Theses and Dissertations

August 2018

Italian as a Heritage Language Spoken in the US

Maria Teresa Bonfatti Sabbioni
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

ITALIAN AS HERITAGE LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN THE US

by

Maria Teresa Bonfatti Sabbioni

A Dissertation Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Linguistics

at

The University of Milwaukee-Wisconsin

August 2018

ABSTRACT

ITALIAN AS HERITAGE LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN THE US

by

Maria Teresa Bonfatti Sabbioni

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2018
Under the Supervision of Professor Sandra Pucci

"L'italiano è di nuovo una lingua scritta e non parlata, dei dotti e non della nazione"
                                                                    - A.Gramsci (1891 – 1937)

The present study focuses on Italian as a heritage language spoken in the US by

individuals bilingual in Italian and English, exposed to both language since birth. The subjects of

the study are the members of six family nuclei, for a total of seven children as heritage speakers

of Italian and as input receivers, and 6 parents as native speakers of Standard Italian and as

input providers, living in different cities in Wisconsin and Illinois. The study specifically

investigates the following structures: a) Gender assignment and gender agreement between

determiner, noun and adjective; b) Auxiliary selection in the Italian compound past tense

passato prossimo; c) Presence of the contrast between *passato prossimo* and i*mperfett*o in the

same narrative; d) Preferred past tense forms; e) Production of direct objects in the form of

clitic or as a full lexical noun; f) Clitic placement in the contexts of use with negative imperative

and with modal verbs; and g) Different uses of *piacere* verb. Eight tasks were administered,

divided between oral and written modalities, of which oral tasks are in the form of elicitation,

of picture description, of sentence building based on pictures, and of semi-free speech. Written

tasks are in the form of forced-choice acceptability, binary acceptability, Yes/No acceptability judgment, and multiple-choice selection task.

The study aims to investigate possible differences and similarities between the heritage language and the language of origin, under the assumption of the heritage grammar as an independent linguistic system with its own set of rules. The findings suggest that the nature of the differences between the two systems doesn't reside only in language performance, but also in language structure. Specifically, systematic differences between the two systems take place in grammatical adomains in which the source language displays degrees of variability and language specific properties. Therefore, these differences represent the heritage speakers' attempt at regularizing language specific rules.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation was born and completed under the guidance, the help and the support of different people. Each one of them contributed to enrich my life of knowledge and perspectives.

My biggest, sincerest, and forever gratitude goes to all the subjects of the study, without whom I would have never had any real data and therefore any research. Thanks to the parents, who had the intelligence and the perseverance of raising their children bilingual and bicultural. Thanks to the children as heritage speakers of Italian, who understood the challenges and the gains of being bilinguals.

A special thank to Professor Liliana (Sandra) Pucci, because: "*Rare sono le persone che usano la mente, poche coloro che usano il cuore e uniche coloro che usano entrambi* (by Rita Levi-Montalcini*). Come te!* Thank you for being the perfect bridge between two worlds and two languages and for making my experience as a doctorate student remarkable and fulfilling, not to mention, funny.

My sincere gratitude goes to Professor Fred Eckman for showing me the importance of clarity and of logic and focused thinking. Thank you to Professor Ann Pycha, for her brilliant and pragmatic mind, and to Professor Garry Davis, for teaching me how the past beautifully connects to the present through language. My gratitude goes to all the Linguistic professors at UWM (K. Pattillo, A. Park, T. Tue, H. Ouali, N. Fleisher, J.Y. Song, C. Zafra), who allowed me to be part of an amazing program.

If I arrived at the end of this beautiful linguistic experience, it is also because I have shared laughs, thoughts, and lots of homework with ironic and intelligent friends and

classmates, like you, Yahya Aldholmi. Thank you to all my friends: Hoen, Mary, Laurel, Irina, Brent and Jane, Lara, Kim, Nilda, all of you have always been supportive and encouraging, even when the end seemed very far away.

I want to specifically dedicate this research to my family. To my parents *babbo* and *ma`*, because they always stand by me, even without fully understanding my choices. To my sister, *Tita,* because many years ago, she was the very first one who ever introduced me to Chomsky (although from a psychological perspective) and I have to say, I got hooked.

Last, but not least, I dedicate this dissertation to my husband *Jigbie* (you can go running as much you want now). You are the only one who understood the profound meaning of my choice and the consequent challenges that this choice had on our team, because everything we do together, supporting, replacing, helping each other, is for the three of use. Thank you for being such a big part in our daughter's education, especially for helping me rasing her as a great heritage speaker of Italian.

And finally, this is for you *cara Camilla,* because I am confident that one day, you will benefit from knowing two languages and two cultures and because now *mamma* can play with you any time you ask.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The present research, as many previous studies on heritage languages (Montrul, 2008,

2015, Polinsky, 2006, 2009, Rothman, 2009), attempts to understand the complexity of

linguistic issues such as language acquisition and language maintenance in the heritage context

(Scontras et al., 2015), providing possible explanations on the nature and origin of the heritage

system. This research represents the first investigation of Italian as heritage language spoken in

the United States, and explores the features of the Italian language used by members of the

same family nucleus, specifically the parents as input providers and the children as heritage

speakers.

Theoretical assumption

The study is based on the view of the heritage system as the internally constructed

other language in the mind of the bilingual speaker, and as a system independently developed

from the language of origin. This investigation does not rely on theoretical constructs purely

defined in relation to monolingual norms, deeply rooted in the role of the standard language as

target against which to compare the heritage system, but is based on the assumption that

deviations from the idealized standard norm can be seen as specific traits of the speakers'

heritage system. Therefore any differences between the heritage system and the standard

monolingual system, from which the heritage language derives, are considered defining

elements of an independent grammar.

Specifically, the study is based on the following theoretical statement: the heritage

language is a full, functioning and independent system with its own set of rules, spoken by

bilingual individuals, whose features are dependent from its acquisition modality and from cross-linguistic influence. The linguistic origin of the heritage system is the native language of the input source (the parents) from which the heritage system derives and independently develops. The features of the new system, due to the bilingual nature of the context in which it is born, will either differ from or be similar to that of its language of origin. The present study adopts the view of heritage speakers as native speakers of their language of origin to which they were exposed from birth, and proposes to set the ground for the future investigations of heritage Italian as an independent linguistic system with its own set of rules.

The chapter starts by presenting the theoretical approach followed by the study from the perspective of language acquisition, describing the conditions of language acquisition in monolingual setting and in heritage language scenario. The chapter then covers the notions of native intuition of the first language, of linguistic competence and of vulnerable domains of the heritage grammar, in relation to the acquisition of the heritage system. The chapter concludes with the description of the study and the main research questions, providing an important overview on the risk of the Comparative Fallacy (Bley-Vroman, 1983).

Language acquisition

I believe that language acquisition happens by nature and by nurture. The language system is built through the complex and fundamental interaction of factors that are in and out the human mind. Humans are social animals and most of the things they do, included the use of language, take place within the society in which they live and operate. Therefore language acquisition is the product of social interaction (Snow, 2009) that starts within the basic speech community made by the parents and the child. But what makes us unique social animals is our

ability of producing language. The human mind takes the necessary fuel from the environment to feed the complex in-built system (Chomsky, 1988) that produces language and that makes us unique.

The present study adopts the view that our innate ability of producing language "is not just a predisposition to language, but an abstract structured system" (Belletti & Guasti, 2015, pg. 11), which enables us to produce comprehensible and grammatical sentences, which belong to the abstract representation of language, whether they are a found or not in the specific environmental input of the language we speak. Therefore, the fundamental linguistic element that allows the understanding of how language develops in children, is the production of structures and forms, which may or may not be conformed to the expected adult language, but which are, most of the time, "linguistically possible expressions in other world's languages" (Belletti & Guasti, 2015, pg. 11). In this perspective, the study adopts the view of the heritage grammar as one of the native linguistic systems in the mind of bilingual speakers and of the heritage speakers as native speakers of their family language. Therefore, any of their productions, forms or judgments is evidence of the linguistic manifestation of their in-built and fully developed native language.

Language acquisition in heritage language scenario

Different preconditions of language acquisition produce different linguistic outcomes to the point where a heritage language and the language of origin from which it derives, can be seen as products of two different acquisition modalities. In addition, the bilingual nature of the heritage language scenario contributes to create variables in terms of outcomes of the acquisition process. For example, bilingual speakers can develop at different paces and

according to different levels of competency, the production and comprehension of one of their

two languages systems.

First language in monolingual speakers is acquired through aural exposure to the input

in naturalistic environments, like family and society, and through the explicit language learning

in artificial school settings after the age of five. While, implicit knowledge of language in

monolingual children develops in very early years of the child's life, metalinguistic knowledge

fully develops when children go to school (Karmiloff-Smith, 1979). The aural and written

acquisition modalities intersect one another in the life of the monolingual speaker, providing

language development through adolescence, although we still don't know if the explicit

exposure to written text and to metalinguistic knowledge plays a direct role in the structuring

of the language system. Both modalities produce a direct influence at level of skills in the

learner's linguistic system. Speakers will develop competent comprehension and production

skills under direct aural input, and competent writing and reading skills under formal

instruction, in addition to the oral competence (Montrul, 2011).

