of this activity³⁹ is to let the students distinguish between the two sounds “/dz/ and /tz/. It is based on an inductive process, which undermines a process from the global to the synthesis.

Type of activity	Inductive activity of problem solving.
Linguistic aims	Distinguish between the phonemes /dz/ and /tz/.
Duration	20 min.
Materials	Photocopies, pen.
Organization	In pairs.

How to proceed: the teacher gives each student a photocopy with a group of words. In pairs, they have to subdivide the group of words into two different groups. It is important to underline that they have to focus just on sounds and not on the meaning of the words. Afterwards they have to find out the rule of the proper pronunciation of /dz/ and /tz/.

This is the group of words:

Zanzara – stazione – zuppa – zenzero – operazione – zero – zampillare – pozione – dichiarazione – zebra – zaino – moltiplicazione – paziente – fortezza – caratterizzato – esposizione – iniziare – intelligenza – utilizzare – altezza – produzione.

³⁹ This and other activities of this chapter are based on the theory found in Balboni, 2008

4.3.1.2 Word stress

The aim of this exercise is to let the students aware of word stress in Italian words.

Type of activity	Inductive activity of problem solving.
Linguistic aims	Memorization of lexicon.
Duration	20 min.
Materials	Photocopies, pen.
Organization	In pairs.

How to proceed: students are given a list of words, which have to be grouped into three subgroups. They will see that there is no hint on how to understand if a word is proparoxitone or if the stress is on the penultimate syllable. The only certainty comes from apocopated words, which have a graphic stress. Therefore they have to memorize the ones which are proparoxitones.

This is the list of words:

Espandersi – enfasi - meta – potere – comò – facile – città – coetanei – metà – comici – araba – follia – farò – falò – pero – dollari – è – linea – però – mania.

4.3.2 Lexicon

This category includes false friends, word formation and the grammar of words. As I supposed that the origin of them is found in the storage of words, including all their features, the aim of this activities is to focus on accuracy.

I propose here some activities, which help the memorization of those words.

As Begotti⁴⁰ points out, the memorization of any item is helped by two elements: if something is new or emotionally participated, it will be easier to remember.

We are trying here to help students memorize words that they have already heard. So there is nothing very new helping them. It could actually be boring. So I will try to involve their emotions and feelings, proposing something to make them laugh and have a good time. For this reason I have chosen to use playful activities, to be done in groups.

⁴⁰ Begotti, P., 2010:54

4.3.2.1 False friends

Type of activity	Playful activity.
Linguistic aims	Memorization of false friends.
Duration	30 min.
Materials	Paper, pencil, photocopies.
Organization	In groups or within the whole class.

How to proceed: this activity is a picture dictation. It can be done in groups or within the whole class. The teacher or a student draws a picture without letting the other students see it. His picture has to include the list of false friends given below. Then he will describe it and the other ones have to draw it from instructions.

List of false friends:

Utenti – Videocamera – Diffusione – Sanità – Elegante – Libreria - Magazzino - Fabbrica
Firma – confetti.

4.3.2.2 Word formation

Type of activity	Combination of an exercise and a creative technique.
Linguistic aims	Fixation of lexicon.
Duration	About 20 min.
Materials	List of words. Pen and paper.
Organization	In groups.

How to proceed: the teacher divides the whole class in 2 (or more) groups and gives each of them a list of pairs of words, for example *clarità – chiarezza*. The students have to choose the right alternative, and combine it with the other words in order to form a short story. The first team to finish the story wins, with penalties if they do not use all the words or if they fail in the choice of the word. This could be done both as a speaking or writing task.

This kind of correction can be helpful to encourage peer-correction, and thus a collaborative atmosphere in the class.

This is the list of words:

- Passionate/appassionato;
- Valutare/valutare;
- Una sprecata /uno spreco ;
- Bolliere /bollitore;
- Regolazione/regolato;
- Austro/austriaco;
- Chiarezza /chiarezza;
- Governo/governo;
- Maggioranza/maggioranza;
- Nazionali/nazionali.

