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Learning Egyptian Arabic as L2 in Egypt: a self- case study.

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ABSTRACT

The study concentrates on learning Egyptian Arabic as an L2 in Egypt. The goal of the research is to explore how motivation and interaction with native speakers shape the speaking proficiency of L2 language learners of Egyptian Arabic in Egypt. Furthermore, this thesis examines whether the deductive method is effective to construct vocabulary knowledge in L2 learning.

In the first chapter, an overview of studying abroad research and of the linguistic situation in Egypt are presented. Then, an outline of three of the most common methods and approaches is given. Last, psychological aspects that influence language learning are described. In the second chapter, the case study designed for this thesis is presented. The research is based on the study abroad experience of the student-researcher, an Italian university student, who attended a one-to-one class in colloquial Arabic ('ammiya) for two months in a private school in Alexandria (Egypt). Data were collected through a diary compiled by the student-researcher and results showed that, in an L2 learning environment, the interaction with native speakers played an important role in terms of motivation, and that an inductive method and a communicative approach seemed closer to the student-researcher preferences, while the deductive method proved to be demotivating and ineffective for learning new vocabulary. Findings also showed that, although contacts with natives increased the student-researcher's motivation, unpleasant events with native speakers gave rise to the affective filter and created a state of anxiety.

INTRODUCTION

There have been numerous studies presenting the pros and cons of study abroad programs. The present research investigates how the motivation, the interaction with native speakers, and the deductive method influence the acquisition of the Egyptian Arabic as L2 in a private school in Alexandria (Egypt). The research is based on the student-researcher's own study experience and was conducted within a two-month program in Alexandria where she was both teaching Italian and studying Arabic at *Ahlan school*.

The main reason for conducting this study is the student-researcher's will to understand the benefits of acquiring a non-common language (Egyptian Arabic) in an L2 context. Specifically, the goal of this paper is to explore the role played by integrative motivation, the foreign language anxiety, and the deductive method in promoting the student-researcher's language learning. This goal will be reached by analysing the diary written by the student during the two-month study program and the dissertation will be structured as follows.

In the first chapter, an overview of studying abroad theories along with some significant research regarding the acquisition of a language as an L2 will be shown. Furthermore, to better show the choices of the student-researcher and some potential difficulties in learning a dialect rather than a standard language, an outline of the Egyptian Arabic language and the Egyptian diglossic situation will be presented. In addition, the inductive and the deductive method and the communicative approach will be analysed to display the teacher's *modus operandi* and the expectations of the student-researcher regarding the teaching methods employed. Last, psychological aspects, namely, instrumental and integrative motivation and language learning anxiety will be discussed.

In the second chapter the research project will be presented, as well as a description of its goals, participants, the context in which the study was conducted, the instruments, and how the data were

analysed. This research project was conducted during an international internship within a master's degree program in Language Sciences at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. The internship lasted two months between March and May 2022 and was implemented at *Ahlan school*, a private school of Arabic and Italian language in Alexandria, Egypt.

Afterward, in the third chapter, the results of the data collected using the diary will be presented reporting the entries of the diary containing information useful to address the research questions and some pictures to support the information given. Finally, in chapter four, the findings will be discussed, and conclusions will be drawn.

The results of the study show that integrative motivation helped the student to improve speaking skills but only in situations where the student felt appreciated by the natives and there were no factors undermining her social image and generating anxiety. As a matter of fact, the data suggested that foreign language anxiety could prevent the speaker from communicating with natives even if the student seemed motivated and willing to succeed in learning the new language. Last, as for the methods employed by the teacher in class, the results showed that deductive methods prevailed in mainly occasions although the student would have preferred to be taught following an inductive reasoning. As a consequence, the student considered many lessons ineffective for acquiring new vocabulary, also for the little time dedicated to exercises.

CHAPTER 1: Methods and psychological aspects in studying abroad

Since the field of second language acquisition has been receiving research attention from a variety of disciplines, when analysing language acquisition in a peculiar context such as studying abroad, different aspects have to be considered. First, in this chapter, some research about the study abroad experience (paragraph 1.1) will be presented, with a particular focus on Egypt and its diglossia situation, to better understand how a specific context may influence language acquisition (paragraph 1.2). Second, the history and the main characteristics of the most widespread teaching methods will be analysed to show how some of them, despite being partly ineffective for teaching modern languages, persisted in time (paragraph 1.3). Finally, some psychological aspects will be discussed to highlight elements of the acquisition process which might be hidden and underestimated (paragraph 1.4).

1.1 Studying abroad

Every year, hundreds of thousands of international students join programs abroad to study in a country different from their own. According to some language learners, studying abroad is an essential opportunity for reaching advanced language proficiency because of the possibility of being highly exposed to the target language. Moreover, the majority of students would agree that together with linguistic skills, other components of personalities such as self-awareness may improve while living an experience abroad. As a matter of fact, personal skills developed during the study abroad period are almost as crucial as the study abroad experience itself (Roberts, 2012).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that students, before leaving for a study abroad experience, believe that studying abroad is a necessary step to acquire advanced abilities, research shows that very often it is only a common belief. When students study abroad, they often return to their country feeling they have already significantly improved their language skills as well as their

understanding of other cultures. However, notwithstanding evident improvements, researchers are rarely able to define precisely what benefits they derive from studying abroad (Dewey, 2007). As a consequence, it is difficult to understand whether the improvements gained during studying abroad programs derive from either classroom environments or interaction with native speakers.

For example, Freed (1990) showed that intermediate learners of French found interacting with native speakers outside the classroom very helpful for the development of their oral skills while, on the other hand, more advanced students considered non-interactive activities, namely, reading, watching television, and listening to the radio, more useful than having conversations with natives. Moreover Freed, Segalowitz, and Dewey (2004), who compared a studying-abroad student group to a similar group of students participating in an immersion program at home, found that students studying abroad in Paris were using, to better succeed in everyday conversations, more English than French. As a matter of fact, learning in an L2 context did not always result in greater time spent using the language and, although learners abroad were undoubtedly given more opportunities to utilize French, it was shown that they did not fully capitalize on these possibilities.

Therefore, other variables need to be considered when analyzing language acquisition in environments such as studying abroad. Segalowitz and Freed (2004), in their research, showed that improvements in oral performance are influenced not only by the context of learning, but also by students' speed and efficiency of L2 processing. Furthermore, since oral skills require a minimum initial level of fundamental word recognition, learners' language level at the beginning of their study abroad experience helped to predict the amount and kind of L2 speaking activities students would have joined. As a matter of fact, some L2 learners who did not have adequate cognitive or linguistic skills at the beginning of their studies, showed not to be able to acquire them during the experience abroad. Consequently, during their stay abroad, when learners were unable to satisfy the cognitive and linguistic demands of speaking in real contexts, they felt overwhelmed and they experienced a

loss of motivation in communicating with other language users. In addition, Pellegrino (1998) found that students may consider the information acquired in class, namely grammar rules, lists of words, inconsistent if compared to the speaking skills developed while interacting with native speakers, leading again to a possible refusal of the topic explained in class by the teacher.

Moreover, it is also necessary to take into account that the efforts students make to meet target language speakers and engage in a conversation are also influenced by other aspects. Broadly speaking, students who do not use their agency to learn a language are depicted as uninterested or deficient in language learning. In contrast, according to Pellegrino (1998), there are many social, cultural, and psychological variables that may induce learners to avoid speaking the target language and refuse opportunities to converse. For instance, in some cultures such as Arab culture, the influence of gender inequality may prevent some students from coming into contact with natives. In Egypt, a woman engaging in conversation with a local man in the street would easily generate an uncomfortable situation. Consequently, women involved in peculiar contexts like the one previously mentioned, consider themselves having less opportunities in practising L2 compared to men. Nevertheless, in Egypt, the disadvantaged condition of the woman is less noticeable in some areas inhabited by citizens with a mindset considered closer to European culture.

Furthermore, another aspect that has to be acknowledged when moving to another country is the possibility of experiencing a cultural shock caused by the encounter with another culture. Cultural shock occurs when students abroad lose contact with their own system of values and attitudes, feeling a sense of loss, confusion, and anxiety.

When an individual enters a strange culture, all or most of our familiar cues are removed [...] When to shake hands [...] when and how to give tips; how to give orders to servants; how to make purchases; when to accept and when to refuse invitations; and when to take statements seriously or not. He or she is like a fish out of water. No matter how broad-minded or full of good will he may be, a series of props have been knocked out from under him (Oberg, 1960, p.1).

Also, culture shock presents some concrete symptoms such as washing hands continuously, fear of drinking water, the concern of eating food, and, above all, the desire to be in contact with people of the same nationality (Oberg, 1960). As a matter of fact, seeking people belonging to the same culture is one of the first unconscious steps foreigners studying abroad take, in reaction to a cultural shock. Nevertheless, despite the feeling of relief given by the encounter of compatriots abroad, the choice of creating a comfort zone initially, leads to the possibility that students share the whole experience with people coming from the same nationality, reducing the exposure to the target language.

However, because of the existence of different studying abroad programs, a short overview of pros and cons of each program will be given to better analyse the context of the research project. Programs can vary depending on the hosting organisation, the structure of the course, the length of the course, the size of the group, and the target language. Shorter and more rigorous programs that improve cross-cultural awareness and proficiency, as well as other personal and professional abilities, have been increasingly popular in recent years (Iskhakova, & Bradly, 2022). Yet, research consistently shows that lengthier programs offer larger advantages in terms of language learning and language exposure. According to Davidson (2007, 2010), program length is a strong predictor of language growth, implying that a year abroad program could lead to more improvement than summer or semester abroad programs. Anyway, a large number of studies on second language acquisition are published every year to show that the context of learning is a crucial variable and the experience students have during international exchanges is powerful in terms of speaking skills improvements, different dialects acquisition and increasing motivation (Trentman, 2012). Interestingly, some researchers focused on the effects of learning conditions on language acquisition and goal achievement, showing that students abroad can learn aspects of the L2 namely

dialects, slang, and extralinguistic aspects that can only be acquired in contact with native speakers (Pérez-Vidal, 2014).

1.2 The Egyptian language and the diglossic situation: an outline.

In many communities, in addition to the primary language, other varieties used for distinct functions are available. This phenomenon, called diglossia, largely exists in Arab countries since the Arabic language, meaning the standard variety spoken officially in twenty-two countries, coexist, in each country, with a low variety (Kaye, 1975). Ferguson (1959) defined the term diglossia as a linguistic situation in which the primary language, used in ordinary conversations, and a more complex variety, used for formal situations, are both essential to express every function of a language. The Arabic language includes two distinct varieties: the high variety (H), called *al-Fusha*, Standard Arabic, Classic Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), and the low variety (L), called *al-Ammiya* or Colloquial Arabic (paragraph 1.2.1). In addition, an English variety exists in Egypt, which is considered a prestigious variety (paragraph 1.2.2) (Yacoub,2015).

1.2.1 Standard Arabic and Egyptian Arabic variety



Figure 1: The map of the Arab world

The Standard Arabic language is the official language of all the countries belonging to the Arab League, from North Africa to the Arabian Gulf. Arabic, together with other languages in the Middle East and North Africa, is the most widely spoken Semitic language.

In the seventh century CE, after the death of Prophet Mohammad and the foundation of the Islamic Arab Empire, both Islam and the Arabic language started to expand around. The Arabic language started spreading because of the nomadic tribes traveling out of the Arabian Peninsula and creating connections between Arabs and non-Arabic speaking populations. This language, which gained more importance after the revelation of the Qur'an, is nowadays used for formal purposes such as newspapers, street signs, some advertisements or in any religion-related situation. On the other hand, the L variety, better comprehended by the majority of the population, recurs in everyday conversations, public speaking, news broadcasts on radio and television. (Yacoub,2015).



Egypt

Figure 2: Egypt (taken from Simpson, 2008, p.27)

The history of the Egyptian Arabic variety (al-ammiyya) and the period in which the variety started being used remains still unknown. Researchers claimed that a hundred years ago, because of the trade and conquests, many words were borrowed from Turkish, Persian, Pharaonic, Coptic, Latin, English, Italian, and French, and new dialects were created through the years. (Yacoub, 2015)

Broadly speaking, researchers focused their attention on Standard Arabic more than on dialect varieties due to the problem of collecting written data for colloquial Arabic. Most of the data about the Arabic dialect, in fact, are collected by recording conversations or from a small number of written texts available such as chats, e-mails, and plays (Duh, K. and Kirchhoff, K., 2005). Lately, dialectal Arabic has received much more attention since this variety started being used not only in ordinary conversations but also on social media and official contexts exceeding Standard Arabic in its usage (Al Zahrani, 2013).

The main reason Egyptian Arabic is more used than the MSA in daily conversation is due to the conciseness in its grammar structures. Table 1 shows how the sentence: “We did not write it for them” can be translated in MSA and in the CEA.

	Arabic	Buckwalter
MSA	لم نكتبها لهم	lm nktbhA lhn
CEA	مكتبناهمش	mktbnhlhm\$
English	We did not write it for them	

Figure 3: Transforming a sentence in MSA and CEA (taken from Mohamed, & Oflazer, 2012)

As it is shown in Figure two, the sentence in MSA is composed of three words while the sentence in CEA is synthesised in just one word containing the negative particle, the preposition, and the pronoun. The verb conjugated is “Katabna”; the preposition: “m” at the beginning of the word and “\$” at the end are used together to express the negation and the “l+hm” is the preposition and the pronoun (Mohamed, Mohit, & Oflazer, 2012). Both the first and the second examples contain all the elements necessary to express the meaning, but what differs is pronunciation: the words in the L variety undergo phonological changes that lead to the formation of one word.

1.2.2 English variety

During the British colonisation (1882-1922), the colonisers reconstructed the Egyptian linguistic situation by encouraging the use of the English language (considered prestigious and modern) and weakening the use of Egyptian Arabic language (seen as a minority language). As a consequence, nowadays, a wide group of Egyptian speakers includes English words in everyday’s conversation, code-switching between EA, CA, and English. For this reason, many private English schools were opened, especially in Cairo, and universities structured classes taught completely in English. However, the choice of using one language rather than another is mainly related to the speaker’s social identity since lower class rarely have access to private education (Poese, M. 2015). Furthermore, whether today British or American English predominates in the nation is still unclear.

According to Schaub (2000), in public and private schools, English —particularly the received pronunciation (RP) of British English— predominates, since language schools in Alexandria and Cairo mainly employ native British speakers. In addition, older students typically prefer British English because they perceive it as a more respectable variety. On the other hand, a growing number of Egyptians, particularly those under the age of forty, prefer American English, because they believe it to be "more trendy", a belief that is strengthened by the presence of American television programs. Also, English has found a large position in Egyptian popular culture because of its popularity in advertisements, television, apparel, and music. Furthermore, Egyptian Arabic (EA), the language of the Egyptian native people utilized in face-to-face interactions, has been mostly replaced in written and academic contexts by the English language because of the necessity of communicating with the worldwide community. The demand for English is described by Schaub (2000) as "hysteria" since students, housewives, soldiers, and doormen are rushing to the language for the desire to adapt to the practical realities of the highly competitive modern world.