Although it's not clear to what extent explicit instruction may contribute to the process

of language acquisition, different scholars believe "academic support of the language and

development of literacy skills during the school-age period can contribute significantly to

language maintenance and the degree of linguistic competence acquired in the heritage

language in early adulthood" (Montrul, 2015, pg. 5).

In heritage context, the family language is acquired through aural modality. The

acquisition of the heritage system as the other native language in bilingual speakers is

determined by the early exposure to input in the form of speech provided by family members

and mainly by the parents (or just on parent in many cases). The boundaries of the family nucleus represent the naturalistic environment in which the heritage language is acquired, developed, and used. In this scenario, the acquisition of the heritage system often (but not always) lacks the instructed acquisition modality provided by formal schooling in the heritage language, and sometimes lacks a linguistic environment and the exposure to societal input with input sources outside the family environment.

The lack of explicit language learning in the heritage language posits questions of if, how, and in what terms the explicit instruction contributes or not to language acquisition. According to Birdsong (1989), native linguistic competence can be achieved by a speaker without necessarily be exposed to explicit instruction, while Silva-Corvalán (Silva-Corvalan, 1994; Martínez Mira, 2009) suggests that by receiving less input at an earlier age and without any schooling in the family language, heritage speakers of Spanish never fully acquire all of the uses and semantic nuances of some standard structures like the subjunctive mood (Silva-Corvalán, 1994; Martínez Mira, 2009).

Heritage speakers are known to be highly competent in the oral comprehension and production of their heritage language while lacking explicit knowledge of reading and writing. Montrul (2008) showed that heritage speakers of Spanish outperformed advanced second language learners in pronunciation, listening tasks, and in conversation (Montrul, 2008, Keating et al. 2011). I agree on the fact that difference at level of skills is related to the presence or absence of the implicit and explicit modality in which the heritage input has been received. But I also believe that knowing how to interpret a text and knowing how to reproduce graphemes, are skills that develops thanks to our language capacity and that, they don't belong to the

linguistic notion of language acquisition as the human capacity of building the abstract system of language. Therefore, the fact that heritage speakers may not be exposed to explicit instruction in their family language doesn't necessarily imply lack of acquisition of their heritage language.

In terms of methodology, the acquisition modality of the heritage language, which favored the development of oral abilities, has been identified as a possible explanation for some of the experimental results obtained in linguistic research ion heritage language (Montrul, 2011). In fact, targeting both the subjects' implicit and explicit knowledge of their heritage language ignores the fact that different modalities of language acquisition lead to different manifestations of linguistic competence. Heritage speakers are often administered acceptability judgment or fill the gap tasks in written form, which require metalinguistic competence, reading ability, and knowledge of specific grammatical lexicon in the heritage language. As a consequence, the results may be an artifact of the task rather than the results of the speakers' competence since they have been judged on the basis of skills that they have not acquired (Montrul, 2011).

The acquisition of the heritage language seems to be influenced by many linguistic and extra linguistic factors. Different pre-conditions of language acquisition play a role in determining the outcome of the acquisition process, while the social status and education of the input providers, or the presence or lack of instruction, may influence the level of competency in the heritage language or the language register used. In addition, different scholars suggest the importance of "investigating the political, educational, social, cognitive, and affective conditions under which language learning does or does not occur in these

minority-language-speaking populations" (Montrul, 2015, pg.8). Although I believe that language acquisition happens through the complex interactions of various factors, I think that every assumption made to understand the acquisition of the heritage language, in terms of acquisition modality, and in terms of interaction of multiple factors, should also be made with respect to language acquisition in monolingual setting.

The notion of linguistic competence

The analysis of heritage languages brings us back the old debate on the meaning of language knowledge. What does it mean to speak a language well? What are the criteria that define the language skills of a speaker? We tend to identify language knowledge in terms of language proficiency and we measure language proficiency in terms of language use (Valdes and Figueroa, 1994). A second language learner is considered proficient in the second language (L2) according to how much and how well the proficiency criteria are met. The greatest achievement of the learning process is reaching a native-like attainment in the second language. "Being like a native speaker" becomes a criterion for comparison, but we do not usually question nor measure the proficiency of a monolingual native speaker. In monolingual settings, the one language spoken does not have any other terms of comparison but itself. In the case of second language acquisition, the unquestioned proficiency of the native speaker still remains the preferred target against which to compare a speaker's knowledge of the L2.

In many heritage language studies, the bilingual heritage speaker is compared with the native monolingual speaker, whose proficiency level still remains unaltered and unquestioned. In fact, heritage speakers are often described as proficient children in the heritage language, who grow up to become adult speakers with divergent attainment in relation to the standard

baseline, and whose language seems to lack the full development of a monolingual native language (Polinsky, 2006; Polinsky and Kagan, 2007; Montrul, 2008; Benmamoun et al., 2013).

With regard to first language competence, we assume that the monolingual native speaker, as idealized speaker, not only develops the best language system possible, but also provides the best performance, not potentially influenced or limited by irrelevant conditions. We equate being a native speaker of a language variety with the linguistic notion of competence in that language. If this is true, we should then consider a priori heritage speakers as competent speakers of their heritage language since they are native speakers of that language. However, one aspect would remain unexplained: The many degrees of linguistic competence among heritage speakers. According to Polinsky and Kagan (2007), heritage speakers display great comprehension skills while "their speaking abilities fall within a continuum, from rather fluent speakers, who can sound almost like competent native speakers, to those who can barely speak the home language" (Polinsky and Kagan, 2007, pg.6). They state that the heritage speakers' oral abilities "fall within a continuum, from rather fluent speakers, who can sound almost like competent native speakers, to those who can barely speak the home language" (Polinsky and Kagan, 2007, pg.6). The great diversity in competence levels among heritage speakers seems to be determined by the variable input received.

The role of the input

In first language acquisition we don' have evidence of the input necessary to trigger the process of acquisition, but we often make assumptions about its properties. In most of the studies on heritage grammars (Montrul, 2008, 2015; Polinsky 2006) the input or lack of it seems to be the pivotal element around which the features of the heritage language are identified as

incomplete first language (Montrul, 2013, Scontras et al., 2015). Differences in exposure to input seem have have a multiplicity of causes such as, "the manner and length of exposure to the baseline" (Polinsky and Kaga, 2007, pg.16), intending for baseline the target standard language as language of origin, the number of family members who speak the heritage language to the children, and the time when the majority language is introduced in the home (Kondo-Brown, 2005; Valdes, 1995).

But how do we determine if the input amount is adequate and sufficient for language acquisition? And how do we define a competent native speaker? If we assume that monolingual native speakers are all equally competent in different areas of language knowledge, that is, in comprehension and production, can we assume the same for heritage speakers? We account for differences in the native language, in terms of individual variability and of language variation. If the heritage language is a native language, spoken not by monolingual speakers, but by bilingual speakers, how do we account for differences in language use and language structure? If one of the critical points in heritage language studies is the presence of many degrees of competence in the heritage language, should we explain the differences between heritage speakers in terms of individual variation and language change as in the monolingual setting, or should we find criteria that better describe the bilingual setting?

According to Kupisch and Rothman (2016) the factors that can influence the variable competence in heritage speakers' performance are quantity of the input (Sorace, 2004; Rothman, 2009; Pascual y Cabo & Rothman, 2012) and formal instruction in the HL (e.g., Kupisch, 2013; Kupisch et al., 2014).

I believe that all one can determine is the nature of the grammar from which any input

9

came. Therefore, the present study doesn't make any assumptions about the role of input in

terms of quality and quantity, but aims to describe the heritage system, as the outcome of

specific condition of language acquisition. Understanding what the heritage grammar is and

how it works is the only way to determine how the input may have worked, not the other way

around.

The notion of vulnerable domains

The role of the input is often indicated as main factor in determining the features of

vulnerability of the heritage grammar. Vulnerable domains represent an important element in

the investigation of heritage grammars. These are areas of the heritage grammar known to be

"vulnerable" (Montrul, 2013, Scontras et al. 2015) to simplification processes employed by the

heritage speakers, "in comparison with what monolingual speakers do" (Scontras et al., 2015,

pg. 8). Other factor also seem to contribute to how the heritage system is acquired and

develops throughout the life span of heritage speakers such as the onset of age of acquisition,

individual differences in working memory, and individual aptitude and motivation (Tsimpli &

Sorace, 2006; Montrul, 2010; Rothman, 2009; Scontras et al., 2015). For example, according to

Scontras et al., (2015) syntax and morphology seem to be areas of the heritage grammar

"particularly vulnerable to reanalysis" (Scontras et al., 2015, pg. 9). In their investigation of

gender and number assignment in Heritage Spanish, they found that number and gender were

not treated as separate categories but their differences were leveled to the point of

convergence into one category (Scontras et al., 2015). Their findings were interpreted as

evidence of "morphological limitations in heritage languages" (Scontras et al. 2015, pg. 8),

which leads to the notion of the heritage system as "a different, ostensibly simpler grammar

than that of the baseline" (Scontras et al. 2015, pg. 8), where baseline is the behavior of the native speakers of the language of origin.