4.3.2.3 Grammar of the words

Type of activity	Drilling exercise.
Linguistic aims	Focus on gender features.
Duration	10 min.
Materials	Photocopy, pen.
Organization	Individually

How to proceed: the teacher gives each student a photocopy . Each sentence has some gaps to be filled in with appropriate endings.

These are the sentences:

- Questo partito_ politic_ non è moderno_.
- Gli abiti_ della regina d'Inghilterra sono molto elegant_.
- Domenica vado al_ cinema.
- Questo cantante sta riscuotendo un_ success_ enorme tra gli adolescenti.
- Qual è ___ capital_ della Francia?
- Altri_ stilisti_ americani_ hanno partecipato al convegno.

4.3.3 Grammar

This section includes articles, adjectives and verbs.

4.3.3.1 Articles

The article system is generally a very difficult point in the acquisition of Italian. This is because the article consists just on a single morpheme, but it shows both gender and number features. These students confirm that the article is difficult.

There are some researchers⁴¹ who do not think that articles should be taught in class. Some of them think that it is not necessary to know them to communicate, or that the input a teacher could give in class, will always be too small, compared to the wideness of the article system. However I think that the wrong choice of articles, will make the students sound foreigners, especially because articles are so frequent in any production in Italian. Furthermore, as Chiapedi⁴² affirms, as this category is most of the times barely audible in natives' speech, the teacher's help would be essential for the students, to notice the regularities of the system.

Having said that, it is worth noticing that these students do know the rules quite well. What they need to develop is the ability to use the right articles in their productions. In addition, they had already acquired the distinction between definite and indefinite, because of their mother tongue.

Type of activity	Drilling exercise.
Linguistic aims	Practice articles.
Duration	10 min.
Materials	Photocopies, pens.
Organization	Individually or in pairs.

How to proceed: the teacher gives each student a photocopy. Each sentence has some gaps to be filled in with appropriate articles.

Sentences:

- ... Facebook è usato da moltissime persone.
- ... I miei amici sono andati al mare.
- ... linee di questo disegno sono troppo spesse.
- ... stile degli abiti di Valentino è elegante.
- ... stilisti creano un marchio.

⁴¹ See Chiapedi for a comprehensive insight.

⁴² Chiapedi, N., 2010 :70

- Antonio ha scoperto che ha ... cancro.

4.3.3.2 Adjectives

The problem with adjectives is that students have to focus on their gender and on the nouns' gender.

It is therefore useful to deal with this problem with exercises focused on accuracy. I propose here some alternatives.

Type of activity	Playful exercise.
Linguistic aims	Memory task
Duration	(Indefinite: as long as students can do it.)
Materials	(nothing)
Organization	The whole class works together.

How to proceed: the teacher distributes a photocopy with a list of prompts and then says a sentence, using one of these prompts. The following person has to repeat the same sentence without any agreement mistake and add something new to it. The game continues this way with next students. The first one who fails to repeat the sequence is excluded from the game. The last person who remains, is the winner.

These is the list of prompts:

- Le altre punizioni
- Altre squadre
- Nuove collezioni
- Competenze imprenditoriali
- Tante sfilate
- Molte donne eleganti
- In queste foto
- C'è molta gente negli Usa
- Sono tanto costosi
- Abiti eleganti
- I professori severi
- Le mie compagne matte
- Le aule lontane

- Sono favorevoli
- Sono sicuri

4.3.3.3 Verb tense

Verb tense, especially the use of present perfect and imperfect, are misused.

A good way to clarify the distribution of their usage are time lines. Time lines are useful to let the students see that every tense refer to a time line, which is different from every other time line. In particular present perfect can be draw as a continuous line, indicating the duration of an action which is taking place:



On the other hand present imperfect can be draw as a breaking of a continuous line:



Type of activity	Drilling task.
Linguistic aims	Distinguish the use of present perfect and imperfect.
Duration	10 min.
Materials	Paper and pen.
Organization	Individually.