1.2.3 Diglossia and Education

The diglossic situation in Egypt strongly influences Arabic language teaching. Because of the presence of a variety considered 'higher', researchers believe that L variations are unworthy of attention, causing difficulties for SL learners and hindering SL acquisition (Palmer, 2007). Although many institutions offer MSA teaching programs, MSA is not used in everyday conversations and students find themselves unable to communicate and integrate themselves into the community by using the H variety. However, since the majority of the students are unaware of the linguistic situation in Egypt, when they realise they are not able to use the language in everyday conversations, they start feeling a sense of frustration. As a result, many students abandon their studies because they perceive that L2 learning is useless in terms of developing their communication

skills (Donitsa-Schmidt, S., Inbar, O., & Shohamy, E. 2004). In his research, Palmer (2008) found that LS learners studying MSA before going to an Arabic-speaking country, would have applied for a program including the spoken variety of Arabic, if they had known about the linguistic situation of the country. To overcome this problem, according to Palmer (2007), colloquial dialects must be introduced from the very beginning to allow students to feel part of the community and increase their learning motivation. In addition, according to Yacoub (2015), Egyptian Arabic must be standardised for two main reasons: first, Egyptian Arabic is the language Egyptians use for communicating in almost every context in everyday conversation; second, Egyptian Arabic is more flexible and open to incorporating some borrowings from other languages. However, despite the support given by researchers to preserve the Standard Arabic, the language of the Qur'an, the Egyptian language has already substituted the H variety in many circumstances. For instance, in the past, one of the roles of Standard Arabic was to connect linguistically all the countries belonging to the Arab league while, today, because of the huge number of movies and series produced in Egypt, Egyptian Arabic became the language understood by the majority of the citizens of the Arab world.

1.3 Teaching approaches and methods

In this third part of the chapter, a review of the history of language teaching methods will be briefly presented. Particular attention will be drawn first to Europe and then to the Arabic world, in particular Egypt, the country where the research study was conducted. The history of the two areas will be analysed separately until the 19th century, a period in which many Egyptian teachers travelled to Europe and were influenced by European teaching approaches. Specifically, inductive and deductive methods, as well as the communicative approach, will be finally presented.

1.3.1 Teaching FL in Europe and in Egypt

In Europe, throughout history, language teaching methods have changed to suit learners' needs and to be in line with the various theories of language learning. Kelly (1969) showed that although many teaching methods during the history of language teaching have been considered innovative, they were just the result of methods previously adopted. For instance, the deductive and the inductive methods (paragraph 1.3.2) are teaching methods that have always existed, but never on an equal basis. As a matter of fact, the deductive methods were adopted in the late Middle Ages and the 18th century, while the inductive methods gained the most popularity in the late Renaissance and the early 20th century.

The prevalence of a teaching method in a specific historical moment can be related to the role that languages play in a society. For instance, five hundred years ago Latin was a language taught to give people the access to education, commerce, and religion while, during the sixteenth century, since other languages such as Italian, English and French replaced Latin both in oral and written communication, Latin became only a subject studied at school (Richards, 2014). Consequently, when Latin changed its role and started being used for practising classical text translation, the methods used for teaching Latin changed. The Grammar-Translation method which consisted of applying grammar rules by translating sentences and subsequently texts, was adopted and became, by the end of the 19th century, the standard way for teaching foreign languages. Despite the introduction of different methods during the history of teaching education, the approach adopted for Latin strongly influenced teachers' perception of language education. As a matter of fact, although the purpose of learning modern languages was to use them as a means of communication, they were treated and taught with the same Grammar-Translation method utilised for Latin (Titone, 1968).

In the early 1900s, approaches alternative to the traditional grammar method were developed and teachers began to experiment with other educational models since the necessity of communicating in a multicultural global community created a request for oral skills in foreign

languages. As a consequence, in response to the inefficacy of the Grammar-Translation method, the Direct Method was developed to enhance the communication skills and enable students to speak the language (Kelly, 1969). Subsequently, during the 20th century, thanks to the introduction of psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics, languages, which were previously treated as systems, began to be taught in their action considering also the individual differences among students (see paragraph 1.4) (Balboni, 2002).

Before analysing some of the methods introduced in the 20th century, a brief overview of the history of language teaching in Arabic countries will be provided, with a specific attention to the area where the research was conducted: Egypt.

When Islam first emerged, only seventeen people in Mecca were literate but the new religion needed individuals who could read and write to spread the content of the Qur'an. For this reason, initially, people were gathering in homes or freshly constructed mosques to learn reading and writing skills, taught by the People of the Book. According to the sources that are now accessible, there were also some proper schools during the period of the Umayyads, which became more popular in the Abbasid era, all over the Islamic area (Al-Baladhuri,1966). Nevertheless, there is no evidence of teaching methods used to teach Arabic at the very beginning of Arabic diffusion and researchers still question how non-Arabs learned to speak the Arabic language during the first century of Islam. Researchers believed that a book called *al-Kitab*, written by Sibawayhi and containing the grammar of Arabic, was utilised to teach Arabic. Notwithstanding this, since the book required interpretations and commentaries to be understood, the hypothesis that the book could have been used for teaching Arabic was rejected (al-Baladhuri,1966).

Throughout history, after the introduction of some books containing morphology and syntax, the first debates on Arabic teaching methods appeared. Some teachers preferred teaching

morphology and syntax separately, as two different fields (separation methods), while others considered morphology and syntax as aspects of the language to be taught concurrently (mixed method) (al-Baladhuri,1966). Nevertheless, both separated and mixed methods were not effective to teach Arabic as a foreign language since textbooks were written to regulate some rules created for speakers of Arabic as a first language. Consequently, grammatical structures needed to be reorganised in order to be appropriate for L2 Arabic students. Those who succeeded in presenting handbooks containing the most important rules of Modern Standard Arabic, necessary to learn how to read and write from the beginning, were Europeans willing to teach Arabic to L2 and FL students (Farzaneh, 2014).

During the 19th century, some countries of the Arab world encountered Europe and adopted European teaching methods. In addition, starting from this period, the Arab world did not remain united and countries did not share the same theories and practices anymore. For this reason, the history of teaching methods will be now analysed focusing on Egypt, the country where the research project was conducted.

Rifā'a Rāfi' al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (1801-1873), an Egyptian writer and teacher, during a mission to Paris commissioned by Muhammad Ali in 1826, entered in contact with the French language and culture and wrote an autobiography describing the educational system in France. First, the writer annotated that the method frequently employed in Europe was the Grammar-Translation method and then he presented the methods teachers utilised to teach him French:

[...] firstly, the alphabet is presented, then it is followed by words and verbs, through which one learns to write; secondly words are kept in mind and then they are pronounced (cf. al-Ṭaḥṭāwī 2011: 199). In his account and autobiography *Taḥlīṣ al-ibrīz fī talḥīṣ Bārīz* (The

Quintessence of Paris), al-Ṭaḥṭāwī declares that he studied also conversation (muḥāṭabāt wa-muḥāwarāt) and after finishing a handbook of simple sentences he took on a more important topic, namely grammar (naḥw), which he considers of paramount importance and pursues its study by examining many books (id. 200, 219) (Facchin, 2019, p.48).

Through his description, it is possible to understand that the teachers focussed, in teaching him French, both on the natural and the Grammar Methods. As a matter of fact, when the scholar later returned to Egypt, he established the School of Translators in Cairo drawing inspiration from his relevant French finds and encouraging teachers to use the Grammar-Translation method (Facchin, 2019). Despite the fact that the method was utilised artificially and students were only asked to memorise information, in 1835, the first schools of foreign languages founded in Cairo, were mainly affected by the methods imported from Europe (cf. Ben Youssef 2007, as cited in Facchin, 2019). Nevertheless, in 1908, when Cairo University was founded and the first official lessons were held by foreign professors, students lamented for two main reasons, both relevant from a pedagogical perspective. First, students complained that professors did not evaluate them through exams and second, they complained that teaching methods employed were only based on the memorization of the information (Baldinetti,2002).

Although students started refusing the idea of merely memorising information about the language, the emergence of new studies in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language was delayed due to some social changes. The main reason can be related to the fact that, when in 1922 Egypt obtained independence from Britain, many intellectuals returned to Egypt and mainly focused on the question of diglossia. As a consequence, the studies on the didactic of Arabic language were preceded by uncertainties about the variety to be taught. Nevertheless, In 1995, the topic of language teaching was reconsidered and, two important Egyptian scholars, Alaa Elgibali (al-Ġibālī) and Zeinab Taha (Ṭaha) stated: «learners of foreign languages expect to acquire the type of speech

which enables them to communicate freely with at least their peers in the communities whose language they are learning» (cf. Elgibali and Taha 1995: 82, as cited in Facchin, 2019). From that moment on, also in Egypt, the communicative aspect of Arabic language teaching gained much importance.

To sum up, the concept of teaching Arabic as a foreign language, as we know it today, emerged from the reflections of Arab scholars, particularly those who worked in the centres of Arabic language research outside the Arab world. Besides, starting from the national independence, influences continued throughout history and relevant teaching methods, which were initially used only in Europe, became available also in Egypt.

1.3.2 Deductive method, Inductive method, and communicative approach

The focus will now be shifted to some psychological discoveries that influenced the history of language education and led to the emergence of two relevant teaching methods, namely inductive and deductive methods, and one of the most important approaches, namely the communicative approach.

In the 1970s, discoveries in humanistic psychology gave a relevant contribution to language teaching, leading researchers to believe that teaching a language, focusing only on the linguistic aspects, was not adequate anymore. Humanistic education, in fact, aimed to encourage both the intellectual and the emotional aspects of language learning, considering not only the language itself but also on the interests of learners, to enhance students' engagement (Moskowitz, 1981). Furthermore, the idea of communicative competence emerged from the need to promote language use and to provide students with the information necessary to use the language effectively.

To better understand humanistic-affective and functional language teaching, it is essential to briefly introduce brain functioning, examining two fundamental theories, namely bimodality and

directionality (Begotti, 2013). Neurology and psychology were both involved in the research on brain functioning but, while on one hand, neurology found that the two cerebral hemispheres work in a specialised way, psychology identified the nature of this specialisation. Researchers demonstrated that the right hemisphere, which also coordinates visual activity, is responsible for global perception of context and presides over the understanding of connotations, metaphors and irony; while, the left hemispheres, has an analytical, sequential perception, logic (cause-effect; before-after) and presides over denotation (Danesi, 1988). According to the bimodality theory, not only does language activate the gyri of the left hemisphere (called areas of Broca and Wernicke), but it also involves both hemispheres in a complementary action (Danesi, 1988).

Nevertheless, since the brain processes information in a direction that goes from the right hemisphere (globality) towards the left (analysis), it has been proved that the only teaching method that follows brain functioning is the inductive method (Begotti, 2013). The inductive method includes a series of processes that lead to observing the language as it follows:

- formulate hypotheses
- verify in daily reality or through confirmation from the teacher
- evaluate if the new rule, hypothesised and verified, is worth to be fixed

(Begotti, 2013)

Inductive methods, together with deductive methods, are the two opposite sides of the generalisation process. As it has already been mentioned, the inductive method begins with certain instances from which a rule may be deduced. On the other hand, the deductive method provides that a rule is first presented and then followed by examples in which the rule is used (Hayes, 2010). To further explain the two methods described, a practical example will be given.

Comparatives (*faster than, more intelligent than, busier than, less interesting than, not as interesting as*) are used to describe the differences between two people, things, or ideas.

There are several ways you can describe the differences between two things.

Use **adjective + -er + than** with one-syllable adjectives and two-syllable adjectives ending in -y.

[Sending an email is **easier than** writing a letter.

[Texting is **faster than** making a phone call.

Use **more + adjective + than** with adjectives that have two or more syllables.

[I think math is **more difficult than** history.

[This recipe for banana bread is **more complicated than** my mother's.

Figure 4: Q: Deductive method to explain comparatives

In figure 4, the deductive method is used to explain comparatives. As it can be noticed, first, the rule is given, "Use adjective + -er + than with one-syllable adjectives and two-syllable adjectives ending in -y." and then some examples are provided, "Sending an email is easier than writing a letter", "Texting is faster".

Comparative adjectives

1 **T 9.2** Read and listen to the conversation.

- A Which do you prefer, London or Paris?
B Well, I'm from Paris, so of course I love Paris.
A London's a lot **bigger than** Paris.
B It's true. Paris is much **smaller**, but it's **more romantic**!
A Yes, this is what people say.
B And the food is **better**.
A Well, I'm not so sure about that ...

Practise the conversation. What are the differences between London and Paris? *London's bigger than Paris.*

GRAMMAR SPOT

- 1 Regular comparative adjectives add **-er** or **more**. Write the comparative forms.
big **bigger** romantic _____ small _____
What are the rules? When do we add **-er**? When do we use **more**?
- 2 Some adjectives are irregular. good **better** bad _____
- ▶ Grammar Reference 9.1 p140

Figure 5: Inductive methods to explain comparatives

In figure 5, the inductive method is used to explain comparatives. In this case, first, the input is given “ [...] London’s a lot bigger than Paris [...]” and then, through some questions, students are led to reflect upon the input observed and are encouraged to draw a conclusion creating a rule based on what they have noticed. Finally, a scheme with all the rules necessary is given.

Despite the effectiveness of the inductive method, vocabulary is still frequently taught adopting the deductive method, mainly because of the constrained class time (Tsai, 2019). Cobb (1999) demonstrated that both deductive and inductive procedures are effective for learning new information, but only teachers following inductive methods enhance students’ ability to use the new vocabulary learned in different contexts. Furthermore, the inductive method helps to improve students’ self-promotion, which can only be attained through autonomy developed during inductive

reasoning. Nevertheless, being the inductive method more time-consuming than the deductive method, sometimes it is necessary to resort to both methods during the same lesson.

However, the choice of using either the inductive or the deductive methods depends also on the aspects of the word analysed. Researchers (Tsai, 2019) indicated that the deductive method is effective to teach receptive words, but it is outperformed by the inductive method in guiding students to understand how to put receptive word knowledge into use. Also, the inductive method requires deeper levels of cognitive processing that lead to better collocation recall while the deductive method, instead, is more effective in the early stages when definitional knowledge of new words have to be built. Nevertheless, research on second language acquisition demonstrated that students involved in active hypothesis-testing during lessons improved their skills significantly (Herron & Tomasello, 1992). Shaffer (1989) argued against the deductive method and claimed that the method favours grammar over meaning and encourages students to participate, during the class, passively rather than actively. In addition, Shaffer asserts that there is evidence that many students struggle to apply the various grammatical rules when these are explained following deductive reasoning.