On the other hand, the Interface Hypothesis (Tsimpli & Sorace, 2006, Sorace and Serratrice, 2008) identifies as vulnerable domains the areas of grammar at external interfaces, more than grammar internal ones. In fact, it is possible to predict areas of heritage grammars in which processes of attrition and/or simplification take place at the interface of two different levels of grammar such as syntax and semantics. In addition, interface levels seem to require more processing load from the bilingual speakers. Other scholars, like Montrul identify domains like "inflectional morphology, complex syntax (with embedding), and discourse-pragmatics" (Montrul, 2010, pg.593) as "structural knowledge typically affected under incomplete acquisition". Montrul (2008) also suggests that the age of language acquisition in combination with a limited exposure to heritage input may play a role in determining simplified features of the heritage system, viewed as products of incomplete acquisition of the language of origin.

Last, but not least, scholars like Rothman (2007) believe that the language contact scenario as environment of heritage language acquisition plays a role in determining the presence of "attrited or incompletely acquired" (Rothman, 2009, pg.5) structures in the heritage system. The states that the main differences between "emerging language-contact and monolingual varieties" (Rothman, 2009, pg. 159) are determined by the differences in the quality and quantity of the input provided during the acquisition process, which can lead to simplified forms of the heritage grammar in comparison with the standard language from which the heritage system derives.

The present study questions the notion of vulnerable domains in the heritage grammar, since the vulnerability of the heritage system only exists in comparison with the standard target language. Therefore, since the heritage grammar is investigated here as the speaker's own creation, vulnerable domains become specific traits of the heritage system, and evidence of the heritage speakers' knowledge of the family language.

The Comparative Fallacy

The theory of grammar, as postulated by Chomsky (1975), aims to describe the mechanisms that generate the regularities of the language system set in the mind of an ideal speaker. In order to understand the functioning of the language system, we rely on the native speakers' intuition of their own language. In fact, we assume that native speakers can implicitly identify what "sounds right" or "doesn't sound right" in their native language. This native intuition is usually investigated through grammaticality judgments or acceptability tasks on target elements. If the native speakers' "opinion" is evidence for the nature of their linguistic competence, shouldn't the heritage speakers' judgment become evidence as well of their heritage language competence?

In many studies on heritage language acquisition, the theory of an idealized language used by an idealized speaker is taken as referential target against which the heritage system is compared. The grammatical judgment from native speakers of a standard variety becomes the unquestioned evidence of the linguistic competence that the heritage speakers should have, as native speakers of the same language. From this perspective, everything that the heritage speakers do never quite reaches the idealized standard language.

I believe that prominent studies (Polinsky, 2006; Montrul, 2008; Benmamoun et al., 2013) fall into a comparative fallacy (Bley-Vroman, 1983) when they attempt to explain the heritage system mechanism through the rules that govern the standard language, and when they define the linguistic profile of the heritage speaker on the basis of monolingual criteria. This is why the present study aims to avoid the comparative fallacy of comparing the linguistic competence of bilingual heritage speakers to a monolingual target language as absolute model. The analysis of the heritage grammar refers to the grammar of the source language Standard Italian as the source language for the description of the heritage speakers' behavior, but not according to a target language perspective. In fact, the heritage system could theoretically be investigated in terms of principles and of language specific parameters, like any other language in the world.

The current study and research questions

The current study follows from the latest discussion on the state of heritage linguistics as carried on by Scontras, G., Fuchs, Z., and M. Polinsky (2015) within the wider view of multilingualism. Scontras et al. (2015) highlighted the importance of heritage linguistics in understanding the concept of native speaker competence as well as its implication for the study of grammar. Kupisch and Rothman (2016) put emphasis on the complexity of the heritage speakers' scenario, not only in terms of acquisition, but also in terms of variable linguistic knowledge across heritage speakers. The present study aims to explore the behavior of heritage speakers of Italian living in the US from the perspective of language acquisition and differs from previous investigations, in methodological choices and in theoretical assumptions.

The study in fact, adopts the view of the heritage grammar as an independent linguistic system, which was born from the language source input but developed it own set of rules.

Specifically, this investigation aims to answer the following research questions, in order to describe the heritage language as it is used and produced by each subject, as the result of the speaker's own creation.

RQ 1 How do the heritage speakers of Italian behave with respect to the given structures?

RQ 2 Do the heritage grammars of individuals differ from the source language?

This dissertation will also test two hypotheses, each of which corresponds with the previous research question.

For research question 1 (RQ1), I will test the following hypotheses:

H1 Heritage speakers rely on native intuition of their family language when employing a re-structuring process of grammatical aspects of their heritage language.

For research question 2 (Rq2), I will test the following hypothesis:

H2 The HL restructuring process takes place in specific domains of grammar that are particular to the source language and in which the source language displays degree of variability and/or language specific behaviour.

The hypotheses are tested through the interlanguage analysis of the behavior displayed by the heritage speakers of Italian living in the US, in the following grammatical structures: a) Clitic form, use and placement; b) Contrast and use between various past tense forms; c) Selection of auxiliary in past tense *passato prossimo* d) Morphological gender assignment and agreement

e) Acceptability of various uses of *piacere* verb. The subjects of the investigation are the members of the same family nucleus, for a total of six families. Participants are six parents as native speakers of Standard Italian and as input source, and seven children as input receivers and as heritage speakers of the family language. A total of eight tasks in written and oral modalities are administered to each subject. The data analysis employs two complementary procedures: Error analysis in obligatory occasions, which refers to Standard Italian as the target language, and interlanguage analysis, which highlights the speaker's own creation as possible grammatical constructions of the language system. A detailed description of the methodology can be found in Chapter III.

The dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter II provides the definition of heritage languages as minority languages with no official status in the United States, followed by the definition of heritage speakers as bilingual speakers. The chapter also provides the literary review of previous investigations on heritage languages.

Chapter III describes the theoretical assumptions and the methodology employed in the study, explaining the reasons for the use of two distinct types of data analysis: Error analysis and Interlanguage analysis. Results from error analysis in obligatory occasions are presented in Chapter IV, results from the interlanguage analysis are described in Chapter V while discussion on the overall findings are presented in Chapter VI. Chapter VI also provides the answers to the initial research questions and the statements of each hypothesis.

CHAPTER II

Literature review

The present chapter highlights the importance of the acquisition modality in understanding the linguistic nature of the heritage language, aurally acquired within the family environment and in contact with another language. The Chapter also provides a summary of the previous studies on various heritage grammar, such as Spanish and Russian.

Definition of heritage language

From a socio-political perspective, the term heritage language refers to "the languages spoken by immigrants and their children" (Montrul, 2008, p. 2) in the host country, within the family environment. More specifically, the term identifies "languages other than the dominant language (or languages) in a given social context" (Kelleher, 2010) often referring to immigrant, indigenous, and colonial languages, a categorization based on their historical and social conditions (Fishman, 2001). The heritage language usually plays the role of a minor-unofficial language, while the language spoken in the host country, plays the role of major and official language (Montrul, 2008). Within the United States, the term heritage language identifies the minority language of immigrant communities, which co-exists with English as majority language in the same social, cultural and political ground (Willey & al., 2014). The socio-political status of the heritage language in the US is of minority-immigrant-unofficial languages spoken within home environments, opposing the majority language spoken in society, English.

From a linguistic perspective, the term refers to the internally constructed other language in the mind of bilingual speakers, aurally acquired in naturalistic environment and primarily used by family members within the family context.

Definition of heritage speakers

From a socio-political perspective, heritage speakers (HS) are either "the children of immigrants born in the host country or immigrant children who arrived in the host country some time in childhood" (Montrul, 2008, p. 2). The immigrant parents are usually identified as the first generation, while the children and grandchildren are identified as second and third generation of speakers of their language of origin (Silva-Corvalán, 1994).

From a linguistic perspective, heritage speakers are viewed as "heterogeneous sub-population of multi-linguals" (Scontras et al., 2015, p.16) often defined as "early bilinguals of minority languages" (Montrul, 2008, p.16) exposed to two languages either simultaneously, since birth, or sequentially, from a very early age. They are native speakers of a minority language. Many heritage speakers seem to be subject during the course of their lifetime, to a shift in use toward the majority language spoken in society. What initially was the language acquired after moving into the host country, for example English in the US, takes on the role of first language (Montrul, 2008), as the primaru language used in daily life.

The Italian investigated in the study

The present study focuses on Italian as heritage language spoken in the US. From the perspective of language policy and language use, the Italian language plays multiple roles according to whether it's spoken in or outside the country.

 The Italian spoken in Italy plays the prestigious role of official and standard language along with minority languages, recognized and protected by State laws and with many dialects and regional varieties, which don't hold any official status. Italian is also the majority language of new generation of Italians of different ethnicities who continue to use their language of

origin at home. In this specific situation, the term *language of origin* or *ethnic language (*Diadori, 2009*)* both refer to the language spoken in the family environment, which is also the major language spoken in the country of origin of the parents and is being used in place of the term "heritage language". Only in recent years, sociolinguistic studies have started to use the term "heritage" in reference to ethnic languages spoken by other populations residing in Italy (Guerini, 2011).

On the contrary, the Italian spoken outside the country becomes a minority language with or without status depending on the host country. Within the European territory, Italian is one of the official languages of the European Community used in the European Parliament and taught in many schools and institutions of the Community as a foreign language. In the US, Italian language, like Polish, Spanish and Russian acquires the features of family language spoken only within the home environment and becomes a foreign language taught in different American schools and universities.