How to proceed: the students are asked to draw timelines for some sentences:

- Il libro è stato tradotto in 8 lingue.
- Ieri non ho potuto vedere il video.
- Quanti specialisti ha consultato in tutto il protagonista del film?
- Da piccolo voleva diventare medico.
- Non aveva pensato che il archeggio potesse essere pieno.
- Mentre pedalavo per andare al lavoro, ho visto Luca che andava al supermercato.
- Stavo rallentando, quando l'auto dietro di me mi ha tamponato.
- E' stato divertente nuotare nell'oceano?
- Mentre lavoravo a Venezia, ho visto molti turisti.

4.3.3.4 Verb moods

This is a simple drilling exercise which focuses on the use of indicative and subjunctive mood. It aims to remind the students what they already know. They already know all the theory and they need to put it into use, to acquire it to a deeper awareness.

Type of activity	Drilling task.
Linguistic aims	Distinguish the use of indicative and subjunctive.
Duration	10 min.
Materials	Paper and pen.
Organization	Individually.

How to proceed: the students have to fill in the gaps of the sentences, choosing between the indicative and the subjunctive mood.

Sentences:

- Il genitore non vuole che suo figlio ... (essere) chiamato deficiente.
- Penso che le terapie alternative ... (fornire) solo placebo.
- Sembra che ... (avere) un rapporto migliore con i medici alternativi.
- Credono che ci ... (essere) dei problemi.
- Credo che gli ... (avere) detto che sta bene.
- L'articolo dice che i consumatori ... (essere) a rischio di malattie gravi.

4.4. Fossilization

Fossilization has been defined as a “permanent lack of mastery of a target language despite continuous exposure to the TL input, adequate motivation to improve, and sufficient opportunity to practice”⁴³.

Although Ortega warns about it, saying that it is not yet completely demonstrated and the teacher’s attitude should be cautious, fossilization is an aspect of language learning that every teacher should take into account. It can affect every area of language and in particular those area which are more difficult. It is not clear yet if this phenomenon is irreversible or if it can stop at some point.

⁴³ Selinker, L., 1972, in Ortega, L., 2009: 134

In this research we have seen some areas of difficulty. The exercises are supposed to be a helpful tool for the students in order to maintain a high sensitivity to the input. It implies that they should prevent them from the fossilization of learning.

4.5 Conclusion

These activities' aim is to let the students reach a higher level of linguistic competence. Although they could not be tested, they are specifically tailored on the errors of these students. This helps them to get a deeper knowledge on the most difficult areas to be corrected.

Furthermore, this research focused on oral errors and the activities are consequently tailored to improve oral production, specifically on phonology, grammar, lexicon, register. However these areas are really wide and some aspects of oral language have not been tackled. One of these aspects is intonation.

The aim of this research is also analyzing these errors. Through this research we can have in fact an insight on the interlanguage level of the students.

However the interlanguage concept includes not only the errors, but also what the students know already. Errors are in fact just one side of their wider linguistic competence, so this research can give just a partial insight on their interlanguages. Furthermore, the study of a learner's competence is much more complicated if we consider the occurrence of avoidance. The learner can in fact omit some structures in order to take fewer risks in his/her production. This strategy is successful because it leads to produce fewer mistakes, but the negative effect can be a delay in the acquisition of certain structures. It can affect learner's behaviour both at a conscious or at an unconscious level and can be caused by L1-L2 striking differences, but also by L1-L2 misleading similarities. This happens for example when an L2 structure is felt to be too similar to the mother tongue and the students think that it is not transferable. So they avoid to use it, hoping to avoid to make more errors.

In any case this partial insight on the learner's interlanguage can help Italian language teachers to have an idea of the difficulties of English native speakers in Italian. It can also help the students themselves to understand what are the causes of their mistakes and reach a metalinguistic awareness.

Appendix

Example of teaching material used by the teacher.