On the other hand, Koran (1972) affirmed that the efficacy of both inductive and deductive methods depends on students' profiles (see paragraph 1.4) and teachers should consider the individual differences, namely the learning styles of the students and the students motivation in learning a language.

1.3.2 Communicative approach

The communicative method refers to a broad approach, rather than to a specific teaching methodology and it is considered a reaction to previous methods which attached little importance

to the practical use of the language. In the 1970s, the first Communicative Approaches were developed, namely, the Notional-Functional Syllabus and the Threshold level (Danesi, Diadori & Semplici, 2008: 32), and the idea of teaching only grammatical structures and model sentences was replaced by the necessity of focussing on communicative skills. Therefore, the linguistic level of the students was assessed based on the development of their communication skills and abilities.

The communicative method of teaching languages is based on several characteristics (Mitchell, 2002):

- (1) comprehension takes place through the active interaction of students in the foreign language;
- (2) teaching takes place through the use of texts in the original language;
- (3) students learn the second language but at the same time they also learn the strategies to comprehend the language;
- (4) some importance is attached to the personal situations and experiences of students, which are therefore considered a valuable contribution to the content of the lessons;
- (5) the use of the foreign language in improvised contexts creates learning opportunities outside the classroom. Individuality is encouraged but also collaboration, as both help to acquire greater confidence to face the foreign language.

Halliday (1975) gave a significant contribution to the development of the Communicative Approach, describing the seven basic functions of a language:

- (1) instrumental function: use of language to get things;
- (2) regulatory function: use of language to control the behaviour, attitudes or feelings of others;
- (3) interactional function: use of language to interact with others;

- (4) personal function: use of language to express individuality;
- (5) heuristic function: use of language to seek and test knowledge;
- (6) imaginative function: use of language to create unreal scenarios or words;
- (7) representational function: use of language to communicate information.

Taking all the above-mentioned theoretical frameworks into consideration, Canale and Swain (1980: 30) proposed four components of communicative competence:

- (a) Grammatical competence: it includes the knowledge of lexical items, morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology. In other words, grammatical competence enables learners to produce comprehensible utterances;
- (b) Sociolinguistic competence: it comprises sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. Sociolinguistic competence provides students with the ability to use socially determined cultural codes in meaningful ways;
- (c) Strategic competence: it consists of the verbal and non-verbal strategies that can be used to compensate for a breakdown in the communication due to different causes; They are grouped in two sub-categories: those connected to the grammatical competence (e.g. paraphrasing) and those connected to sociolinguistic competence (e.g. conversation fillers);
- (d) Discourse competence: it is a combination of grammatical forms and meanings. It enables learners to encode act into cohesive and coherent texts.

The communicative approach encounters particular issues when utilised to teach Modern Standard Arabic. Although many universities provide programs for MSA, researchers (Khalil, 2011) have argued that university students were unable to develop communicative skills because of the

inappropriateness of the H variety for communicative purposes. Nevertheless, Arabic language teaching is undergoing a process of change which is leading to a reconsideration of the Arabic dialects. As a consequence, both universities and private Arabic schools are introducing classes for acquiring dialects, enhancing the communicative approach. Nevertheless, despite the awareness of the importance of teaching the Arabic dialects, researchers are still questioning which dialect of the 22 countries belonging to the Arab League should be selected (Khalil, 2011). Holes (1995 as cited in Khalil, 2011) conducted a cross-dialectal study that showed that Egyptian Arabic is the most comprehensible dialect, and it can linguistically connect people belonging to different areas of the Arab world more than Modern Standard Arabic.

Furthermore, a crucial factor that influences students' communicative skills is the method teachers use for explaining during the class. In his research, Xuan (2018) found that 70% of Arabic teachers employ the traditional grammar method which focuses mostly on maintaining grammar at the expense of oral skills improvement. In addition, the lack of qualified educators and teachers with expertise in the field of teaching Arabic to non-native learners is the main cause of the issues and challenges facing Arabic language education. Nowadays, according to Mat Taib (2006), despite the fact that curricula were improved and teachers were asked to follow some continuing education, the problem persists because of the influence of prior language learning experiences on EFL teachers. According to Grossman (1990), teachers' past experiences accumulated during their careers as students, determine the teaching methods they choose to use in class. This phenomenon is called hidden pedagogy and, because it is unconscious and teachers are unaware of its existence, it is really difficult to be recognised.

1.4 Psychological aspects in language learning

1.4.1 Learning styles

One of the most prevalent aspects to be considered in the field of language acquisition is the existence of different learning styles. Learning styles can be analysed from both students' and teachers' point of view. First, for a teacher, knowing the weaknesses and strengths of students and modulating teaching style to adapt it to the learners, can greatly improve the teaching and the classroom environment. Furthermore, it is important not only to know the existence of various learning styles but also to be aware of the individual characteristics of each student as much as possible. On the other hand, students must strengthen the so-called monitoring function, which means not only having full awareness of their own learning style and of the strategies that are most natural for them, but also being able to modify the strategy, or to apply other types of strategies if the situation requires it (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990).

In this paragraph, two models of analysis of the styles, namely the VAK model and the Felder-Silverman model will be presented. The VAK model (Felder and Henriques, 1995) is based on the three main sensory receptors, namely sight, hearing and functions related to movement, and aims to determine the prevailing function. In a learning situation, in fact, all three tools are used, but only one, or sometimes a combination of two of them, tends to prevail over the others. The dominant style, however, may not always be the same, but it can vary depending on the situation or task in which the student is involved. Some brief descriptions of the three types of learning styles will be presented.

Visual Style: Learners who prefer visual style, in general, remember better what they can see. However, they are divided into two further categories: visual-linguistic and visual-spatial. Those who prefer the visual-linguistic style learn through written language, namely reading or writing activities.

On the other hand, those who prefer the visual-spatial style, learn through graphics, tables, drawings, and video projections.

Auditory Style: Students with a prevalence of the auditory style need to listen to what they have to learn. They love reading aloud and sometimes repeat aloud or talk to themselves when they study. They may have difficulty with written assignments as they work very well during conversation with other students. They love recording and listening to the lessons more than once.

Kinesthetic style: Those who are oriented towards the kinesthetic style need to touch objects and be in motion. These students can not concentrate if they are forced to stand still for a long time since they enjoy being involved in various activities during the lessons.

As previously mentioned, teachers must be able to address all three of these sensory receptors during the lessons, so that each learner receives inputs in the way that best suits their learning style. At the same time, however, teachers must not neglect to encourage students to train to receive input in a style that is not their favourite.

The Felder-Silverman model (Felder & Silverman, 1988), on the other hand, was developed by Richard Felder, professor of Chemical Engineering at North Carolina State University, and Linda Silverman, of the Institute for the Study of Advanced Development. The model was proposed, above all, to improve university courses, in particular those of engineering, since teachers did not consider the learning styles of the students, with a consequent decline in the performance of the classes. The Felder-Silverman model is proposed as integration and reorganisation of previous models, in particular the David Kolb model and the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) model. As a consequence, students are divided based on five dichotomous pairs: Sensory / Intuitive, Visual / Verbal, Inductive / Deductive, Active / Reflective and Sequential / Global.

Sensory Learning / Intuitive Learning: This category is based on the MBTI model and Jungian psychology. Sensors learners (Sensors) tend to be concrete and methodical, preferring concrete facts, data and experimentation and also solving problems through known and standardized procedures. Intuitive learners, on the other hand, prefer solving problems creatively and grasping new concepts. As for the language field, however, most of the teachers and the students belong to the category of Intuitors. The reason for this preference would be related, according to the author (Felder & Silverman, 1988), to the fact that the language is composed of symbols, and Intuitors are particularly inclined to everything that is abstract and symbolic.

Visual Learning / Verbal Learning: The Felder model takes this dichotomy from the VAK model, however eliminating the kinesthetic category, which in the authors' opinion can not be considered a true form of preference for a type of sensory input. The preference for physical activity during learning is included in the active/reflective dichotomies according to the Kolb model, or extroverted/introverted according to the MBTI. The distinction between visual and verbal learning was introduced in the Felder model at a later time, replacing the previous Visual / Auditory dichotomy. According to Felder, despite numerous studies indicating that most students can be considered visual learners, or in any case visual/verbal learners, the style of academic teaching is still uniformly based on the almost exclusively auditory/verbal model of *lectio ex cathedra*.

Inductive learning / Deductive learning: Induction is the mental process that proceeds from the particular to the general, starting from observations, data and experiments to derive principles and theories. The deduction goes in the opposite direction: it starts from the general principles from which the consequences are drawn and arrives at the analysis of specific cases (See paragraph 1.3.1).

Active Learning / Reflexive Learning: Felder has elaborated this category integrating Kolb's notions of active experimentation and reflective observation with the extrovert and introvert categories of the MBTI and kinesthetic learning of the VAK model. Active learners, who are well versed in group work, learn best in situations that allow them to act and experiment ; they do not give their best, however, in situations of static and passivity. Reflective learners, on the other hand, prefer to work alone and need time to calmly think and analyse each new input. From these indications it can be deduced that the traditional frontal lesson, since it prevents from experimenting, does not adapt to the active learner, nor to the reflective learner, to whom he is denied time for thinking.

Sequential Learning / Global Learning: A student who learns better when the material is delivered incrementally, in a sequential pattern that progresses toward conceptual understanding, is known as an analytical student. Sequential learners learn step by step following linear reasoning and going from the easiest to the most difficult. From the point of view of the language class, they seem well versed in learning grammatical structures and contrastive analysis. Global learners, on the other hand, need to see the input on the whole and then reconstruct it in detail, proceeding in a non-linear way. Students inclined to global learning must be viewed with particular caution since they can remain stuck even for a long time on apparently simple structures. However, global students can suddenly reach and often even surpass the rest of the class once developed the overview needed. Traditional curricula are structured for sequential learning, and consequently, those who have a preference for global learning can be easily demotivated.

1.4.2 Instrumental and Integrative motivation

It is believed that L2 motivation is one of the most crucial variables that affect the rate and success of L2 achievement. Motivation provides the energy to start learning a new language and the eagerness to continue the learning process. As a consequence, it must be highlighted that even students with the most extraordinary talents are not able to attain long-term objectives without sufficient motivation (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). Because of the central importance of motivation in SLA, a great deal of research has been conducted during the past decades. Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) created a list of Ten commandments for motivating language learners. The ten motivational macro-strategies will be briefly introduced to give an overview of the main aspects of L2 motivation:

1. Set a personal example with your own behaviour: teachers' motivation in motivating learners is an aspect that must be considered despite the fact that it has been ignored in the psychological literature for a long time;
2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom: teachers need to consider that anxiety created by a negative environment is one of the most influential factors that reduce L2 motivation (e.g. MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991; Young, 1991, as cited in Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998);
3. Present the tasks properly: tasks presented in class by teachers must raise students' interest in the activity;
4. Develop a good relationship with the learners: a good relationship both between the teacher and the students and among students is an important requirement in the approach to education (e.g. Rogers, 1983, as cited in Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998);
5. Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence: it must be highlighted that self-confidence is not necessarily related to students' skills or competence but rather to what they believe they know or can do;

6. Make the language classes interesting: teachers should consider giving the students an experience that can be perceived as relevant, interesting, and, consequently, motivating.
7. Promote learner autonomy: students' motivation is enhanced by the ability to take responsibility for their own successes;
8. Personalise the learning process: lessons need to be adjusted according to students' needs.
9. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness: individuals are motivated by both appropriate goals and feedback given by teachers;
10. Familiarise learners with the target language culture: it is important for the students to have a positive predisposition towards the target linguistic-cultural.

In the field of language learning and teaching, motivation can be divided into two main categories: Integrative Motivation and Instrumental Motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, as cited in Gardner, 2001). First, Integrative Motivation includes integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, and motivation. These elements constitute a type of motivation that is related to the will of students to encounter the community of the second language and establish positive attitudes toward the language context. Second, instrumental motivation indicates students' desire to obtain economic and social benefits through L2 acquisition. Although both integrative motivation and instrumental motivation are crucial conditions for success, it is the integrative motivation that has been considered effective for promoting long-term success when studying a second language (Taylor, Meynard & Rheault, 1977; Ellis, 1994; Crookes & Schimdt, 1991). In their research, Carrió-Pastor (2014) demonstrated that generally, students choose instrumental more than integrative reasons for the study of a particular language, but integrative motivation can be stronger and can lead to a more successful acquisition of the language. Furthermore, students focused on

instrumental reasons are more concentrated on learning how to communicate while, on the other hand, students who preferred integrative reasons, were more eager to learn all the aspects of the target language.

Gardner (2001) presented a model where the role of aptitude, integrativeness and motivation in second language learning was described.

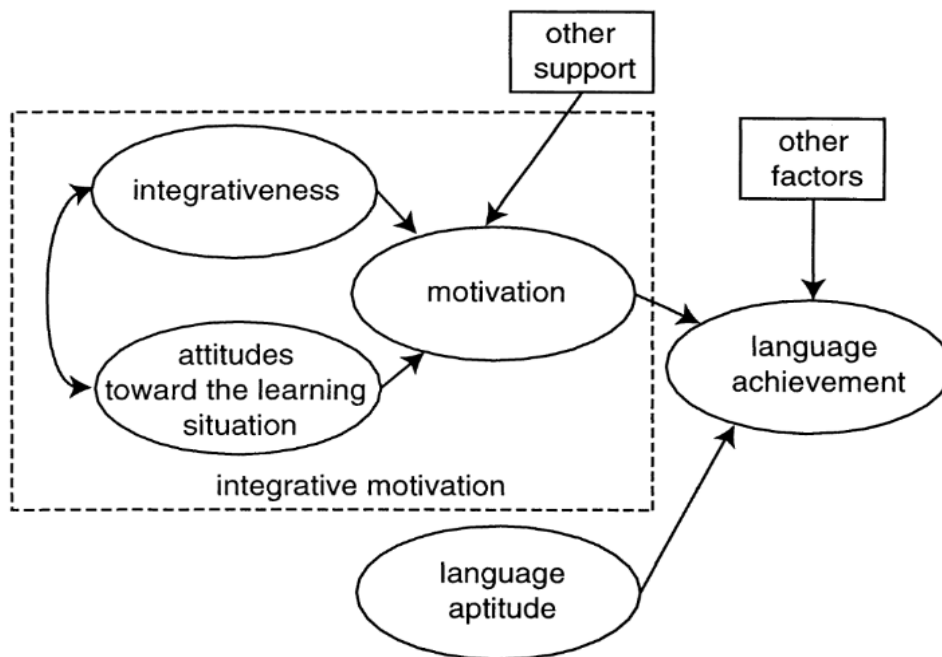


Figure 6: Socio-Educational model of second language acquisition (Gardner, 2001)

In figure 6, Integrativeness and Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation are shown as two variables that can determine the Motivation to learn an L2 and, consequently, the language achievement. The variable Integrativeness is related to the desire of the student to learn a second language and integrate into the culture, accepting and respecting cultural groups and lifestyles and

identifying with the community. The socio-educational model asserts that as integrativeness entails emotional connection with another culture, students with integrative reasons will manifest a positive attitude toward the linguistic community and an openness to other groups. In other words, the integrativeness variable is a system of attitudes that extends beyond language learning itself since it is more than just a justification for learning the language (Gardner, 2001). The variable Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation refers to how students feel about any element of the environment in which the language is learned. In the classroom environment, these attitudes may be expressed toward the teacher, the course as a whole, the classmates and the selection of the materials. Furthermore, the model acknowledges that, although ineffective teachers and courses may influence students, they will express more positive attitudes than with no integrative motivation.