The Italian under investigation in this study is identified as follows: It is an immigrant minority language, with no official status in the United States, used in the same country as the majority language, English. It is the language spoken in the family setting and among family members, aurally acquired in home environment by its heritage speakers, with or without a larger community of use outside the family nucleus.

Previous studies on heritage grammars

The primary focus of many investigations on heritage languages is to provide an explanation as to how and why the heritage grammar differs from the standard variety as its language of origin. The outcomes of language acquisition and of language maintenance "in the

shape of heritage grammars" are explained by different theories (Scontras, G., Fuchs, Z., M.

Polinsky, 2015, p.3), which share the common goal of understanding what contributes to the

features of certain areas of the heritage grammar, often defined as vulnerable to simplification.

These theories differ with respect to the origin of this vulnerability. Many linguistic and extra-

linguistic factors seem to influence the structuring process of the heritage system, from the role

of input in terms of quantity, as sufficient or insufficient exposure, and in terms of quality with

respect to the type of language variety spoken by the input providers, to the environment of

use of the heritage language and to individual speakers' traits, such as "age of acquisition,

individual differences in working memory, affect, and motivation" in using the family language

(Montrul 2010, pg. 593).

Previous studies provide multiple explanations to why the heritage grammar looks the

way it does. For examples, some scholars view the features of the heritage systems as the

result of incomplete acquisition, or of divergent attainment (Scontras et al., 2015), due to

reduced input (Montrul, 2008); while others view the heritage grammar as evidence of cross-

linguistic interferences between the family language and the societal language (Cuza, 2011,

2012). Scholars like Valdes (1999) consider HL a case of attrition analzyed according to a

language contact framework while Cook (2003) views HL as a case of the dominant language

transfer.

Among European studies, some scholars attribute the features of the heritage grammar

to various process in integrating sources of information at different levels (Belletti, Bennati, and

Sorace, 2007; Sorace, 2004; Serratrice, 2009; Sorace and Filiaci 2006; Filiaci, 2011), while others

view the heritage language as the other language in the mind of a bilingual speaker, which can

assume the trait of weak or dominant language according to different linguistic and extra

linguistic factors (Kupisch, 2006; LaMorgia, 2013).

The dominant approaches to heritage language acquisition are described in the

following section.

a. HL as evidence of incomplete acquisition or of divergent attainment.

This view is the predominant perspectives among others and follows the assumption

that "Successful and complete language acquisition depends on receiving a minimum threshold

of input that will trigger the full development (i.e., age appropriate) of language abilities and

grammatical proficiency" (Montrul 2011, pg. 22). According to this view the heritage language

displays the linguistic identity of a first language, because it's acquired from birth, but never

reaches a full development in the mind of the heritage speaker due to an abrupt interruption of

input. In fact, the heritage speakers' family language "was first in terms of order of acquisition,

but was not completely acquired" (Benmamoun, Montrul, Polisnky, 2013, p.7). In addition, in

many cases, although the heritage language is acquired first in order of acquisition, "it's not

completely acquired because of the individual's switch to another dominant language"

(Polinsky and Kaga, 2007, pg.4). Montrul states that "Incomplete L1 acquisition occurs in

childhood when for different reasons, some specific properties of the language do not have a

chance to reach age-appropriate levels of proficiency after the intense exposure to the L2

begins" (Montrul, 2008, pg. 24). Heritage structures are analyzed in comparison with the

monolingual system and any divergent form is viewed as evidence of a system that never fully

set in the speaker's mind (Montrul, 2008). Therefore, features of the heritage grammar that are

different from the properties of the standard structures from which the heritage language

derived, are assumed to be the result of an incomplete acquisition process (Montrul, 2008), due

to a reduced input exposure during the life span of the individual heritage speaker. The heritage

input reduction usually happens at the onset of schooling, due to a shift in use towards the

societal language as predominant language in the speakers' life (Montrul, 2008, 2011), for both

the heritage speakers who migrated to another country at a very young age and for the

heritage speakers who were born in the host country, exposed to two languages since birth. In

fact, incomplete acquisition is the outcome of language acquisition in childhood, which did not

reach a full development (Montrul, 2008). Effects of incomplete acquisition on the structural

knowledge of heritage grammars can be identified in inflectional morphology, in complex

syntax structures, such as relative clauses and embedded clauses, and in discourse-pragmatics

interference. In addition, the critical period of language acquisition seems to play a role in how

this system develops and solidifies. The child's competence in the heritage language begins to

lag, such that the heritage language becomes, structurally and functionally, the weaker

language, while the second language spoken in society, plays the role of first and predominant

language. In the words of Benmamoun, Montrul, Polisnky (2013) "Developmental delays that

start in childhood never eventually catch up, and as the heritage child becomes an adult, the

eventual adult grammar does not reach native-like development" (Benmamoun, Montrul,

Polisnky, 2013, p. 55). Incomplete acquisition in the weaker language manifests in adult

heritage speakers as the permanent trait of the heritage grammar (Montrul, 2010). In many

studies on Spanish, Russian, and Arabic as heritage languages (Montrul, 2008, 2015, Polinsky

2006, Benmamoun, 2011) heritage speakers are often described as speakers who don't achieve

the same linguistic knowledge and the same level of competence as adult monolingual speakers

of similar cognitive ability and level of education (Montrul, 2008). The heritage grammar

displayed by these speakers is often referred to as the product of incomplete acquisition

(Polinsky, 2006; Montrul, 2008). The term "incomplete acquisition" was recently replaced with

"divergent attainment" by Scontras, Fuchs, & Polinsky (2015) in their analysis on the status of

heritage linguistics, identifying as 'divergent" the heritage structures that do not conform to the

standard language as the language of origin of the heritage system.

b. HL as evidence of cross-linguistic influences

According to this perspective, the features of the heritage grammar are determined by

interference between the two languages of the bilingual speakers, the family language and the

dominant societal language (Cuza, 2011). In addition to cross linguistic influences multiple

factors seem to play a role in the shaping of heritage structures, such as a reduced exposure to

heritage input, in terms of quantity and quality, the age of acquisition of the heritage speaker,

and the length of exposure to the family language, especially after many years in a country

where another language is spoken.

Some of the latest studies identified as an influencing factor the contact of the heritage

language with altered native input provided by parents and by family members whose native

language is undergoing change due to the extensive use of the societal language, used in their

host country (Perez and Pascual Y Cabo, 2011).

c. *HL as consequence of contact language situation*

In the context of language contact, studies have shown that the features of the heritage

grammar are due to convergence between the heritage language as family language, and the

majority language, as the societal language (Silva-Corvalán 1991, 1994, 2003, Sorace 2003,

Toribio 2004, Bullock & Toribio 2004, De Prada Pérez & Pascual y Cabo 2011, Otheguy 2011).

According to Silva-Corvalán (1991), similarities between the structures of the heritage system

as weak family language and the structures of the majority language as societal language are

assumed to have been different at the onset of contact. As a consequence of language contact,

the presence of non-standard forms in the heritage language is interpreted as evidence of

language loss, or attrition of native grammatical structures (Silva-Corvalan, 2003, 2014).

d. HL as evidence of processing load, specifically at interface levels

The interface vulnerability hypothesis (Sorace, 2004, 2011; Sorace and Filiaci, 2006;

Serratrice, Sorace, Paoli, 2004; Serratrice, Sorace, and Baldo, 2009) interprets the difficulties

that heritage speakers seem to have at the interface between syntax and semantics as evidence

of processing overload, since bilingual speakers display more difficulty than monolingual

speakers in processing two structures from two different levels. The Interface Hypothesis is

based on the assumption that interface levels are particularly vulnerable domains for bilingual

speakers because their grammatical choices are based on two different systems and

consequently involve more processing load (Sorace & Filiaci, 2006; Keating et al., 2011).

e. HL is a case of dominant language transfer

In bilingualism and in language contact studies, such as the case of creoles and pidgins,

the direction of transfer has been attested to be the opposite from the traditional one, which is

from the native language into second language (Cook, 2003). In the heritage situation, the

transfer operates from the second language as the dominant one, into the structures of the

heritage system, as first language in the bilingual speaker (Pavlenko and Jarvis, 2008, Silva-

Corvalan, 2014). For example, the simplified case morphology attested in Russian as heritage

language, is explained through transfer from English, a language that doesn't have a complex morphological marking system.

f. HL as evidence of bilingual first language acquisition

Within a bilingual approach to language acquisition, based on the view of language development as sequence of languages (Kupisch, 2013), scholars like Kupisch (2011, 2016) have attempted to understand the role of language dominance in the development of the two native languages in the mind of bilingual speakers. The order of acquisition of the two languages defines the linguistic identity of the speakers, who are investigated as being simultaneous or successive bilinguals. Simultaneous bilinguals are simultaneously exposed to both weak and strong languages since birth while sequential bilinguals, acquired two languages in different orders. Different outcomes in context of acquisition of the minority versus the majority language (Kupisch, 2013) are due to the influence of linguistic factors, such as the input conditions, and of extra linguistic elements external the acquisition process, such as lack of language separation, cross-linguistic influence, and language mixing (Kupisch, 2014). Native attainment in both languages is a possible outcome of bilingual first language acquisition (Kupisch et al., 2003), and the social status of the one of the two languages, as minor or major, doesn't seem to influence the outcome of the acquisition process, as identified in Kupisch et al., (2003). Their study showed minimal differences in morpho-syntax domain between the heritage speakers of French as minority language and the speakers of French as dominant language in two distinct groups of speakers.