SETTIMANA 18, tb2 - Comunicare per passatempo e per sopravvivere

VIDEO COMPrensione:

“Il mondo prima di Facebook” (6’)



Rispondi alle domande, dopo aver guardato il video sul sito:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdlvjm7TCbY>

[Attenzione: parte dei contenuti possono essere considerati offensivi. Ce ne scusiamo]

1. Di che cosa parla il video?

.....
.....

2. Come mai il protagonista comincia a riflettere sulla sua infanzia?

.....
.....

3. Come giudica le nuove generazioni? Cosa ha causato il cambiamento?

.....
.....
.....

4. Di cosa parlano i due ragazzi sulla panchina?

.....
.....

5. Perché il ragazzo con la maglietta nera si arrabbia con il ragazzo con la maglietta grigia?

.....
.....

6. Com'è cambiata la vita dopo Facebook secondo il video? Cita almeno tre esempi

.....
.....
7. Che conclusione trae su Facebook il protagonista del video?
.....
.....

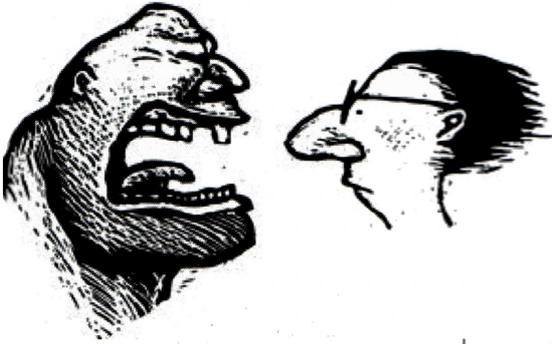
8. Come descriveresti il tono del video? Tu, sei d'accordo con le opinioni espresse?
.....
.....
.....

DISCUTI!

1. Hai il cellulare?
 - a. Quanto lo usi al giorno?
 - b. Con chi?
 - c. Quando?
 - d. Che tipo di telefonino hai? (a colori, a conchiglia,...)
 - e. È dotato di fotocamera?
 - f. Quanti i messaggini (gli sms)mandi al giorno in media?
 - g. Hai un contratto/abbonamento o un ricaricabile?
 - h. Quanto spendi in media al mese?
 - i. Da quanti anni ce l'hai?
 - l. Quanto spesso lo cambi e perché?
2. Come sarebbe la vita senza cellulare? Ti piacerebbe provare?
3. Il cellulare "croce e delizia" (che cosa ti piace e che cosa non sopporti del cellulare): commenta.
4. Quanto usi le altre tecnologie (l'e-mail, le chat, le macchine fotografiche digitali, Facebook, l'ipod, l'i-pad, l'i-phone, Twitter, Skype...)?
5. Rispetto al passato comunichiamo di più? Meglio? Peggio?
6. Ti senti una vittima del fenomeno Facebook? Sei Facebook-dipendente? Spiega.
7. Quali sono i rischi collegati alle nuove tecnologie?
8. O forse preferisci *Twitter*?



ROLE-PLAY: PROTESTO!



Espressioni utili:

- Sono venuto a protestare.
- Ci sono delle cose che non vanno.
- Senta, guardi...
- Almeno abbia il coraggio di ammettere che...
- Ma non è possibile!
- Le assicuro che è così!
- Lo saprò bene visto che...
- Non pensa di esagerare?
- La prego di venire a constatare personalmente.
- È assolutamente inammissibile che...
- Certe cose sono incredibili!
- Posso parlare con il responsabile?
- Mi faccia parlare con chi di dovere!