According to the socio-educational model, there are three components of motivation. First, motivated students try to learn the language by doing homework, doing extra exercises, and looking for occasions to learn more. Second, motivated students are eager to have success and work constantly to succeed. Thirdly, motivated students consider learning a language a gratifying process despite the moments in which students could consider the lesson less enjoyable. Each component on its own is thought not to be sufficient to convey motivation, even though students, in some situations, may seem motivated. Some students, in fact, may display effort, even though they have no strong desire to succeed but, broadly speaking, students who are strongly motivated show effort, desire, and affect. The model also demonstrates that Integrative Motivation is made of three classes of variables, namely Integrativeness, Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation, and Motivation. Integrative motivation, as it is defined in the socio-educational model of second language acquisition, is a collection of attitudinal, goal-directed, and motivational characteristics. In other words, a student who is integratively motivated, is willing to identify with a group that speaks a

different language, and has a propensity to consider the learning environment favourably. Integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning situation are seen as motivational supports but motivation itself is what drives success in the second language. As a consequence, high degrees of Integrativeness and/or extremely favourable Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation would not lead to success if not accompanied by a strong motivation to learn the language.

1.4.3 Anxiety

As mentioned in paragraph 1.1, studying abroad is considered the most effective way to transform the L2 knowledge from an abstract set of grammar rules, speech acts, and vocabulary items into communicative intentions. However, studying abroad, as it could be commonly believed, does not automatically imply learning a language easily (Dewaele, 2007). Many people have inflated expectations about developing their language skills abroad, feeling discouraged and anxious after unsuccessful attempts to speak with native speakers. The anxiety caused by negative experiences during communication is often considered difficult to overcome since students become unable to express their thoughts while communicating with the native interlocutor. (Drogan, 2019).

Furthermore, to better understand why anxiety can be influential in language acquisition, it is necessary to introduce the concept of affective filter. In situations of pleasant challenge, in the conviction of being able to succeed, the body releases neurotransmitters (such as noradrenaline) which are essential for fixing the "memory traces" and remembering the input received. On the other hand, in case of negative feelings such as stress, anxiety, or fear of failing, the body releases a steroid that prepares the brain to face danger: the amygdala. At the same time, the hippocampus (another key gland for long-term storage) evaluates that the stimulus is not dangerous and tries to stop the effect of the steroid momentarily blocking the access to the long-term memory. This idea

explains why learners understand at different rates despite receiving the same inputs and why some context can be considered negative for the language acquisition.

For many years, FL teachers have been worried about the role of anxiety and its potentially harmful impact on foreign language students, since many aspects of FL acquisition can cause anxiety in learners. Nevertheless, some situations, compared to others, may have a stronger impact on language learners. For instance, when the language learned, especially the writing and the phonological system, are completely different from students' mother tongue, as in the case of Arabic, Japanese, or Chinese for European students, the anxiety could increase drastically (Elkhafaifi, 2005). In addition, in language learning, listening, together with reading, writing, and speaking, can cause skill-specific anxiety. For instance, listening can raise the level of anxiety when learners perceive that, on some occasions, they are not able to comprehend the message of the interlocutor and the communication could be limited (Kimura, 2017). Anyway, researchers examined the relationships between the four abilities and FL anxiety, finding that speaking is the main source of anxiety among students (Al-khresheh, 2020). It is the responsibility of the teachers to assist students and encourage them to communicate, setting realistic goals and allowing mistakes.

Furthermore, another aspect that must be considered is the interaction of students with native speakers in an L2 study context. According to Lee (2020), the interaction with natives outside of the classroom is more frequent for students who have higher levels of L2 and self-confidence since they are more inclined to take risks. These findings could be quite predictable since, in contrast to the classroom where FL students frequently communicate with familiar interlocutors (such as classmates) and in quite predictable L2 exercises, real-life environments may frequently lead them to unfamiliar interlocutors in quite unpredictable contexts. According to Suleiman (1991), in fact, when students meet the native speakers of the TL, there is a high percentage of probability that students can feel anxious (Woodrow, 2006).

CHAPTER 2: The research project

This research project was conducted during an international internship within a master's degree program in Language Sciences at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. The internship lasted two months between March and May 2022 and was implemented at *Ahlan school*, a private school of Arabic and Italian language in Alexandria, Egypt. The goal of the research was set beforehand; nevertheless, it underwent some changes after the first lessons. The initial plan involved writing a diary to collect

data on the teaching techniques and the psychological aspects that influence language acquisition, namely anxiety and motivation, inside the classroom environment. However, as the study program started, it became obvious that, in an L2 context, other aspects outside the classroom environment should have been considered. As a matter of fact, external factors present in everyday life prevented the diarist from communicating with natives. Consequently, the direction of the research changed, and the focus was set not only on the motivation inside the classroom environment, related to the teacher's behaviour and the student's personality, but also outside the classroom, when the student came into contact with natives (integrative motivation).

In this chapter, after a brief introduction of the context in which the study was conducted (paragraph 2.1), including the participants (paragraph 2.3), an overview of the research tool and the data collection procedure (paragraph 2.4) will be presented.

2.1 Research questions

The three research questions investigated in this study are:

RQ1) To what extent is integrative motivation effective for improving speaking skills in an L2 learning environment?

RQ2) Can conversations with native speakers cause anxiety and limit speaking skills?

RQ3) Is the deductive method effective to construct word knowledge in an L2 Egyptian language class?

Based on the theories and studies previously presented (chapter 1) , the following hypothesis were formulated:

- (1) Integrative motivation is important to encourage the student to speak Arabic in an L2 environment to a high degree.;
- (2) Conversation with natives can cause anxiety and reduce exposure to the target language, especially if the student is a beginner;
- (3) The deductive method is not effective to construct word knowledge in an L2 Egyptian language class.

2.2 Context of the study

The research was carried out in a private school of Arabic and Italian as a FL in Alexandria, Egypt. The school offers intensive Arabic classes, both Standard Arabic and 'Ammiyya (Egyptian dialect), for small groups and for single students. Programs can be customised based on students' necessities and stay abroad period. In the school, teachers are free to manage the classes and the materials as they believe. Nevertheless, there are some guidelines they need to follow. Firstly, they are instructed to use only Arabic inside the classroom, even if the student is a beginner, and to encourage them to do the same. Anyway, using a bridge language, such as English, is not forbidden. Secondly, teachers are provided with a book they are supposed to use to complete a level. The book includes grammar, vocabulary, and communicative situations. In addition to printed books, teachers have access to digital books, and they are also free to use original or authentic materials. The levels are based on the Common European Framework of Reference: Level 1 (A1), level 2 (A2), level 3 (B1), level 4 (B2), level 5 (C1). Teachers are not asked to structure lessons and prepare materials: they just follow what is contained in the book without big variations. Lessons are held inside small classrooms that can accommodate around 10 students. Chairs are placed around a big table in front

of the whiteboard. Teachers don't have at their disposal many electronic devices since the school is old-fashioned. However, the decorations on the walls include many pictures of Egyptian cities, Egyptian typical food, the Arabic alphabet, typical chairs, and typical carpets. The environment is friendly and there is also a kitchen that can be used by both students and employees to make teas and store food.

2.3 Participant

The data collection was carried out using the diary study written by the researcher herself, an Italian 24-year-old female university student, during her study abroad experience. The language studied was the low variety of Arabic, specifically the Egyptian Arabic language. The student started from a beginner level and studied 10 hours per week from Sunday to Thursday (11.30-13.30), since the weekend days in the Arab world are Friday and Saturday. Now, an overview of the linguistic background of the student will be given. The first approach of the student to the Arabic language during her bachelor's degree was at the University of Naples L' Orientale. The student was enrolled in a study program including both English and Modern Standard Arabic. The MSA language lectures were held by two teachers: the Italian teacher, responsible for the Standard Arabic grammar program, and the mother tongue teacher, in charge of the students' speaking skills development. Nevertheless, being Standard Arabic a complex language, the lectures given by the mother tongue served mainly as support to the other grammar lectures. As for the Arabic dialects, they were not included in the study program for the first two years, and they were optional during the last year. The student never attended the Arabic dialect lectures and consequently, she approached the Egyptian Arabic language in Alexandria for the first time.

On the other hand, the teacher is an Egyptian native speaker with 20 years of experience in the field of language teaching. She teaches both Colloquial Arabic and Standard Arabic as an L2 in one-

to-one classes every morning and then she gives private lessons online. For teaching, the teacher used a textbook, a whiteboard and some tracks for practising listening. Sometimes she assigned homework which were mainly exercises taken from the book. The lesson consisted of grammar and vocabulary explanation, readings, exercises, and conversation.

2.4 Research tool and data collection procedure

In this paragraph, first, an overview of the diary study as a research tool will be given; second, how data were collected will be shown and, finally, a practical example of the diary will be provided. The instrument employed in the research was chosen because of the degree of freedom the students have, while compiling the diary, to record the learning experience. In addition, in this study, the diary study was used to record both experiences in the classroom and outside the classroom. In this research project, the diarist attended the class two hours per day from Sunday to Thursday, since the weekend days in the Arab world are Friday and Saturday. Furthermore, when the research was conducted, because of COVID-19, only single lessons were allowed. As a consequence, the student had no option but to take private classes.

2.4.1 Diary as a research tool

The data were collected using a diary study research method and the researcher was actively involved in the environment in which she observed, with a dual role, that of the diarist and that of the researcher.

A diary is a research tool utilised in second language acquisition or teaching for recording personal experiences while learning or teaching a language. The diary is utilised for presenting introspective aspects of language learning or teaching, with the learner or the teacher annotating

learning strategies, psychological aspects, and personal observations which could be hardly understood by an external researcher. Furthermore, the diary must be compiled within a period of time and can be analysed either by an external researcher or by the diarist himself (Bailey, 1991). On one hand, arguments in favour of the diary study tool were presented. According to Fry (1988), one of the positive aspects of using a diary to collect data is the absence of research intervention and constraints; in addition, Bailey (1991) claims that diary studies help researchers to reach an advanced comprehension of classroom language acquisition.

At the present time we are working with an unrefined tool to craft an only dimly understood representation of language learning. Properly done, the diary studies can provide us with important missing pieces in this incredibly complex mosaic – pieces which may not be fully accessible by any other means ... An appreciation for individual differences ... leads directly to the importance of studying single learners in depth (pp. 87-88).

On the other hand, some researchers presented arguments against using diary as a research tool. According to Fry (1988), although the researcher aims to avoid all interventions, there are still issues that prevent from collecting valid data. For instance, since compiling a diary requires much effort and time, the initial enthusiasm in writing about the learning or teaching experience can easily turn into fatigue and consequently data inconsistency. Furthermore, even though researchers can hide the goal of their research project, participants may be able to understand the hypothesis and consequently try to write data consistent with them. Last, documenting events happening while learning or teaching a language can lead the student or the teacher involved in the research to focus more on that aspect, resulting in a change of attitude due to more consciousness.

Anyways, in the context of action research, the diary holds a very important role and helps teachers to figure out problems in the classroom environment, creating good communication with

the students. In this context, the issues related to data consistency are eliminated since the only purpose is improving the quality of teaching (Hopkins, 1985). Finally, according to Matsumoto (1987), a diary can help to raise awareness, evaluation, and improvement of the subject, helping the process of language acquisition.

2.4.2 Data collection

In this research project, the subject compiled a diary almost after each lesson and every time a relevant event happened outside the classroom. The lessons lasted two hours a day from 11.30 to 13.30. The diary was written on the mobile phone since the student needed to always have it at her disposal, even when outside. Here follows an example of how the diary was written, after the lesson, on the 4th of April.

Durante le lezioni, l'insegnante non varia molto e non propone quasi mai esercizi alternativi. Oggi mi veniva molto difficile mantenere l'attenzione, mi succede spesso durante le lezioni di arabo ma, per fortuna, scrivere questo diario mi aiuta a non perdermi, a controllare i miei progressi e anche a superare alcune difficoltà.

The diarist followed five steps for writing and analysing the diary, derived from Bailey (1990):

1. The history of language learning. The diarist describes the history of language acquisition;
2. The experience of learning a second language. The diarist documents events and information related to learning a second language, as well as her emotions;
3. The review of the private diary. The diarist edits the diary for making it ready to be published;

4. The examination of the diary. The entries are examined numerous times to identify the most noteworthy patterns and occurrences.

2.4.3 Data analysis

To answer the research questions, the components that were thought to be pertinent to the language learning process, in relation to second language theories and research findings, will be reported.

As for RQ1 (To what extent is integrative motivation effective for improving speaking skills in an L2 learning environment?), the researcher analysed the parts of the diary where the native speakers' behaviours positively influenced the process of language acquisition.

For RQ 2 (Can conversations with native speakers cause anxiety and limit speaking skills?), the researcher considered the parts of the diary where the interaction of the diarist with the native caused a state of anxiety.

Finally, RQ 3 (Is the deductive method effective to construct word knowledge in an L2 Egyptian language class?) was answered considering the parts of the diary where the reactions of the student to the methodologies used by the teacher during the classes were written.

Now that the research project has been presented, the results of the data will be shown.

CHAPTER 3: Results

The data emerged from the qualitative longitudinal research project of this dissertation will be now presented. Specifically, a thematic analysis of the data will be proposed and the entries of the diary will be shown. First, in paragraph 3.1, how psychological aspects may influence SLA outside the classroom environment will be illustrated; second, in paragraph 3.2, how the student perceived the methods utilised by the teacher in the class, in relation to her language learning preferences, will be indicated.