Similar results were obtained by LaMorgia (2013) in her longitudinal study of developmental features of Italian spoken in Ireland by bilingual children. She explored how and

in what terms the weaker language of a bilingual child, differs from the stronger language. She

identified criteria of "weak feature" versus "dominant feature" on a continuum based on

elements such as code-mixing, rate of acquisition of syntactic structures or functional

categories, production of norm-deviant (or target-deviant) forms, vocabulary, lexical and verb

type, avoidance of complex structures, mean length of utterance MLU, and Phonological MLU.

She found that in some children, the Italian displayed features of a weak language while in

others displayed features of a dominant language. Her results showed that the variability

between weak and dominant languages seems to correlate with different factors such as

individual differences, linguistic aptitude, context of use and the speaker's language history.

LaMorgia also found that the input plays a major role in the development of the weak

language and that linguistic properties at the interface between syntax and pragmatics

represent areas of difficulty in the processing of Italian with features of weak language

(LaMorgia, 2013).

CHAPTER III

The methodology

The following chapter describes the methodology employed in the present study and the target structures investigated. The chapter explains the reasons behind the methodological choices focused on the bilingual nature of the heritage system and on the importance of task modality in relation to the modality of language acquisition. The experimental design is presented with respect to the subjects' linguistic and social identity, the type of data analysis, and the role of the target language. The chapter also provides a detailed description of the eight tasks administered in the study. The complete stimulus of each task can be found in Appendix A.

Motivation behind the methodology

The following metaphor can help to understand the methodological choices in terms of how I view the heritage language that is as a functioning system, independent from its language of origin. When we look at a monument built during the Roman Empire, we admire its unique features while praising the incredible construction skills of Roman engineers. We are aware of the fact that the building's properties, from functionality to material and design, belong to a specific historical time and cannot be compared against those of a building designed by contemporary architects. I feel that heritage grammars should be seen in the same way we view Roman buildings. We can achieve a full understanding of the heritage system by comparing its features with those of a similar system that is, of another heritage language and by looking at it as result of specific preconditions of language acquisition and exposure to input in the same way we appreciate the Roman monument by comparing its qualities with similar

buildings of the same historical time and by viewing it as a result of its era. Through this metaphor I want to highlight the importance of analyzing the heritage system on its own terms, by employing a methodology that allows the investigation of the heritage structures for what they are and not for what they should be in relation to a target language and to the prescriptive notions of grammar often used to describe it.

Therefore, the biggest challenge of the present study was to explore the heritage grammar through adequate tools of investigation that would favor the subjects' performance, by allowing them to rely on their implicit knowledge of the heritage language and minimizing their use of explicit or prescriptive knowledge (Montrul, et al., 2008).

The methodology employed here is conceptually based on two important elements: The notion of the comparative fallacy and the role of the acquisition modality in shaping the nature of the heritage system. With respect to the first element, the present experiment is designed with the intent of avoiding the comparative fallacy. Bley-Vroman (1983), in studies on second language acquisition, stated that "Grammars of learners' languages cannot be written, or at least cannot be constructed using the techniques developed for describing other languages" (Bley-Vroman, 1983, p.2). This is why I will not attempt to describe heritage structures by employing tools that belong to another context of investigation. (Simply put, I can't tighten a screw with a needle. I need the appropriate tool, a screwdriver). Any interlanguage analysis that views its deviations as wrong manifestations of the native speaker standards has the serious effect of producing incorrect or misleading assessments of that data. In the same way, any analysis of the heritage grammar that adopts a Target Language (TL) perspective may lead to inadequate descriptions of the heritage structures. For this reason, I believe I can minimize

the risk of misunderstanding the properties of the heritage grammar by avoiding a normative

perspective and consequently, by eliminating the use of an idealized and standardized language

target.

The second element that conceptually influenced my experimental choices is the

assumption that the acquisition modality of a heritage language learner differs from that of a

monolingual first language (Montrul and Benmamoun, 2013) learner and that two different

linguistic outcomes derive from each modality. Consequently, the study aims to employ a

methodology that takes into consideration the preconditions of heritage language acquisition,

exploring a "possible relationship among mode of acquisition, type of task and task modality[1]"

(Montrul, 2011, p. 189). This means for example, that the tasks used to investigate a linguistic

system derived from a specific acquisition modality, should favor the speakers' linguistic

behavior in accordance with how that language was acquired.

Link between the aural acquisition modality and task modality

The acquisition modality of the heritage system may have a direct influence on the

choice of tasks modality as the tasks' modality may influence the subjects' performance. This is

why aural tasks are the most adequate to investigate the subjects' knowledge of their heritage

language, aurally acquired in the family context. In fact, heritage speakers are bilingual

individuals, exposed since birth (or at a very young age) to two languages: the societal

language, spoken in the host country in which they live, study and work, and their heritage

language, spoken in family environment. In the specific case of the family language, the

acquisition of the heritage system takes place in family context in interaction with the parents

---

as input providers and mainly through aural exposure. Therefore, the present study investigates the heritage language as an aurally acquired system, which developed under specific conditions of exposure. From a methodological perspective, this means that the aural modality of the experimental tasks will match the aural modality of language acquisition. Assuming that heritage speakers' oral skills are the result of the oral exposure to the input, I believe that the subjects' performance during the experiment can be favored by targeting their implicit knowledge of heritage Italian through tasks in oral modality. In fact, as stated by Montrul et al. (2008), in their study on gender and number agreement in heritage speakers of Spanish (Montrul et al., 2008, pg. 40), it's possible that "the oral task favors heritage speakers' spontaneous skills with the language." Therefore, by controlling the modality in which the tasks are administered, I am hoping to gain more representative results of the subjects' knowledge of their family language.

Half of the tasks used in the present study, are designed to elicit the subjects' oral competence through semi-free speech and elicited production, while the other half investigates the subjects' competence in given grammatical structures. Specifically, the grammaticality judgment tasks are designed in dual modalities, oral and written, exploring the possibility that heritage speakers may need extra phonetic cues in order to successfully complete tasks in written form. This means that a written task will have its oral counterpart as an audio file, which can be used or not, by the subjects, according to their preference.

The environment of use of the heritage language

The last influencing factor of my experimental choices is the condition of input exposure and the environment of use of the heritage language. Both quality and quantity of the heritage

input are dependent upon the environment in which the input provider operates and in which the heritage language is acquired and used. In fact, heritage speakers develop their heritage language in family contexts, receiving the main input from their parents (or from just one parent), as native speakers of the language of origin. Since the acquisition of the heritage system is bound to a specific family unit and is dependent on it for input and condition of use, the primary subjects of the experiment is the family nucleus itself interpreted as the specific developmental environment in which to delimit the role of the input. The data is gathered by investigating the language of the parents or caregivers (mother or father) as native speakers of the language of origin and input providers, and the language of the children as receivers of the input. Specifically, the language of the children as input receivers is compared with the language of the parents as input providers. The family nucleus provides the unprecedented opportunity to exploring the relationship between the two linguistic systems, which may or may not share common behavior, in the attempt to understand how the input source operates with respect to the quantity and quality of the linguistic input provided within the restricted environment of use of family context.

The bilingual nature of the heritage system

Another property of the heritage system is its bilingual nature. Unlike the acquisition of native languages in monolingual setting, heritage grammars develop in contact with another languages. This is why I strongly believe that the methodology employed to investigate a native language, as a monolingual system, should not be used to explore a heritage bilingual system. From a methodological perspective, the present study not only aims to account for the bilingual nature of the heritage system but also aims to avoid the comparative fallacy (Bley-Vroman,

1983), by comparing the subjects' behavior among themselves and not against the language of a monolingual control group, viewed as idealized target. Therefore, the Standard Italian system is not used as an absolute model but as point of reference for the analysis of the heritage structures, which may or may not display similarities with the standard language from which they are derived. In addition, each task employs a scoring procedure that contributes to highlight the subjects' preferences in the given structures.

The experimental design

The experimental design of the study is characterized by the presence of family nuclei (made by the parents as input providers and by the children as input receivers) as experimental group and by the lack of a native monolingual control group. In fact, the language of the children is compared to the language of the parents as native speakers of the language of origin, which in this case is Standard Italian, taken as primary point of reference for the analysis of the heritage grammar. The experimental design is also defined by the employment of two distinct types of analysis: error analysis in obligatory occasions and interlanguage analysis.

The experimental group

The experimental group is made by six family nuclei for a total of ten heritage speakers and six parents, five mothers and one father as native speakers of Standard Italian, born in Italy. Each family nucleus is composed by one or two children and by their parents. The children are bilingual speakers of English and of Heritage Italian. They are the receivers of the heritage input, while the parents are the main input providers. The children as heritage speakers are all first generation of Italians born and raised in the US. In only one nucleus, the parent as input provider is first generation Italian, born in Italy and than raised in the US by his Italian parents,

while the two children represent the second generation.