STUDENTE A

1. *Frequenti un corso di italiano in una scuola di lingue. Sei insoddisfatto e vai dal direttore a protestare. I tuoi argomenti sono:*
 - Il prof. arriva sempre in ritardo
 - Il prof. parla esclusivamente in italiano
 - Si sentono continuamente le sirene delle ambulanze
 - Il registratore funziona malissimo e non è mai stato usato il laboratorio linguistico (Ma esiste???)
 - Non c'è una sala riunione per gli studenti
 - L'aula è al quinto piano e l'ascensore è sempre fuori servizio
2. *Sei proprietario di un ristorante. Un cliente viene a protestare. Puoi dargli torto oppure no, o spiegargli le tue ragioni.*
3. *Sei in vacanza in un albergo a tre stelle, al settimo piano. Non sei soddisfatto e vai dal direttore a protestare. Ecco i tuoi argomenti:*
 - l'ascensore è sempre fuori servizio
 - il letto non è mai stato fatto
 - il bagno mai pulito
 - la sala ristorante è caldissima e il condizionatore non funziona
 - l'acqua è color ruggine
4. *Sei il proprietario di una pensione. Un cliente viene a protestare. Puoi dargli torto oppure no, o spiegargli le tue ragioni.*



STUDENTE B

1. *Sei il direttore di una scuola di lingue. Uno studente viene a protestare. Puoi dargli torto oppure no, o spiegargli le tue ragioni.*
2. *Hai mangiato in un ristorante e il servizio era pessimo. Vai dal proprietario a lamentarti. Ecco i tuoi argomenti:*
 - hai atteso 55 minuti la prima portata
 - il cameriere ti ha rovesciato del vino sui pantaloni
 - le lasagne erano fredde
 - la bistecca al pepe era senza il pepe
 - il cameriere parlava solo dialetto e tu non lo capivi
 - la tovaglia era piena di macchie
3. *Sei il direttore di un hotel a tre stelle. Un cliente viene a lamentarsi. Puoi dargli torto oppure no, o spiegargli le tue ragioni.*
4. *Sei in vacanza e stai in una pensione. Il giorno dopo il tuo arrivo vai dal proprietario a lamentarti. Ecco i tuoi argomenti:*
 - puoi sentire tutto quello che succede nella camera accanto
 - di notte nella tua camera ci sono dei rumori strani
 - l'acqua calda funziona solo dalle 22.00 alle 24.00
 - a 2km c'è un aeroporto militare.

Bibliography

- BALBONI, P. E., 1999, *Dizionario di Glottodidattica*, Guerra Edizioni, Perugia.
- BALBONI, P. E., 2008, *Fare educazione linguistica : attività didattiche per italiano L1 e L2, lingue straniere e lingue classiche*, UTET, Torino.
- BEGOTTI, P., 2010, *Imparare da adulti, insegnare ad adulti le lingue*, Guerra Edizioni, Perugia.
- CATTANA, A., NESCI, M. T., 2004, *Analizzare e correggere gli errori*, Guerra Edizioni, Perugia.
- CORDER, S. P., 1967, *The significance of learners' errors*, University of Edinburgh
- CHIAPEDI, N., 2010, *L'articolo italiano nell'interlingua di apprendimenti sinofoni: problematiche acquisizionali e considerazioni glottodidattiche*, Italiano LinguaDue.
- DELLA PUPPA, F., 2002-2005, *Analisi degli errori di alunni arabofoni in italiano lingua seconda su testi scritti in contesto di insegnamento formale*, Tesi di dottorato, Università Cà Foscari, Venezia.
- ELLIS, R., BARKHUIZEN, G., 2005, *Analysing learner language*, Oxford University Press, Uk.
- GASS, S. M., SELINKER, L., 1972, *Second language acquisition*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New York.
- GAUCI, P., 2008, *Interferenza fonetica. Un'analisi degli errori più comuni commessi da parlanti di madrelingua italiana nella pronuncia dell'inglese*, Università di Bari.
- GIACALONE RAMAT, A., 2003, *Verso l'italiano*, Carocci, Roma.
- JAMES, C., 1998, *Errors in language learning and use, exploring error analysis*, Longman, London

LO DUCA, M. G., 2003, *Lingua italiana ed educazione linguistica. Tra storia, ricerca e didattica.*, Carocci, Roma.

ODLIN, T., 1989, *Language transfer, Cross-linguistic influence in language learning*, Cambridge University Press, Uk.

ORTEGA, L., 2009, *Understanding second language acquisition*, Hodder education, London.

PALLOTTI, G., 1998, *La seconda lingua*, Bompiani, Milano.