3.1 Motivation and foreign language anxiety

In this paragraph, the entries of the diary, containing the psychological aspect of language acquisition during the study abroad experience will be presented. First, the events that motivated the student and helped her improve her speaking skills will be analysed. Second, the events that generated anxiety and reduced the interaction of the student with the native speakers will be shown.

3.1.1 Motivation

From the diary analysis, it can be seen that, although the student interacted with native speakers daily, the interaction led to a positive experience only in specific contexts. Data show that the student was more willing to speak Arabic when the language was a means of integrating into society and when there were no options but to speak Arabic (see entries 1,2,3,4,6,7,9).

In particular, the diary reports an event that recurred four times during the study abroad program (see entries 1, 2, 3, 4): the interaction with an Egyptian woman in her fifties with whom the student

felt at ease to express herself. The first time the student encountered the woman (entry 1), the support of a third person that stood in as a translator between the two interlocutors was essential. Nevertheless, although conversations between the student and the woman were limited, they had great understanding, in terms of empathy, from the very beginning. As a matter of fact, the student felt comfortable to utilise the first Egyptian words acquired during the lessons at school without experiencing any negative feelings such as anxiety or embarrassment, also because the language served as a means for connecting with the interlocutor. Afterwards, when other meetings occurred, as the student's knowledge of Egyptian Arabic increased, also the quality of conversations improved. The student showed an interest in using the language not only for gaining experience in speaking in an environment considered "safe" for taking risks, but also for succeeding in the conversation with the woman itself and becoming more integrated into that context (entries 2 and 3). Last, during the third and the fourth meetings, when the student had the opportunity to spend more time alone with the woman, in order to succeed in the conversation, she tried to employ all the sources at her disposal and to recall all the knowledge acquired (entries 3 and 4). The entries of the diary, showing the development of the events previously presented, will be now displayed.

Entry 1: 17th March

L'accoglienza che ho ricevuto in questa casa è stata meravigliosa. Ho conosciuto la mamma di Mustafa (un mio amico), per la prima volta, e devo dire che è un persona davvero molto gentile. L'unico problema è che lei non parla per niente in inglese e abbiamo avuto sempre bisogno di qualcuno che ci aiutasse a comunicare. Ad ogni modo, per provare ad avvicinarmi a lei, ho provato a dirle qualche parolina che avevo imparato. È stato molto divertente e lei era felice che sapessi qualcosa in arabo.

Entry 2: 24th March 2022

Oggi ho studiato con la mamma di Mustafa e, rispetto alla settimana scorsa, riuscivamo a tenere una piccola conversazione. Sono felice e voglio provare a parlare di più anche con le altre persone perché sento che quando parlo in arabo c'è un rispetto maggiore nei miei confronti. Mi piace molto utilizzare l'arabo per andare incontro ad una persona che non parla in inglese perché mi sforzo molto di più e posso permettermi di sbagliare e prendermi il mio tempo.

Entry 3: 31st March

Oggi sono di nuovo al Cairo e sono a casa di Moustafa, come sempre. Poiché domani inizia il Ramadan, Moustafa mi ha spiegato che, per fare gli auguri, si dice "Kullu sana ua anti taib/a/in" come si dice anche in occasione dei compleanni. A questo punto, ho salvato questa frase sul cellulare, l'ho ripetuta un po' di volte per sembrare naturale e poi l'ho detta alla mamma. Lei era molto fiera di me. Inoltre, oggi siamo rimaste da sole per tanto tempo e allora abbiamo deciso di fare i compiti insieme (porto sempre il quaderno con me). Successivamente, abbiamo appeso le lucine di Ramadan che le ho regalato e nel frattempo abbiamo chiacchierato come meglio potevamo: gesti, disegni, immagini sul cellulare... Lei non si stanca mai di ripetermi le cose e io con lei mi sento molto sicura e protetta.

Entry 4: 28th April

Sono al Cairo dopo tanto tempo, quasi un mese. Oggi, quando sono arrivata a casa di Moustafa, mi sono sentita così sicura di parlare con la mamma del più o del meno che Mustafa è rimasto sconvolto. Avevo davvero voglia di tirare fuori tutto quello che avevo appreso e parlare con qualcuno senza provare ansia. La conversazione è andata bene, le ho spiegato cosa ho fatto durante il Ramadan, come va con le lezioni di arabo, come va la vita ad Alessandria. Frasi semplici e sicuramente anche grammaticalmente sbagliate ma ci siamo capite e siamo riuscite a comunicare. Questo è quello che mi interessa.

Data also show that not only was the student encouraged to speak Arabic when she felt at ease and she wanted to integrate with the society, but also when the conversations with natives were predictable. In particular, the student reported the positive experiences in conversing in Arabic with taxi drivers, even when she was not able to understand (entry 5,6,7).

In entry 5, it is reported that, when the student used Uber for the first time, she was not worried about saying to the driver that she could not understand because, since the student was at the very beginning of the course, she had no expectations regarding her language skills. As the time passed, the student started recognizing the repetitiveness of the questions asked by the drivers during the rides so, whenever she felt ready to answer, she abandoned the sentence: “sono italiana” and she started interacting in Arabic spontaneously (entry 6). Mainly, the predictability of the conversations and the relaxed environment contributed to a positive attitude of the student which was reflected in her willingness to speak Arabic during the rides for the whole period in Egypt. Now the entries of the diary containing the different episodes described above will be presented.

Entry 5: 9th March 2022

Sono stata in Uber per la prima volta. L' autista mi ha detto qualcosa ma io non ho capito nulla allora io gli ho risposto: "Sono italiana" e lui ha subito capito che non parlassi arabo, mi ha sorriso e mi ha detto: "No problem, welcome!". Onestamente non mi sono preoccupata più di tanto perché è una persona che non rivedrò mai più e poi l' unica cosa che ha bisogno di sapere da me, ovvero la mia destinazione, è già scritta sull' app.

Entry 6: 5th April 2022

Spesso prendo Uber per spostarmi sia ad Alessandria che al Cairo. Mi piace tantissimo chiacchierare con i tassisti perché quando parliamo, non essendoci altre persone oltre a noi due,

non mi sento per niente in imbarazzo. Inoltre, essendo per loro un lavoro e non potendo infastidire le persone, quando sento di non voler parlare più, posso tranquillamente interrompere la conversazione. Di solito, se il viaggio è breve, la conversazione è sempre sugli stessi argomenti: sei sposata? di dove sei? quanti anni hai? e così via... ma, se c'è molto traffico, capita che si parli dell'Italia, del cibo e delle differenze tra i due Paesi. Una cosa che mi piace molto è che, appena entro in macchina e dico una frase in arabo, ricevo sempre dei complimenti, anche se ho detto una frase semplicissima. Inoltre, il clima è sempre rilassato dato che c'è la musica, i finestrini abbassati e non c'è un contatto visivo con l'interlocutore.

Entry 7: 2nd May 2022

Sono a Sharm-el-Sheikh con la mia famiglia. Oggi è stato molto gratificante riuscire a guidare la mia famiglia in giro per la città perché, anche se era la prima volta per me qui, riuscendo a tenere piccole conversazioni in Arabo, ho potuto risolvere diversi problemi tra cui quello dei taxi. A Sharm non c'è Uber perché, essendo una città molto turistica, i tassisti provano a guadagnare il doppio puntando sul fatto che turisti che non conoscano i prezzi del Paese. Parlare in Arabo e dire ai tassisti: "io vivo qui in Egitto" significa quasi automaticamente ottenere prezzi decisamente inferiori. Questa cosa mi rendeva fiera perché, essendo la prima volta che parlavo in arabo davanti alla mia famiglia, in qualche modo ho potuto dimostrare loro l'utilità di imparare un dialetto arabo e non l'arabo standard. In auto ci siamo divertiti perché loro ammiravano come riuscissi a interagire utilizzando quella lingua che per me è stata sempre impossibile.

Moreover, the student clearly exposed her attempt to integrate into the social structure of the host society and the effects that positive feedback from natives had on her. From the data (entry 8), a description of the feelings during the month of Ramadan was given. The student explained that the reason why she decided to fast, even though she is not Muslim, is related to some social factors. In addition, while describing the experience of Ramadan, she reported an event in which,

compliments from natives, about her speaking skills, boosted her confidence. Nevertheless, not only did the student feel motivated the first days of Ramadan, but also during the entire month. In fact, she succeeded in respecting the fast for the whole period, feeling even happier at the end of the experience because of the willingness to deepen the cultural aspects of Egyptian society (entry 9).

Entry 8: 1st April 2022

Aspettavo questo momento da tanto tempo e finalmente è arrivato. Il primo giorno di Ramadan è stato bellissimo... un'atmosfera inspiegabile. Ho deciso che farò anche io il digiuno per tutto il mese di Ramadan perché voglio capire bene come ci si sente e voglio entrare in sintonia con le persone e con le loro abitudini che cambiano. Le strade di notte sono bellissime, le persone di ogni età escono per fare acquisti, passeggiare, giocare davanti ai bar, chiacchierare, fumare shisha. Tutti i negozi sono aperti fino all'una circa e le strade sono tutte illuminate dalle luci a forma di fanous (lanterne tipiche del periodo di Ramadan). Devo dire che anche se torno a casa tardi e la mattina a lezione sono stanca, non rinuncio mai alle uscite serali e mi godo sempre questi momenti. Ieri sera, per esempio, sono stata davanti ad un bar a bere un tè a parlare con alcune persone le quali hanno iniziato a farmi delle domande in arabo e ad insegnarmi delle parole nuove. Ad un certo punto, mi hanno chiesto se davvero studiassi l'arabo da meno di un mese perché già ero capace di formulare qualche piccola frase. Mi sono sentita felicissima perché volevo conferma da qualcuno, in qualche modo, che fossi sulla giusta strada.

Entry 9: 25th April 2022

È arrivata la fine del mese e davvero questo evento mi ha cambiata. L'idea di poter condividere la rottura del digiuno con tutte le persone è meraviglioso e soprattutto poter dire agli egiziani di aver digiunato per tutto il mese mi fa sentire davvero integrata perché ho provato e portato a termine una delle cose più sentite e attese della loro religione.

3.1.2 Foreign language anxiety

Now, the data related to the events that generated anxiety during the study abroad experience will be presented.

First, when the Egyptians who were able to speak English tended to answer in English even if the student started a conversation in Arabic, a feeling of negative evaluation of the speaking performance aroused in the student (entry 10). On the other hand, even on occasions in which the student turned to a native speaker in Arabic and the interlocutor answered in the same language, negative results can be observed. In entry 11, in fact, the student, after implementing the suggestion of the teacher to start utilising, at the restaurant, some words learned in class, failed in the conversation with the waiter, experiencing an anxiety-provoking situation.

Moreover, as time passed and the student became more confident, the conversations in Arabic with waiters, in the same restaurant, increased, but the student, as a consequence of the first events, never abandoned the fear of failing. Nevertheless, the solution she found to deal with this environment was to turn to the waiters in Arabic whenever she was feeling relaxed and at ease, and to switch to English whenever she perceived the situation as “risky” for her social image. The development of the level of interaction of the student with the waiters in the restaurant, during the whole period of stay, will be now presented.

Entry 10: 16th March 2022

L'insegnante, a lezione, mi ha detto di provare ad utilizzare quello che impariamo in classe. Oggi mi ha spiegato come rivolgersi ai camerieri, come chiedere il conto, come chiedere informazioni sul cibo e mi è sembrato tutto molto utile dato che spesso mi fermo a pranzare in un ristorante dopo la lezione. Anche oggi mi fermerò e proverò ad utilizzare quanto appreso.

Sono arrivata all'ingresso del ristorante vicino a scuola. Adesso dovrei provare ad evitare l'inglese e ad iniziare a parlare in arabo a partire dai saluti ma ci sono 5 o 6 camerieri all'ingresso che mi fissano e ho un po' vergogna perché nei giorni precedenti mi sono rivolta a loro in inglese. Poi ho paura che ridano del mio accento o che sorridano perché sanno che sono straniera e che non conosco l'arabo. Lo so, non dovrei preoccuparmi di questo perché è normale però l'imbarazzo è forte. Ho deciso, ci provo.

Purtroppo, la prima volta non è andata benissimo. Quando sono entrata, al mio dire "Salamaleikum, a3mlen eh?" (Ciao, come va?) loro hanno risposto con un "Good morning, welcome!" sorridendo. Lì mi sono sentita un po' fuori luogo, come se non avessi usato le parole giuste o come se fosse stato buffo e inutile salutare in arabo.

Entry 11: 16 March 2022

Ma, successivamente, la situazione è stata ancora più frustrante perché, quando ho ordinato, utilizzando quelle poche parole apprese in classe, il cameriere mi ha risposto dicendo qualcosa che non ho capito. Di conseguenza, avendo il cameriere percepito che non avessi capito, ha iniziato a sorridere (come mi aspettavo) e questo mi ha fatto sentire terribilmente in imbarazzo: avevo dato il massimo per sembrare naturale ma è bastato pochissimo per crollare. Sono consapevole del fatto che tutto questo sia normale e che è molto difficile prevedere l'andamento di una conversazione però, fallire dopo la prima battuta, è stato molto frustrante, soprattutto dopo l'episodio dei saluti. Sarei stata soddisfatta se fossi riuscita almeno a ordinare in arabo ma evidentemente è ancora troppo presto.

Entry 12: 4th April 2022

Oggi sono di nuovo qui, ad Old Street, ormai vengo in questo ristorante da più di due settimane e tutti mi conoscono. Riesco a salutare in Arabo e ad ordinare ma l'ansia di parlare in Arabo in questo posto non è mai andata via. Spesso, quando mi sento ansiosa, parlo in inglese mentre,

quando sento che la situazione può essere sotto controllo, provo a dire qualcosa in arabo. In genere, però, non provo piacere a farlo.

Entry 13: 7th April 2022

Sono a pranzo al solito ristorante. Ormai mi fermo qui anche a studiare. Ho spiegato ad uno dei camerieri che sto studiando arabo e che però ci vuole tempo per impararlo. Lui mi ha detto che è normale. Un po' questa cosa mi ha rassicurata ma comunque, essendo un posto pieno di camerieri maschi che quando arrivo mi guardano e sorridono tra di loro, non mi sento mai al 100% a mio agio. Allora spesso preferisco parlare in inglese e mettere le distanze. Ad ogni modo, ci torno spesso perché il posto è molto carino per studiare e concentrarsi e il cibo è buono.

Additionally, there are other events that, according to the student, triggered listening anxiety and limited the attempts to speak Arabic with natives. In particular, the student described an event in which, when she was about to order in Arabic at a fast food restaurant, the anxiety blocked her actions and prevented her from buying some food (entry 14). Nevertheless, the following month, since the restaurant was less crowded, the student decided to stop and to turn to the cashier in Arabic. On that occasion, despite the decision of the interlocutor to answer in English, the student, to claim her identity as an Arabic language speaker, continued to answer in Arabic (entry 15). Notwithstanding this, the student affirmed that, since these situations provoked stress, she would have avoided interacting in Arabic if her day had been already tiring. The development of the events can be observed in the entries of the diary presented below.