In five nuclei, the input provider is the mother. The five mothers are all Italian women, born and raised in Italy until the age of 18 or older, all speakers of Standard Italian. They all moved to the host country, the US, in their adult life for different reasons such as work, study or personal relationships. By moving abroad, they shifted from the monolingual use of their first language (Standard Italian) towards the use of two languages in a bilingual environment, becoming advanced second language speakers of English. They had children in the US and they have been raising them bilingually, exposing them to their first language, Italian. The only father in the study was born in Italy and moved to the US by the age of 6. He learned the societal language, English, in school and continued to speak Italian at home, until he decided to pursue his higher education in Italy where he lived for about six years. He then moved back to Chicago where he started his own family.

The subjects' linguistic and cultural features

Two questionnaires, one for the children and one for the parents, serve the purpose of gathering information about the cultural and linguistic status of each family nucleus and about each subject. Both children and parents are identified according to social and linguistic factors collected through the questionnaires. The questionnaires are in English, 4 pages long and last about thirty minutes. They can be found in appendix B.

The children' questionnaire is designed to gather information on the demographic identity of the children, on their perception of their heritage Italian Culture, and of their Italian language knowledge. The social factors that identify the children are: Age, gender, birthplace, education level, family generation, nationality, parents' nationality, parents' first language. The

linguistic factors that identify the children are as follows: age of onset acquisition (AOA) of the

HL, length of life in the host country (or country of birth), presence or lack of explicit instruction

about the HL, length of exposure to literacy in the HL, individual use of HL on daily basis within

the family in the host country, contact with Italian family and friends in Italy, and exposure to a

HL community in the host country.

The parents' questionnaire is designed to gather information on their social identity as

parents of bilingual children, on their linguistic identity as advanced speakers of a as second

language (English), their perception of the children's linguistic skills in Italian, and on their own

role as input providers. The social factors that identify the parents are as follows: Age, gender,

Level of education, profession, nationality, the region of provenience in Italy, first language

status, which includes the knowledge of the hometown dialect. The linguistic factors that

identify the parents are as follows: Age of departure from Italy, age of onset acquisition of

English as second language, length of residence in the host English speaking country, length of

residence in the country of origin, individual use of Italian on a daily basis within the family in

the host country, and contact with Italian family and friends in Italy.

The absence of a native monolingual control group

The present study does not rely on the presence of a control group, often made up of

monolingual speakers whose native language is taken as idealized target against which to

compare the language of heritage speakers. The specific methodological choice of not having a

control group is supported by the following theoretical assumptions of the study: 1) The

present study doesn't specifically adopt a target language perspective since it is designed for

the independent analysis of the heritage system as one of the two languages set in the mind of

heritage speakers. Therefore I believe that the presence of a control group as target for comparison in not required, and 2) The lack of a target language perspective and the consequent absence of a monolingual control group also contributes to avoiding the Comparative Fallacy (Bley-Vroman, 1983) and allows the investigation of the heritage system not in light of monolinguals' behavior but within the boundaries of the heritage language itself. In addition, according to Lakshmanan and Selinker (2001) it's important to compare the "interlanguage performance data with the performance of native speakers, systematically" (Lakshmanan and Selinker, 2001, pg.392). Therefore, it is important to consider the input that the heritage speakers were exposed to, in terms of quality and quantity. This is why the analysis of the subjects' language in the present study is compared with the language of the parents as input providers and as native speakers of Italian, and with the structures of Standard Italian, not as the absolute and idealized target, but as the linguistic system that may share most of the grammatical features with the heritage language (Lakshmanan & Selinker, 2001, pg. 4021). In this view, the main referential point in the analysis of the children' productions (in both error and interlanguage analysis), is the Standard Italian system, which is also the native language spoken by the parents. In fact, the language of the children as heritage speakers of Italian is compared with the native language of the parents as heritage input providers. More specifically, any reference to the rules of Standard Italian and its acquisition is based on the following sources of information: 1) The book by Belletti and Guasti (2015), on the acquisition of morphology and syntax by monolingual Italian children growing up in Italy, which allows the comparison between the children production with that of heritage speakers living in the host country 2) The grammar of Standard Italian reported by the *Istituto Treccani*, founder of the

most prestigious and largest non-profit Italian association for the preservation, divulgation and research of knowledge and culture in different fields, and on the grammar book from A. Lepschy and G. Lepschy (2013).

Two kinds of analysis: error analysis and Interlanguage analysis

I analyzed the data according to two distinct yet complementary types of analysis: interlanguage analysis, which explores the subjects' behavior in its entirety, targeting every production as their own linguistic creation, and error analysis, specifically centered on the subjects' behavior in line with the rules of the language of origin as target.

The term *interlanguage i*s used here as a metaphor for the heritage grammar. The primary data analysis of the study is based on the notion of interlanguage (Selinker, 1972) as the learner's own linguistic creation and on the consequent assumption that the heritage grammar as the interlanguage system produced by the heritage speakers, can be investigated as a separate linguistic system different from the parents' native language. Interlanguage analysis focuses on the subjects' development of language as a unique set of rules, which can be in line or not with the rules of the source language, empirically validating the view of the heritage system as an independent system from the language of origin.

The second type of analysis employed in the study is error analysis. I will use here the same terminology usually employed in this type of analysis to describe the speakers' behavior and to refer to the language of origin. The subjects' productions will be identified as "erroneous" with respect to the language of origin, their behavior will be classified as in line or not in line with the rules of the Standard Language taken as target and the scoring procedure will be described according to the presence and/or absence of erroneous productions and

judgments. Therefore, the error analysis employed in the present study, focuses on the subjects' productions and/or judgments in obligatory contexts of use, in each given structures with respect to the rules of Standard Italian tasks as target language. This type of analysis provides a description of the heritage grammar as a collection of errors made by heritage speakers in their attempt to reach the target.

I believe that ignoring the subjects' non-target productions (which means not in line with the rules of what we believe to be the standard idealized target language) means to disregard the entirety of the heritage speakers' linguistic system as well as their ability to develop their unique set of rules. The gap left by error analysis is filled by the interlanguage analysis. By employing two distinct analysis of the subjects' behavior in the same target structure, I aim to reach a more complete understanding of the how the heritage system may work a whole.

Last but not least, Standard Italian as the language of origin of the heritage system plays a double role in each type of analysis. In error analysis, Standard Italian is the absolute target against which to compare the production of the subjects, while in interlanguage analysis Standard Italian represents a point of reference.

The scoring procedure employed in the study

The scoring procedure employed in the study is the same in each task and for both groups of subjects, parents and children of the same family nucleus. The scoring is based on use and preference that subjects make of a given element. Their performance is scored according to the number of times in which they have judged, chosen, or produced a specific element or its possible variant. The difference between the scoring employed in error analysis versus the

36

scoring employed in the interlanguage analysis resides in the role of Standard Italian as the target language. The scoring in error analysis is calculated according to the correctness of form and function in obligatory occasions for each of the structures investigated, in comparison with those of Italian language, while the scoring in interlanguage analysis is based on the number of uses and preferences of a given form, independently from whether the uttered or the chosen form is in line with the rules of Standard Italian. The fact that interlanguage analysis doesn't rely on Standard Italian as the target language doesn't mean that the language of origin cannot be used as point of reference for the analysis of the heritage system. In fact, the interlanguage analysis will identify the subjects' productions and/or judgments which are the same as the source language as well as the productions and/or judgments which are different from the souce language, viewed as the speakers' own linguistic creation.

The importance of employing two separate scoring procedures in the analysis of the subjects'performance is to provide two distinct and complementary views of the same linguistic system. While the percentages in error analysis only highlight the subjects' behavior with regard to the Standard Italian system, the percentages in interlanguage analysis highlight the subjects' linguistic choices for what they are, in relation to their competence, not for what they should be in relation to the correct or incorrect use and form of an idealized target. The threshold of acquisition set in error analysis tells if subjects acquired the form and function of a target structure as expected by the Standard Italian system, but does not say anything about the acquisition of the same target structure with respect to the heritage grammar. By treating the heritage system as an independent system, we allow for the possibility of identifying criteria of language acquisition and levels of attainment in heritage speakers. There is the need

of empirically establishing how and if different aspects of the heritage grammar can be considered acquired or not within the boundaries of the heritage context.

Grammatical structures investigated in the study

In the present chapter I describe the grammatical structures investigated in the study, in relation to the Standard Italian system. The selected grammar structures are:

Structure 1: The morphology of Standard Italian nouns and specifically

a. Gender assignment and gender agreement between the elements of a noun phrases: determiner, noun and adjective

Structure 2: The use and placement of clitic pronouns as direct objects, specifically

b. Production of clitic direct object

c. Acceptability of the object clitic pronoun' placement within two contexts: sentences with modal verb construction and sentences with negative imperative

Structure 3: The assignment of tense and aspect, specifically

a. Auxiliary selection between *essere* (to be) and *avere* (to have) in the Italian compound past tense *passato prossimo,* made by one of the two auxiliaries *essere* or *avere* conjugated in present tense and the past participle of the verb endowed, and corresponding to the English simple past

b. The subjects' preferred past tense forms in sentence production

c. Contrast between the perfective and imperfective aspects, which are expressed in Italian by the past tense forms of *passato prossimo*, as compound past tense, and *imperfetto,* in the same narrative

Structure 4:   Acceptability of the verb *piacere* (to like) in present tense sentences as psych

verb with a specific syntactic construction.