Entry 14: 22nd March 2022

Oggi sono per strada e vorrei ordinare un sandwich take away ma sono ferma prima della cassa perché non so in che lingua rivolgermi. C'è una fila lunghissima ed io ho un' ansia fortissima perché ormai sono in un loop per cui temo di non capire le risposte in arabo e la stessa ansia mi

fa perdere la concentrazione e poi finisco davvero per non capire nulla. Eppure, mi ritengo una persona estremamente estroversa e non ho mai avuto di questi problemi con la lingua inglese. Forse è meglio se mi fermo al prossimo.

Entry 15: 10th April 2022

Sono passata di nuovo davanti a Fairouz, il ristorante take away di cui parlavo l'altra volta. Questa volta c'erano meno persone allora mi sono fermata e ho salutato e ordinato in Arabo. È successa una cosa strana però: mentre ordinavo, io parlavo in arabo e lui mi rispondeva in inglese. Per esempio, io dicevo: "Salam, lau samaht, a3iza sandwich shawarma frekh, shukran" (Ciao, per favore, vorrei uno shawarma con il pollo, grazie) e lui in risposta: "Only one? Big or small?" e io: kibir, shukran (grande, grazie)... Questa volta non ho mollato, ho continuato a parlare in arabo anche dopo la sua risposta in inglese. Sono fiera di me e dei miei progressi però, in ogni caso, queste situazioni provocano molto stress e cerco di evitarle quando sono già stanca o triste per qualcosa.

Now that the psychological aspects of language acquisition have been presented, the data describing the teaching methods and the learning styles will be shown.

3.2 Teaching methods and learning styles

In this paragraph, first, the entries of the diary containing the reflections of the diarist on the methods employed by the teacher in the class will be presented; second, the entries containing the response of the student to the methods utilised, including reflections about their effectiveness on the student will be analysed.

3.2.1 Teaching methods

The methods employed by the teacher during the lessons were frequently reported by the student in the diary. From the data, it emerged that in the whole time span between the beginning and the end of the study abroad program, the teacher presented the grammar rules without giving many examples unless the student explicitly requested it (entries 16, 17). Also, it was indicated that, regardless of the typology and the difficulty of the topic proposed, lessons were lacking in exercises for practising (entry 18). Despite the attempt of the student to suggest integrating lessons with other activities (see paragraph 3.3.2), the teacher continued adopting the same methodology until the end of the study program (entry 18). The immutability of the methods adopted by the teacher during the classes will be shown in the following entries.

Entry 16: 6th March

Oggi è stato il primo giorno e l'insegnante, sapendo che avevo studiato l'arabo standard, mi ha spiegato le differenze tra la pronuncia delle lettere in arabo standard e la pronuncia delle lettere in arabo egiziano. Per prima cosa ha scritto tutto l'alfabeto alla lavagna e poi ha messo delle frecce per farmi vedere come cambiano nelle due varianti. Un po' mi meraviglio di come non mi abbia fatto vedere qualche esempio per abituare un po' l'orecchio... mi sarei divertita. Comunque a volte la pronuncia dipende anche dalle parole quindi aspetto di incontrarle e di imparare un po' alla volta tutte le differenze.

Entry 17: 11th March 2022

Durante la lezione di oggi, l'insegnante ha spiegato la coniugazione dei verbi al passato e poi è passata direttamente alle eccezioni (verbi di prima, ultima e media debole e verbi con la shadda sull'ultima lettera). Mentre scriveva i verbi alla lavagna, in alcuni casi evidenziando le desinenze, mi chiedeva se fosse tutto chiaro. Questo era il suo unico modo per sapere se stessi capendo. Ad ogni modo, una volta finito di scrivere tutte le regole, non c'è stato un momento in cui abbiamo fatto degli esercizi per poter memorizzare le varie coniugazioni. Credo che lei abbia

pensato che sarei andata a casa ad impararli e che questo sarebbe stato sufficiente. Devo ammettere che, rispetto all'arabo standard, i verbi nel dialetto egiziano sono un po' più semplici ma restano comunque complicati se non ci si esercita spesso.

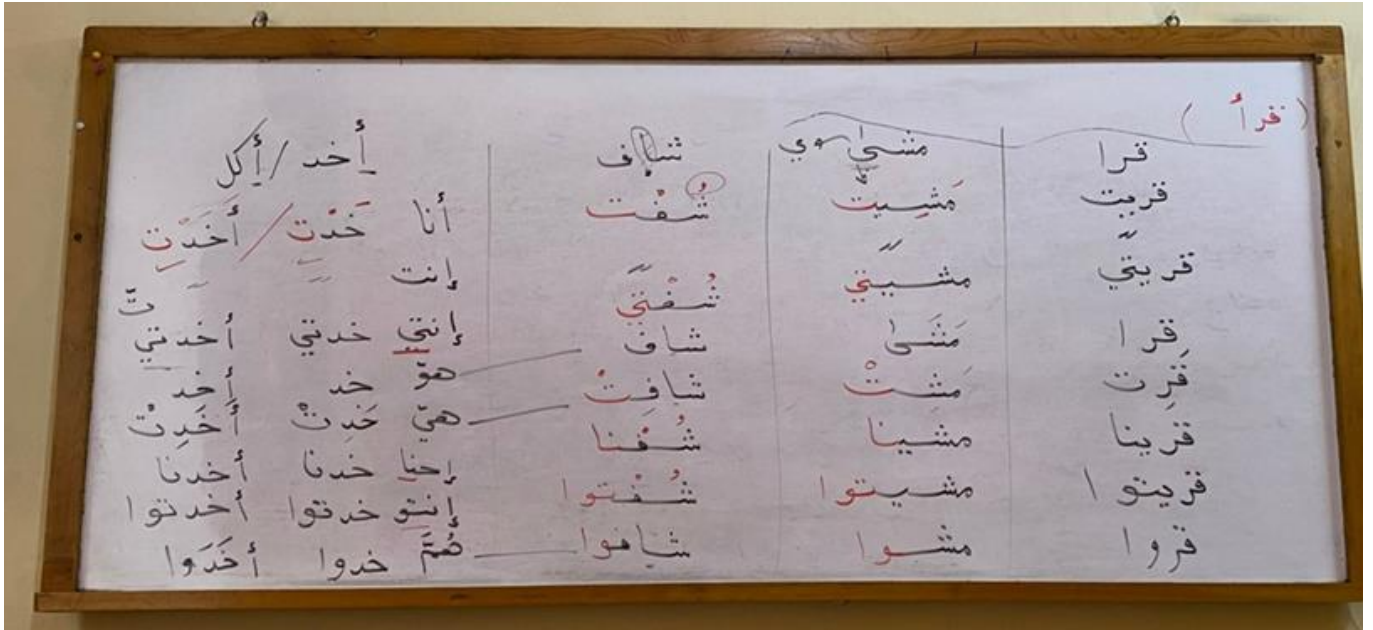


Figure 7: Weak verbs in Egyptian Arabic written on the whiteboard during the lesson.

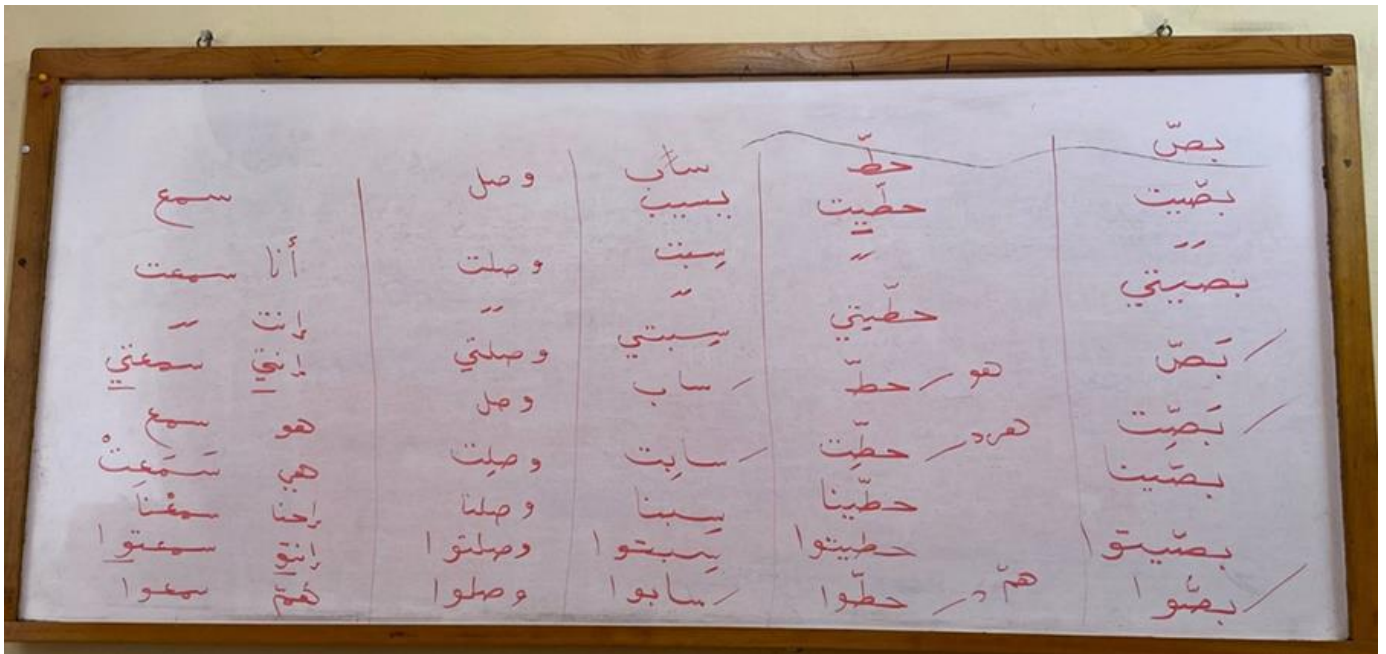


Figure 8: Weak verbs and verbs with shadda on the final letter in Egyptian Arabic written on the whiteboard.

Entry 18: 12th April 2022

Il suo metodo non è cambiato affatto e purtroppo gli argomenti trattati le prime settimane, tranne quelli che ritornano per caso, non sono più stati ripresi a meno che io non l'abbia esplicitamente richiesto. Per fortuna, ho trovato un mio modo per studiare a casa o in compagnia di amici.

Furthermore, the diarist underlined the inability of the teacher to encourage the recall of prior topics learned. The student stated that not only did the teacher ignore the importance of repetition, but also, whenever she was asked to propose exercises for practising, she exactly replicated the lesson proposed previously, without any variations (entry 19). Nevertheless, despite the attempt of the teacher to find authentic materials on Youtube, she failed both for the lack of materials available

online in Egyptian Arabic and for her inability/unwillingness to look for different alternatives (entry 20). The entries of the diary containing the data presented above will be now introduced.

Entry 19: 30th March 2022

Oggi, dopo averle chiesto di proporre degli esercizi per farmi esercitare sulle parti del corpo imparate nella lezione precedente, ha cominciato a scrivere di nuovo tutte le parti del corpo alla lavagna.

Entry 20: 20th April 2022

Poiché ho intenzione di viaggiare qui in Egitto durante o dopo l'Eid, le ho chiesto di ripetere delle frasi utili durante un viaggio e di simulare, ad esempio, il check-in in un albergo oppure in aeroporto... a quel punto lei mi ha risposto, sorridendo, che non ne avrei avuto bisogno perché in questi casi avrei potuto parlare in inglese. Non è stato per niente bello ricevere una risposta del genere. Ad ogni modo, dopo aver insistito, lei ha iniziato a cercare dei video su Youtube e, avendo trovato solo materiale in arabo standard, ha pensato di togliere l'audio e lasciare solo i sottotitoli in egiziano. È vero che trovare materiale autentico in egiziano non è semplicissimo ma è anche vero che c'è un'enorme produzione cinematografica qui in Egitto e avrebbe potuto trovare degli spezzoni di film... ma lei, come spesso capita, non si è preoccupata.

Moreover, the diarist gave an overview of how the teaching units of the book were presented during the lessons. In order to study a dialogue, the teacher first used to ask the student to observe the vocabulary of the unit at the end of the book and then moved on to read the dialogue. Despite the frequent request to change the order in which the topics were presented, the teacher was not willing to consider other approaches. Consequently, the method remained unchanged for the whole study program. There is only one event in which the teacher, after receiving the request of the

student to invert the order of how the information was presented, accommodated the request. Nevertheless, apparently, the student, even on this occasion, did not show to be satisfied.

Entry 21: 22nd March 2022

Per imparare parole nuove e lessico utile per la vita quotidiana, di solito leggiamo dei dialoghi contenuti nel libro. I dialoghi sono molto interessanti perché propongono conversazioni quotidiane, utili per imparare a comunicare, ma il problema resta il modo in cui questi testi vengono affrontati. L'insegnante procede in questo modo: per prima cosa, legge il lessico dell'unità nel vocabolario alla fine del libro e mi chiede di leggerlo; poi, successivamente, legge due volte il dialogo e mi chiede di rileggerlo.

Entry 22: 15th April 2022

Oggi le ho chiesto di soffermarci prima sul testo e poi sulle parole ma lei sembra essere sempre restia quando le propongo delle alternative. Ad ogni modo, oggi abbiamo letto prima il dialogo ed una volta finito mi ha chiesto quali fossero i termini che non conoscessi e me li ha detti. Non era proprio questo il mio intento ma va bene così.

Glossary

Chapter 7

	الوحدة السابعة	meat shawerma	شاورمة لحمة
		shish tawuk	شيش طاووق
Presentation (1)	تقديم (١)	falafil	طعمية
		chicken fajita	فراخ فاميتا
English	Arabic	grilled chicken	فراخ مشوية
blonde	اشقر	apple pie	فطيرة تفاح
bald	أصلع	fuul (fava beans)	فول
bearded	بدقن	crème caramel	كريم كراميل
mustached	بشذب	kushari	كشري
fat	تخين	grilled kufta	كفته مشوية
pretty	حلو		كوسة بالبشامل
coarse / curly	خشن	zucchini with bechamel sauce	
thin	رفيع	chocolate cake	كعكة شوكولاتة
young person	شاب		مسقعه باللحمة
hair	شعر	beef and eggplant casserole	
look	شكل		
tall	طويل	From Real Life	من واقع الحياة
old	عجوز		
rich	غني	English	Arabic
poor	فقير	total	إجمالي
in his / her twenties	في العشرينات	Pay the bill	إدفع الحساب
short	قصير	Buy me	إشترى لي
lazy	كسلان	anytime	أي خدمة
full	مليان	menu	منيو

Figure 9: A page of the glossary contained in the book Kallimni 'Arabi.