Reasons for the study's grammatical selection

The structures investigated in the present study are similar to the grammatical

selections found in previous studies on heritage languages such as Spanish and Russian, in

which they are often defined as domains vulnerable to simplification. For example, the

morphological agreement in gender and number, the assigning of tense and aspect, or the form

and use of nominal cases, are viewed as areas of weakness of the heritage system, because

they are subject to a process of simplification and reanalysis employed by the heritage speakers,

with respect to the standard system of the language of origin taken as target (Montrul, 2013,

Scontras et al, 2015). In addition, the structures investigated here are part of the grammar of

Standard Italian as a native language of the input providers and as the language of origin of the

heritage system. In terms of language acquisition, they represent areas of difficulty for

monolingual Italian children acquiring (Standard) Italian as their first language, as shown in

Belletti and Guasti (2015). Monolingual Italian children master some of the above structures at

the age of three, while fully acquiring them by the age of six or seven.

The grammatical selection of the present study allows me to compare the subjects'

behavior as heritage speakers of Italian with the behavior highlighted in previous investigations

on various heritage grammars, and with the behavior of monolingual Italian children acquiring

Italian in the same structures.

Background Information on the Structures under Investigation

The following section provides background information on how the selected grammatical structures function within the rules of the Standard Italian system.

Structure 1: The morphology of Standard Italian nouns

Italian, as a gender marking language, displays gender through the distinction between masculine and feminine nouns, while number is displayed by the distinction between singular and plural. All Italian nouns, of both animate and inanimate referent, are classified by gender. Gender is a lexical property of the noun, associated with number. Nouns enter the numeration with interpretable gender features and in Italian, as in Spanish, that feature in determiners and adjectives must be checked through agreement (Chomsky, 1995).

Morphological number in Italian nouns is expressed by three markers for singular, the ending vowels: *-a, -o, -e* and by two markers for plural, the ending vowels -e*, -i*. In terms of gender distinction, Chini (1995, 1998) identifies masculine and feminine as grammatical genders of Italian language. Gender is expressed through markers traditionally classified as canonical and non-canonical endings. Usually, canonical endings (or covert morphemes as I like to call them) manifest the following morphemes: the ending vowels *–a, -e* for feminine singular and feminine plural, and the ending vowels *–o, -I* for masculine singular and masculine plural. The non-canonical endings manifests through the ending vowels *–e, -I,* for both masculine and feminine nouns, singular and plural.

Gender assignment in Italian follows both semantic and morpho-phonological rules. In terms of semantics, nouns of animals and people assign gender according to their semantic properties. For example, the gender distinction between *figlio* (son) and *figlia* (daughter) or

between *gatto* (male cat) and *gatta* (female cat) is based on the semantic notion of sex and of

biological gender. Inanimate nouns also receive either masculine or feminine gender depending

on their semantic group. For example, names of fruit are typically feminine such as *mela*-f.s

(apple) while those of trees are usually masculine, such as *melo-m.s* (apple tree*).* But the rule

doesn't always have a felicitous application. In fact, words ending in -o can also be feminine

such as *mano-f.s* (hand) and those ending in -a can also be masculine such as *pianeta-m.s*

(planet). Morphological rules are associated with suffixes. For example nouns ending in *–ione*

like *colazione f.s* (breakfast) are usually classified as feminine while noun ending in *–ma* like

problema m.s (problem) are classified as masculine. Chini classified Italian nouns in seven

declension classes (Chini, 1995) according to their inflectional properties and gender as shown

in the following table.

Table 1. Declension classes in Standard Italian (Modified from Chini, 1995, pg. 83)

Class	Final sound in singular	Final sound in plural	Gender	Example-meaning
I	- o	- i	M	libro/libri (book/boos)
II	- a	- e	F	carta/carte (paper/papers)
III	- e	- i	M	cane/cani (dog/dogs)
			F	ape /api (bee/bees)
IV	[various]	[= sig]	M	re /re (king/kings)
			F	città-città (city/cities)
V	- a	- i		problema/problem (problem/problems)
VI	- o M	- i M and F	M/F	uovo/uova (egg/eggs)
VII	- o	- i	F	mano/mani (hand/hands)

The first three classes are identified as the most common in the Italian language. The

following examples show four Italian nouns in plural and singular forms**,** displaying different

ending vowels often associated with gender. Two of the four nouns are masculine and two are

feminine.

Examples of Morphological gender and number assignment in Italian nouns

a.   Singular   Plural

         Mamm   - a   mamm-   e

         Root   gender marker-f.sg   root   gender marker-f.pl

         Mom   *mom-*   *s*

b.   Singular   Plural

         Libr   - o   libr-   i

         Root   gender marker-m.sg   root   gender marker-m.pl

         Book   *book-*   *s*

c.   Singular   Plural

         Fior-   e   Fior-   i

         Root   gender marker m.sig   Root   gender marker m.pl

         Flower   *flower-*   *s*

d.   Singular   Plural

         Carn-   e   Carn-   i

         Root   gender marker f.sig   Root-   gender marker f.pl

         Meat   *Meat-*   *s*

Native speakers of Italian usually identify gender not through the morphological ending

of nouns, which can be canonical or non-canonical (or covert and overt as I like to refer to it),

but by looking at the determiner's gender as head of the noun phrase. In fact, gender

assignment can be syntactically manifested through agreement in the noun phrase, in which

the determiner, the noun, and the adjective all must agree in gender and number (Montrul et

al., 2008, pg. 6) as shown in the following example.

Examples of gender agreement in a singular noun phrase

e.   Il   gelato   buono

         Det.m.sig   N.m.sig   adj.sig

         The   ice-cream   good

         The good icecream

f.	La	casa	gialla
	Det.f.sig	N.f.sig	adj.f.sig
	The	house	yellow

The yellow house

Examples of gender agreement in plural noun phrase

g.	I	gelati	buoni
	D.m.pl	N.m.pl	Adj.m.pl
	The	ice-creams	good

The good icecreams

h.	Le	case	gialle
	D.F.pl	N.f.pl	Adj.f.pl
	The	houses	yellow

The yellow houses

Since gender and number are part of a native speaker's linguistic competence as grammatical categories (Corbett, 1991), the present study wants to investigate the native ability in gender assignment of all subjects, both children and parents of the same family nucleus, through an oral picture description task.

Structure 2: The clitic pronouns in Standard Italian

Standard Italian (like French) has two series of pronouns known as clitic and strong personal pronouns for all grammatical functions. Italian also has non-reflexive and reflexive object as well as partitive and locative clitics, namely *ne* (partitive) and *ci* (locative). Clitics are considered the meeting point between syntax, morphology, and phonology within grammar. In Standard Italian monosyllabic clitics are usually treated as inflectional affixes. They are assigned to different position classes, according to their function in the sentence, as shown in the table below, taken from Schmitz and Muller (2008, pg. 20). Only one clitic can be assigned to one position. In fact, clitics are in complementary distribution with the full complement, which

belongs to the same class. The following table displays the strong and clitic pronouns in the

Standard Italian system

Table 2. Strong and clitic pronouns in Standard Italian

Person/number	Strong Pronouns			Clitic Pronouns			
	Subj.	Obj.	Ind. Obj.	Subj.	Object	Ind.Ob	Reflex.
1st pers.sig	io	me	a me	null	mi	Mi	mi
2nd pers. sig	tu	te	a te	null	ti	ti	ti
3rd pers. sig (m/f)	lui-lei	lui-lei	a lui/a lei	null	lo/la	gli/le	si
1st pers.pl	noi	noi	a noi	null	ci	ci	ci
2nd pers.pl	voi	voi	a voi	null	vi	vi	vi
3rd pers.pl (m/f)	loro	loro	a loro	null	li/le	gli	si

According to Monachesi (1999) the category of clitics as a set of monosyllabic

morphemes, doesn't constitute a uniform class and can be viewed as a continuum of properties

expressed by a degree of variation between affix-like properties and word-like properties. In

addition, Standard Italian clitics "exhibit a high degree of selection with respect to their host,

since they can only attach to verbs" (Monachesi, 1999). In fact, clitics "move" around the verb.

They can precede a finite verb as shown in example a), they can follow a non-finite verb in

modal verb context as well in negative imperative context as shown in example b) and c).

a. Martina   prende   **il libro**   **Lo**   legge   in spiaggia
   N.Sub.   V   N.object   clitic Ob.   V   locative
   Martina   takes   the book.   It   she reads   at the beach
   Martina takes the book. She reads it at the beach

b. Martina   ascolta   la musica   vuole   ascoltar-   **la** alla radio.
   N.Sub.   V   N.object   modal   V infinite   clitic Instrum
   Martina   listens   to the music   she wants +to listen-itat the radio
   Martina listens to the music. She wants to listen to it at the radio

c. Martina   dorme.   Non   chiamar -   **la**
Subj   V   negation   V imperative clitic obj
Martina   sleeps.   not   call   her
Martin is sleeping. Don't call her

The written acceptability task focused on the clitic placement in two contexts of use: with modal verbs and with negative imperative use. In the first context identified by Rizzi (1982) as "restructuring contexts", modal verbs embed infinitives and in which clitic climbing may happen, but does not necessarily have to. Rizzi argues that clitic climbing occurs when speakers choose to optionally restructure. Italian clitics cluster around the verb, holding different positions according to their context of use. In context of use with modal verbs followed by a non-finite verb, clitics can move around the verbs and climb from one position to another. During this operation known as "climbing", the clitic object pronoun, originally attached to the infinitive in the subordinate clause, can climb to the matrix clause, attaching to the matrix verb.