كلمني عربي

نص الإستماع لتدريب (٧ - ١ - ب)

ألو.. لو سمحت جوزي متأخر قوي ومش عارفة فينه.	كريمة
اسم حضرتك إيه؟ وهو اسمه إيه؟	الظابط
كريمة محمد. وهو اسمه سالم مختار.	كريمة
شكله إيه جوزك يا مدام؟ عنده كام سنة؟ بيشتغل إيه؟ وفين؟	الظابط
هو مش عجوز ولا شاب يعني في الخمسينات وبيشتغل محامي في وسط البلد.	كريمة
في الخمسينات. وإيه تاني؟ شعره أبيض؟ لابس نضارة؟	الظابط
لا، شعره مش أبيض. هو أصلع ولا بس نضارة.	كريمة
أصلع ولا بس نضارة. بشنب؟	الظابط
أيوه بشنب.	كريمة
بدقن وللا من غير دقن؟	الظابط
بدقن.	كريمة
لا بس إيه؟	الظابط
لا بس قميص مقلّم وينطلون إسود.	كريمة
هو بيروح المكتب كل يوم؟	الظابط
أيوه يا فندم، بيخرج الساعة ٩ الصبح بيروح المحكمة وبعدين بيرجع يتغدى وينام شوية، وبعدين بيروح المكتب بعد الظهر.	كريمة

تدريب (٧ - ١ - ج)

مين هو / هي؟

- طالب (١) اختار طالب في الفصل ورد على أسئلة طالب (٢).
طالب (٢) اسأل عن الطالب اللي اختاره طالب (١).
اسأله عن: السن؟ ست ولا راجل؟ الشكل؟ اللبس؟ مكانه في الفصل؟ الشغل؟ البلد؟
هو اسمه

Figure 10: A dialogue contained in the book Kallimni 'Arabi.

3.2.2 Learning styles

According to the student, the method the teacher used was ineffective for memorising new vocabulary because of the exercises lacking during the lessons. As a matter of fact, the lack of exercises led the student to feel demotivated since, instead of expanding the vocabulary and reaching new levels, she was always forgetting information (entry 23).

In response to the inability of the teacher to understand her needs, in the following lessons, the student found an alternative to overcome that feeling. In particular (entry 24), when the teacher, instead of proposing exercises, wrote again the list of the words on the whiteboard, the student started drawing on the exercises book, hoping that it would have helped the process of memorization. The entries presenting this development will be now exposed.

Entry 23: 28th March 2022

Il suo modo di fare lezione per me è davvero demotivante dato che purtroppo tendo a dimenticare molto facilmente se non mi esercito e ripeto sempre. Oggi sono passate circa due settimane da quando l'insegnante mi ha spiegato i verbi e da quel giorno non mi ha mai più proposto un esercizio per fissare le coniugazioni. L'unico momento in cui mi esercito sui verbi a lezione è quando facciamo conversazione però, purtroppo, parlando spesso della mia giornata, mi trovo ad utilizzare quasi sempre la prima persona dei verbi.

Entry 24: 30th March 2022

Quando l'insegnante, invece di proporre degli esercizi per utilizzare le parti del corpo imparate nella lezione precedente ha riscritto semplicemente le parole alla lavagna, mi sono sentita davvero avvilita. A questo punto ho iniziato a disegnare sul quaderno sperando che almeno, fare un disegno mi avrebbe aiutata a memorizzare. Poi le ho chiesto di dirmi come si dicesse: "Ho tanti pensieri nella mente" per inserire almeno una delle parole in un contesto. Inoltre, lei tratta il lessico e la grammatica come due cose distinte e separate mentre io vorrei che tutti gli

argomenti venissero trattati come parte di un discorso unico. Ad esempio, quando abbiamo ripetuto le parti del corpo, insieme al lessico, avrebbe potuto utilizzare dei verbi che abbiamo studiato e creare delle frasi come lavarsi la faccia, lavarsi le mani, fare la barba, tagliare i capelli e così via per mettere insieme più informazioni.

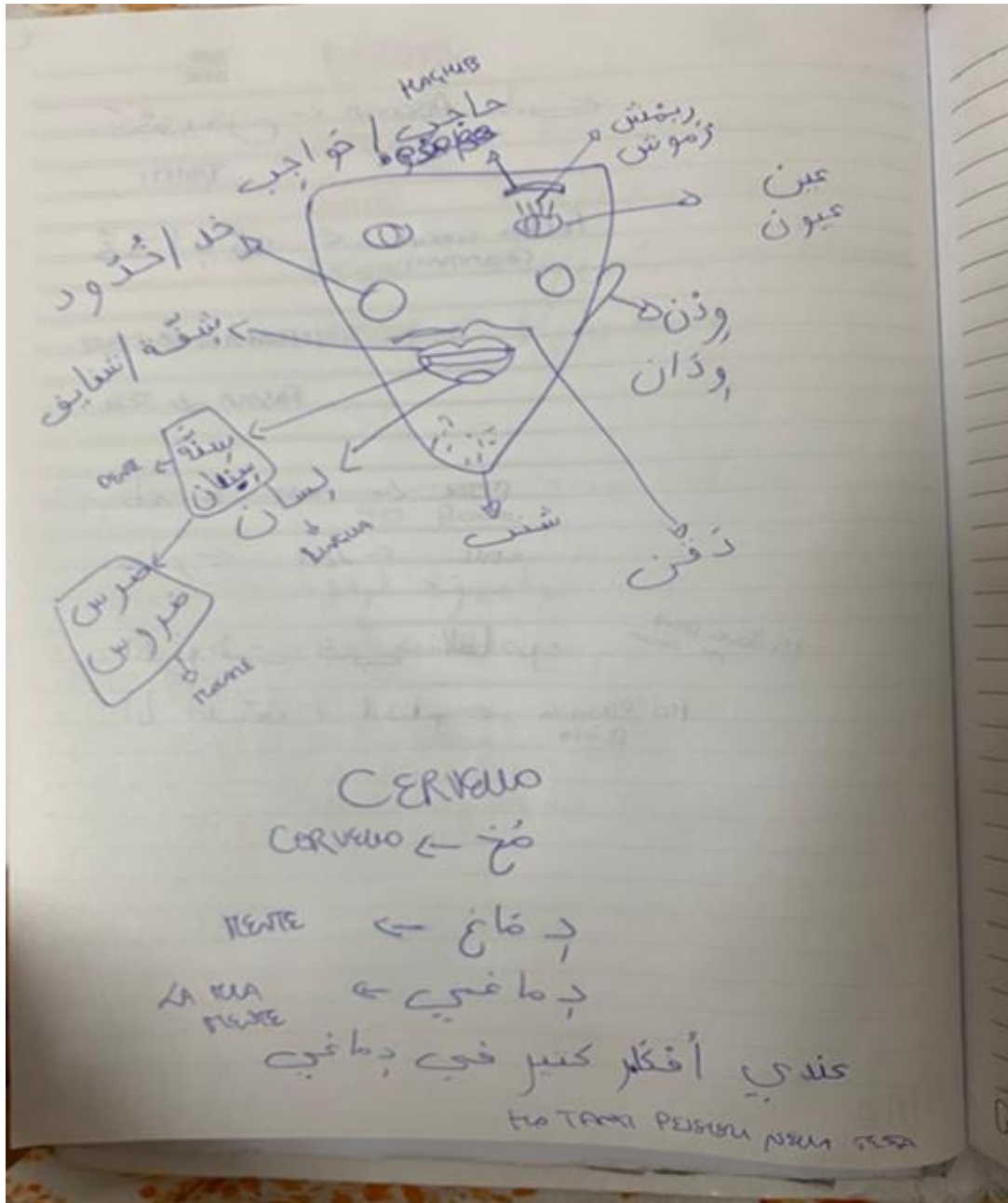


Figure 11: A page of the student's exercise book containing the parts of the body.

Moreover, in entry 25, the student expressed her preferences about how new topics should have been presented during the lesson. The student affirmed that she would have preferred to be taught starting from reading the dialogue instead of discovering first the meaning of the new words from the vocabulary. Nevertheless, in response to the method employed by the teacher, which was not satisfying her learning styles, the student, while doing her homework, always chose to start from reading the dialogue to guess from the context the meanings of the new words. Last, the student, after ascertaining the necessity of looking for a better method to memorise the vocabulary at home, she involved her Egyptian friend in her homework in order to be more motivated in finding funnier and more effective ways of studying (entry 26).

Entry 25: 15th March 2022

Un'altra cosa che preferirei che l'insegnante facesse è quella di farmi leggere prima il dialogo e poi di chiedermi di provare ad indovinare i significati in modo tale da poter prima immaginare il significato del lessico inserito in un contesto. Io, quando vado a casa a studiare, infatti, preferisco fare sempre così: leggere il dialogo e provare a ricordare o ad indovinare i significati e poi confermare tramite il dizionario alla fine del libro. Ogni volta che faccio questo piccolo sforzo di riflettere partendo dal dialogo, non solo riesco a ricordare meglio le parole, ma riesco anche più facilmente a riutilizzarle in un contesto. Quando, invece, provo ad imparare le parole partendo dal vocabolario, mi sembra soltanto di leggere una lista di parole vuote e prive di significato.

Entry 26: 30th March 2022

Oggi ho chiesto aiuto per fare gli esercizi ad un mio amico di Alessandria, Islam. Mi ha aiutato a trovare un modo per ricordare le parole: abbiamo iniziato ad inventare delle storie divertenti

per memorizzare. Per esempio, “scala” in arabo si dice “sellim” allora abbiamo iniziato a dire che c’era un uomo che voleva comprare una scala e allora Islam mi ha detto “Sell-him” la scala. Può sembrare un po’ una perdita di tempo e ovviamente è un po’ difficile farlo con tutte le parole però io, da quel momento, non ho mai più dimenticato come si dicesse “scala” in Arabo.

Furthermore, during conversation exercises, topics related to Egyptian culture were favoured by the student. The student affirmed that the reason is related to the desire of understanding more about the culture to better integrate into the society and also to the fact that, while conversing about these topics, the student felt more comfortable to speak in Arabic. Nevertheless, according to the student, apart from these exceptional episodes, conversation exercises should have been handled differently by the teacher during the other lessons: post-correction should have been preferred to on-the-spot correction to avoid interruptions while the student was already making an effort to speak fluently. Now, the entries containing the information about conversation exercises will be reported.

Entry 27: 18th April 2022

Oggi è stato bello fare lezione perché abbiamo fatto conversazione sulla cultura egiziana. Mi piace tantissimo scoprire questa cultura perché mi permette di riuscire a capire meglio le persone e ad integrarmi. Per la prima volta, oggi, abbiamo parlato di un argomento diverso... finalmente! Di solito mi chiede soltanto della mia giornata oppure del giorno precedente e sinceramente è diventato un po’ noioso. Inoltre, oggi, per la prima volta, non mi ha interrotto mentre parlavo.

Entry 28: 26th April 2022

Oggi ho chiesto io di parlare di un argomento riguardante la cultura egiziana perché l’ultima volta è stato bello. Ho notato che il rapporto con l’insegnante, in questi momenti, migliora. Io

riuscivo a parlare tranquillamente perché lo scopo era quello di riuscire a comunicare e l'insegnante, presa dalla novità di vedere una straniera raccontare aspetti della sua cultura in maniera simpatica, sorrideva e tralasciava le correzioni. Normalmente, ad ogni parola sbagliata, mi ferma per apportare le correzioni e mi fa sentire in imbarazzo e spesso anche affaticata. Preferirei che correggessimo gli errori alla fine della conversazione.

Another aspect reported by the diarist is an apparent absence of lesson planning. From the diarist's perspective, it seemed as if the teacher improvised the lessons by looking for something to do in the book when the lesson had already started or asking the student a topic she would have liked to know. In entry 29, the student affirmed that the teacher asked three times for a suggestion for the topic to be studied in that lesson and, since this episode was repeated more than once, the student complained of not feeling supported by the teacher.

Entry 29: 21st April 2022

Oggi è la terza volta che mi ha chiesto, prima di iniziare la lezione, cosa volessi studiare. Questa cosa inizia ad infastidirmi perché penso sia compito dell'insegnante creare un percorso adatto per supportare lo studente. Oggi non sapevo proprio cosa dirle perché avevo paura che, se avessi chiesto di ripetere un argomento, avrebbe solo ricominciato a scrivere tutte le parole alla lavagna e non volevo. Nonostante ciò, poiché ne avevo bisogno, le ho chiesto di esercitarsi ad utilizzare i verbi dato che usare tutte le persone della coniugazione mi viene proprio difficile. In seguito alla mia richiesta, l'insegnante ha iniziato a scrivere delle frasi alla lavagna da completare. Le frasi proposte contenevano uno spazio vuoto dove avrei dovuto inserire un verbo tra quelli studiati e, nel resto della frase, parole nuove che lei ha dovuto spiegarmi.

Finally, interesting data also regarded the student's memorization strategy process. To better memorise new words, since she reported having a visual memory, she needs to see the words written. In addition, the student stated that the monochrome book did not help her to support her memory (entry 30). Notwithstanding this, the student, after acquiring more lexical knowledge over time, started considering memorising new words easier. As a matter of fact, when she became experienced in recognising some common words at first sight, the effort made during the reading decreased and the attention was drawn directly to the new information.

Entry 30: 5th April 2022

Oggi riflettevo sulla mia memoria. Penso proprio di avere una memoria visiva perché ho sempre bisogno di vedere le parole scritte su un foglio o di associarle ad un'immagine. Infatti, se una persona mi dice una parola a voce e io la ripeto senza associarla a qualcosa, la dimentico dopo un secondo. Un'altra cosa di cui mi sono accorta oggi è che il libro in bianco e nero non mi aiuta affatto a studiare e mi fa perdere facilmente la concentrazione. Mi sembra che tutte le parole e le pagine che leggo siano uguali. Penso che con l'arabo la difficoltà aumenti perché, essendo una lingua con un alfabeto diverso, è difficile riconoscere le parole a prima vista.

Entry 31: 28th April 2022

Devo dire che oggi, avendo un vocabolario più ricco, mi viene più facile leggere e memorizzare parole nuove. Infatti ora, anche se il testo è in bianco e nero, quando ci sono molte parole che riesco a riconoscere anche a prima vista senza doverle leggere lettera per lettera, la mia attenzione va direttamente sulle parole nuove e il testo mi sembra più familiare e "amico".

Now that the results of the study have been shown, the data collected will be discussed. In the next chapter, after addressing the research questions, the limitations of the study will be outlined and suggestions for further research will be provided.

CHAPTER 4: Discussion

In this chapter, the results emerged from the diary will be discussed, and the research questions will be answered. Finally, the limitations of this study will be considered and possible further research insights will be proposed.

The research project was designed for answering the following questions:

- 1) To what extent is integrative motivation effective for improving speaking skills in an L2 learning environment?
- 2) Can conversations with native speakers cause anxiety and limit speaking skills?
- 3) Is the deductive method effective to construct word knowledge in an L2 Egyptian language class?

4.1 Research question 1

For the first research question, the interaction between the student and the native speakers outside the classroom environment was considered. The hypothesis formulated was: integrative motivation is important to encourage the student to speak Arabic in an L2 environment to a high degree. The results highlight that the willingness of the student to succeed in conversing with natives was related more to the desire of understanding the target community (integrative motivation) than to the necessity of achieving practical goals (instrumental motivation). Furthermore, the data suggest that integrative motivation helped the student to increase the conversation with natives but only in situations where there were no factors undermining her social image and generating anxiety.

As previously stated in this dissertation (cf. chapter 1.4) presenting Gardner and Lambert's (1972) theory, learners with an instrumental motivation are willing to learn a language mainly to achieve practical goals such as obtaining a scholarship for studying abroad, increasing the salary earned etc. Comparing the data that emerged from the diary to the concept of instrumental motivation, it can be said that the student never expressed being willing to learn Egyptian Arabic for practical reasons. On many occasions, in fact, the student affirmed that the only purpose to learn Egyptian Arabic was to succeed in communicating with people and integrate into the society.

The data emerged from the diary indicated that, on three specific occasions, the integrative motivation increased the attempt of the student to speak Arabic. First, in the interaction of the student with an Egyptian woman; second, in the episodes in which the student received positive comments from the native speakers; third, during a particular religious event. Now, the aspects emerged above will be better analysed.

First, it can be observed that, during the interaction of the student with the Egyptian woman, integrative motivation increased the attempt of the student to speak Arabic. ,since the woman could not speak English, during the first two encounters, the student utilised the few words acquired in class to empathise with her; as time passed, during the last encounters, in order to communicating and improving the relationship with the woman, the student tried to recall all the information acquired during the study program

Second, another aspect to be considered in relation to integrative motivation is the effect that positive feedback, received from the natives, had on the student. In fact, the positive comments that boosted the confidence of the student and encouraged the use of the Arabic language, demonstrated that the opinion of the natives and the desire to be accepted by the

society, strongly influenced the motivation of the student. Considering this phenomenon over time, it can be observed that motivation remained constant in the whole span of time between the beginning and the end of the study program, resulting in the student being motivated to put into practice the knowledge acquired, when feeling appreciated and accepted by the society.

Third, the last aspect emerged from the diary and relevant in terms of integrativeness is the event of the month of Ramadan. The student clearly expressed that the enthusiasm for this event was due to the desire to understand the feelings of the people while fasting and to match the vibes of the whole country. Therefore, although the student was not Muslim, she decided to fast for the whole month to really find out for herself what this kind of experience meant for Egyptian people. Consequently, during the holy month, the student increased her contact with native speakers in the street and practised the language more, bringing the linguistic knowledge gradually acquired in class, to the real-life environment.

According to Gardner (1985), the second variable to be considered when referring to integrative motivation, is the attitude toward the language situation. This variable indicates that a student integratively motivated has also a positive attitude toward the teacher, the textbook, and all the aspects involved in the classroom environment. In addition, even if the conditions are not favourable, in any situation, individuals who are integratively motivated will express more positive attitudes than others. Consequently, the difficulties encountered by the student in class affected the evaluation of the lessons but did not prevent the student from continuing studying. The data emerged from the diary are consistent with what was affirmed by Gardner (1985) since the student, despite encountering many difficulties in class, tried to find solutions to keep the motivation high and continue following the classes for the

whole study abroad program. In particular, from entry 24 emerged that, although the teacher was not able to satisfy the needs and preferences of the student, the student always found solutions to remain motivated and to study during the lesson.

Nevertheless, the data highlights that along with integrative motivation, other essential aspects that contributed to encouraging the student to speak Arabic, emerged from the data. First, the predictability of the conversation. The student affirmed that her desire to speak with natives increased when the predictability of conversations was higher. Second, the lack of expectations about speaking performance. When the student was not expecting to be able to accomplish a specific task, she felt at ease to express herself in Arabic. Last, the absence of factors undermining the social image and generating anxiety. In a positive and relaxed environment, the student showed to be willing to experiment with the Arabic language. These aspects will be better analysed in the next paragraph since they are strictly related to the data relevant for answering the RQ2.

On the whole, despite the presence of other aspects supporting the willingness of the student to communicate with native speakers, the data emerged from the diary seem to suggest that integrative motivation highly increased the attempt of the student to speak Arabic, confirming the hypothesis n.1.

4.2 Research question 2

For the second research question, negative events that happened during the interaction between the subject and the native speakers were considered. The hypothesis

formulated was: conversation with natives can cause anxiety and reduce exposure to the target language, especially if the student is a beginner.

The data highlights that the assumption that negative events prevented the speaker from communicating with natives is correct. Although the student showed her motivation and her willingness to establish a relationship with native speakers, in many cases, the anxiety prevailed and prevented the students from interacting with the natives. Nevertheless, in this longitudinal study it can be observed that in a span of time that goes from the beginning to the end of the study abroad program, the speaking anxiety decreased in the situations where anxiety-provoking events occurred.

According to Dawaele (2007), although studying abroad is considered the most effective way to transform linguistic knowledge into communicative intentions, studying abroad does not imply learning a language easily. In fact, negative experiences during communication are difficult to overcome since students find it hard to express their thoughts after experiencing an anxiety-provoking situation (Drogan, 2019). The data emerging from the diary are partly consistent with what was affirmed by Drogan (2019) since the foreign language anxiety slightly decreased as the time passed and the student became more self-confident. Consequently, it can be said that interaction with natives outside of the classroom is more frequent for students who have higher levels of L2 and self-confidence since they are more inclined to take risks (Lee, 2020).

The anxiety-provoking aspects will be now analysed and compared to the literature review. The first aspect that generated a state of anxiety in the student is the feeling of negative evaluation of the speaking performance and a non-recognition of the student as an Arabic speaker. For instance, in entry 10 when the student tried to talk to the waiters in Arabic and

received an answer in English, not only did the student experience the fear of being judged by the natives for the accent or for the errors she could have made, but also she felt as if her identity as an Arabic speaker was denied (Trentman, 2012).

Moreover, in contrast to the classroom where students frequently communicate with familiar interlocutors (classmates and teachers) and in quite predictable exercises, real-life environments may frequently lead them to unfamiliar interlocutors in quite unpredictable contexts (Lee, 2020). According to Suleiman (1991), in fact, when students meet the native speakers of the TL, there is a high percentage of probability that students can feel anxious. The data emerged from the diary are consistent with Lee (2020) since the speaking anxiety during the study abroad program was shown to be directly proportional to the predictability of conversations. Furthermore, for instance, in entry 14, when the student was about to order take away food, she feared the unpredictability of the situation and she decided not to buy food. Nevertheless, it must be highlighted that, in entry 15, as time passed, the student dealt with the same situation differently. In particular, not only did the student decide to stop at the fast food restaurant, but also, when the cashier answered in English, she kept giving answers in Arabic. This episode supports the theory proposed by Lee (2020) that anxiety and self-confidence, gained with the improvement of the linguistic skills, are inversely proportional.

Moreover, another aspect to be taken into account is that some situations, compared to others, may have a stronger impact on the student. According to Elkhafaifi (2005), when the language learned, especially the writing and the phonological system, are completely different from students' mother tongue, as in the case of Arabic, Japanese, or Chinese for European students, the anxiety could increase drastically. In fact, in entry 14, at the end, the student

stated that she never experienced this feeling of insecurity and anxiety while talking to an English native speaker.

Additionally, when considering the speaking anxiety, the attention must be drawn also to listening anxiety since listening anxiety can strongly influence speaking anxiety when learners perceive that they are not able to comprehend the message of the interlocutor and the communication could be limited (Kimura, 2017). However, researchers examined the relationships between the four abilities and FL anxiety and found that speaking is the main source of anxiety among students (Al-khresheh, 2020). In fact, the student observed that the conversation in Arabic with the waiter failed after one sentence since she didn't understand what he answered, and this led to a state of anxiety.

Last, many people have inflated expectations about developing their language skills abroad, feeling discouraged and anxious after unsuccessful attempts to speak with native speakers. From the diary emerged that the teacher suggested that the student should have tried to use the vocabulary learned in class, at the restaurant. As a consequence, it may be that the student, having received this as an assignment, had even higher expectations.

The data are consistent with the hypothesis formulated for the RQ2 since many episodes emerged from the diary showed that, in anxiety- provoking situations, the exposure of the student to the language was reduced. Furthermore, it was also hypothesised that this behaviour would have been more frequent in beginner students. As can be seen from the longitudinal study, in fact, the student, after becoming more linguistically skilled and self confident, experienced anxiety in similar situations with a lower degree.

4.3 Research question 3

For the third research question, the methods implied in class by the teacher and the response of the students to the methods utilised was analysed. The hypothesis formulated was: In relation to the student's learning style, the deductive method is not effective to construct word knowledge in an L2 Egyptian language class.

The results might suggest that the teacher, most of the time, employed, during the lessons, the deductive method. However, based on the data emerged from the diary, the student would have preferred to be taught following an inductive method. As a consequence, the student considered many lessons ineffective for acquiring new vocabulary, also for the little time dedicated to exercises.

The deductive method is a traditional teaching method in which first the rules and the information about a specific topic of the target language are introduced and then some explanatory examples are given (Hayes, 2010). From the data that emerged, it can be noticed that the teacher mainly employed this method. As a matter of fact, the student affirmed that, when introducing a new dialogue, the teacher first presented the words in the vocabulary at the end of the book and then moved to reading the dialogue. Afterwards, the teacher did not present exercises for fixing the new information.

On the other hand, the inductive method includes a series of processes that first lead to observing the language and formulating hypotheses; second, verifying in daily reality or through confirmation from the teacher; last, evaluating if the new rule, hypothesised and verified, is worth to be fixed (Begotti, 2013). As emerged from the data, the student affirmed that she would have preferred to see the words in a context before reading the meaning of them in the vocabulary at the end of the book in order to try to guess their meaning and then verify the words in the context, clearly expressing her preference for the inductive method.

The student, in fact, in response to the impossibility of studying during the lessons according to her learning preferences, when studying at home, after the classes, she always chose to start to reorganise the explanations of the teacher, following an inductive reasoning. Also, the student, after ascertaining the necessity of looking for a better method to memorise the vocabulary, found a more effective method for studying at home, sometimes asking for support from an Egyptian friend, which consisted in associating the words to funny stories.

Cobb (1999) showed that both deductive and inductive procedures are effective for learning new information, but only teachers following inductive methods enhance students' ability to use the new vocabulary learned in different contexts. As emerged from the diary, the student, because of the lack of exercises and active participation in the lessons, often felt insecure to use new vocabulary in real life. As a matter of fact, the deductive method does not help students to improve self-promotion, which can only be attained through autonomy developed during inductive reasoning. Nevertheless, being the inductive method more time-consuming than the deductive method, sometimes it is necessary to resort to both methods during the same lesson. Yet, it must be said that little is known about whether the teacher was aware of those teaching methods or not since sometimes, as emerged from entry 29, lessons were improvised without following a structured reasoning and the request from the student of changing method never led to an inductive reasoning.

Moreover, as for the repetition of topics already explained, the teacher never proposed different activities: she only repeated the lesson as already presented previously when the student asked it. Consequently, the student complained that in class, building vocabulary was quite impossible (entry 19). The data emerging from entry 19 were consistent with what affirmed by Nation (1997, as cited in Leung, 2002), that is, that forgetting the meaning of the

words could be related to a scarce exposure or repetition and to a lack of reinforcement immediately after the first explanation. Furthermore, according to Begotti (2013), since the only teaching method that follows brain functioning is the inductive method, only this method leads to logical conclusions that are more significant in terms of memorization.

On the whole, the data emerging from the diary are consistent with the hypothesis that, based on the preferences of the student, the deductive method is not effective for constructing word knowledge in an L2 environment.

4.4 Limitations of the study

This project allowed the researcher to observe a study abroad experience, analysing the influence of psychological aspects on the student outside the classroom environment and the effectiveness of the method employed by the teacher in the classroom. However, some limitations have to be considered. First, the limited length of the data collection: a longer period of time dedicated to the observation would have provided more extensive data about student change over time and improved the quality of the research. Second, self-reported data can present some limitations in terms of the student's change of attitude due to more consciousness while writing the diary. Third, the researcher and the diarist were the same person, therefore the study may be subject to the effect of personal bias.

4.5 Further research

Further research might benefit from a greater sample of students so as to favour higher consistency of the results. Ideally, the study should include a wider sample of students with different backgrounds and a number of teachers of the same school implying different methods. This could lead to a better understanding of how students react to different organisations of the lessons. Moreover, to measure the improvements gained, students might be assessed before and after starting the study abroad program. The researcher could prepare a pre-test and a post-test for each level of the CEFR and the results could then be quantitatively analysed.

Furthermore, research might also be conducted comparing classes of different language levels in order to understand to what extent psychological aspects such as speaking and listening anxiety and motivation do affect students with different linguistic backgrounds, inside and outside the classroom environment.

Conclusion

This research project aimed at understanding the aspects that influenced the study of Egyptian Arabic as L2 of the student researcher herself inside and outside the classroom environment.

From the data, it emerged that two psychological aspects influenced her study abroad experience: the integrative motivation and the foreign language anxiety. The integrative motivation is typically high in students passionate about the culture of the target language, as in the case of the student involved in this research project. In fact, the student continued to speak to natives, despite the negative events that generated anxiety, to succeed in integrating into the culture as much as possible. Notwithstanding the motivation, the foreign language anxiety strongly impacted the student's self-confidence, resulting in the student being reluctant to use Egyptian Arabic when the situation was extremely unpredictable or risky for her social image.

Regarding the teaching method, it was found that, first, the grammar rules or the vocabulary were presented and, second, they were observed into a context which was a sentence or a dialogue from the units of the book. This reasoning, which is part of the deductive approach, did not meet the preferences of the student who clearly found the inductive method more effective.

On the whole, it can be concluded that the student, during the study abroad experience, succeeded in dealing with the difficulties inside and outside the classroom environment thanks to the willingness of integrating into the society and becoming part of the community.

Notwithstanding this, the events that were considered negative, despite the high motivation, still influenced the student's improvement of exposure to the language.

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