In Standard Italian there are no syntactic or semantic constraints on the use of clitic pronouns as direct object as opposed to the use of full lexical nouns as object. The constraints only pertain to the clitic morphology and placement. Clitics can be found in the positions displayed in the following example:

a.   Pre and post verbal position

       Question that sets the context for the use of the clitic pronoun
       Mangi   la pizza?
       V-II.s   obj.N.f.s
       You eat   the pizza
       Do you eat pizza?

       Pre-verbal position with finite transitive verbs
       Si **la**   mangio
       Obj.Cl.f.s   V.I.s
       Yes, it   I eat
       Yes, I eat it

Post verbal position with second person imperative

Mangia-	**la**
Imperative.II.s	obj.clit.f.s
Eat	it

Eat it (eat the pizza)!

b.   Attached to auxiliary with *passato prossimo*

Ho preso	il cane	e	l'		ho	portato	a casa
V.past	N.obj	and	obj.clit		aux	PP	loc
I took	the dog	and	it		I have	taken	at home

I took the dog and I brought it home

c.   Attached to a non-finite verb in negative imperative context.

Non	toccare	la pizza	non	mangiar-	la
Neg	V.inf.imperative	N.obj	neg	V.Inf.imperative	obj.cliti**c**
Not	to touch	the pizza	not	to touch	it

Don't touch the pizza   don't eat it

d.   Pre and post verbal position with modal verbs

Question that sets the context for the use of the clitic pronoun

Mangi	la pizza?
V-II.s	obj.N.f.s
You eat	the pizza

Do you eat pizza?

Pre finite verb position

La	posso	mangiare
Obj.Cl	V1-modal.Is	V2-infinite
It	I can	eat

I can eat it

Post non-finite verb position

Posso	mangiar-	la
V1-modal.Is	V2-infinite	obj.clitic
I can	to eat	it

I can eat it

46

In terms of acquisition, monolingual Italian children acquire clitic pronouns in the following order: subject clitic pronoun, strong subject pronouns and object clitic pronoun (Guasti 1993, 1994). In addition, they acquire clitic placement with finite verbs before clitic placement with non-finite verbs, and in terms of case they acquire accusative clitics before dative clitics. Object clitic omissions are more common than dative clitic omissions, especially when the clitic is attached to the auxiliary in past tense productions, since it requires agreement between the past participle and the object clitic (Guasti, 1994). One of the latest productions to appear is clitic climbing (Caprin and Guasti, 2009). The rate of clitic acquisition among Romance languages is language specific. For example, the acquisition of object clitic pronouns in monolingual Italian children occurs faster in Italian than in French, and tense becomes a constraining factor for accusative clitic omission with Italian past tense *passato prossimo*.

Structure 3: The temporal system of Standard Italian

The temporal system displayed by Standard Italian presents five different forms of past tense, between compound and non-compound as shown in the table below

Table 3. Forms of Italian past tense

Tense (Past)	Simple	Compound	Aspect	English equivalent
Imperfetto	X		Imperfective	Past continuous
Passato Prossimo		X	Perfective	Simple past tense
Trapassato Prossimo		X	Perfective	
Passato Remoto	X		Perfective	Simple past or Present perfect with implication in the present
Trapassato Remoto		X	Perfective	Simple past or past perfect

Non-compound forms are i*mperfetto* and *passato remoto*, while *passato prossimo* and

the derived forms *trapassato prossimo* and *trapassato remoto*, both compound forms, require

auxiliary selection between *essere* and *avere.* The aspectual meaning carried out by the Italian

passato prossimo and by the other three compound forms, is expressed in English by the simple

past. Although the distinction between the English past progressive and the simple past doesn't

always hold true for Italian, the aspect expressed by the Italian *imperfetto* can be rendered in

English by the past progressive and by periphrases of durative action such as "*I am used to.*"

Italian allows the use of the *imperfetto* of the verb *stare* + the gerundive form of verbs as equal

to the past progressive in English.

As native speaker of Standard Italian, I often thought that in the Italian temporal system

the semantic of tense overshadows the syntactic value of tense and aspect, leading to more

than 1 to 1 mapping of the tense to meaning. Different speakers can use the same tense in

different contexts and with different meanings. In fact, when describing past events, we don't

utter sentences that are absolutely bound to the past tense used, but we often provide

reference to specific point in time that can hold different relations with the event described.

The complex temporal relation among tenses can also be reached in Italian, through the

use of time adverbials, which sometimes can be found in complementary distribution such as

the prepositions *da* (since) and *per* (for).

The contrast between *Passato Prossimo* and *Imperfetto*

The use of the temporal system requires the speaker's knowledge of tense and aspect.

Tense is a grammatical category that can be expressed by morphological markers and identifies

when an action, state or event took place in a time-line, therefore tense locates the event in

time. The aspect is "ways of viewing the temporal constituency of a situation" (Comrie, 1976,

pg. 3). Aspect can also be distinguished between grammatical and lexical. The first one encodes

the viewpoint of the speaker and his intention in describing the event, while the second one

refers to the inherent temporal property of the verb. According to the definition of lexical

aspect, each verb displays some kind of intrinsic semantic feature associated with it. Italian

tenses, when used in contrast within the same narrative, indicate different aspectual meanings,

which are conveyed by the verb semantic and by its inherent features.

The most common contrast used by monolingual native Italian speakers, is that between

p*assato prossimo* and *imperfetto.* Both tenses differ in terms of perfectivity where the

Imperfetto provides the idea of imperfective aspect, while the *passato prossimo* yields to a

perfective one. The perfective feature of the past is expressed by the morphology of the

passato prossimo which is a compound tense formed by the past participle of the verb plus the

present tense of the auxiliary, *essere* or *aver*e, while the imperfect value is expressed by the

morphology of the *imperfetto,* as shown in the following examples*.*

Examples of morphology of *Passato Prossimo* and *Imperfetto*

a.   Morphology of *Passato Prossimo*

Marco	**ha**	**scritto**	un email
Subject	aux.III.sig	PP-s*crivere*	object
	(Past tense *passato prossimo)*		
Marco	has	written	an email

Marco wrote an email

b.   Morphology of *Imperfetto*

Marco	scriv-	eva	un email
Subject	V.Root	Imp. Suffix.III.sig	Object
	(Past tense i*mperfetto*)		
Marco	wrote	was writing	an email

Marco wrote an email

Example of aspectual value of *Passato Prossimo* and *Imperfetto*

a.   Perfective value of *Passato Prossimo*
        Marco   ha scritto   un e-mail
        Subject   V. III sig.past *pass.prossimo*   N.object
                        (Transitive-telic)
        Marco wrote an email

b.   Imperfective value of *Imperfetto*

        Marco   scriveva
        Subject   V. III sig. past-i*mperfetto*
                        (Transitive – atelic)
        Marco was writing

The use of *passato prossimo* in the sentence *Marco ha scritto un e-mail* (Marco wrote an

email) conveys perfective value, indicating the completion of the action expressed by the verb

scrivere (to write). The telicity of the predicate is also provided by the presence of the direct

object *un email*, being *scrivere* a transitive verb*.* The *passato prossimo* expresses completion of

telic predicates, and it establishes termination of actions (also for atelic predicates). The

imperfetto suggests ongoing actions for both telic and atelic verbs. This means that in Italian

language, both telic and atelic verbs can convey completion value or on going value according

to whether they are expressed through *imperfetto* o**r** *passato prossimo***.** According to Giacalone

Ramat and Banfi (1999)**,** a single verb may show contrasting grammatical aspect even though its

intrinsic lexical feature doesn't change. In fact, "the verb's intrinsic lexical feature is mostly

associated with the presence of the verb complement" (Giacalone Ramat and Banfi, 1990, pg.

407). For example, the verb *scrivere* (to write*)* displays [-telicity] feature while the same verb

associated with an object can modify its feature and turn it into [+telicity] as in *ho scritto una*

lettera (I wrote a letter). The *Imperfetto* also has a very important anaphoric value, which

means that the context in which is used as well as the temporal adverbial cues provided

determines the continuity of the action.

The following examples show the contrastive use of the two tenses in the same

sentence.

a.

Marco	è andato	in vacanza	ma il mare	era		sporco
N-Subj.	V-past-*to go*	adverbial	N-subj	V-past-*to be*		*adj.*
	Pass.prossimo			*imperfetto*		
	Completion value			on going value		
Marco	has gose	on vacation	but the sea	was		dirty

Marco went on vacation but the sea was dirty

b.

Gli studenti	hanno finito	I compiti	e	erano		felici
N.Subj	V-past-*to finish*	N.object	and	V-past-*to be*		adj
	Pass.prossimo			*imperfetto*		
	Completion value			on going value		
The students	have finished		the homework and	were		happy

Students finished their homework and they were happy

Tense is also expressed in Italian by time adverbials, expressing definite time, such as

*ieri (y*esterday) or *due giorni fa* (two days ago) as well as indefinite time such as *quando* (when)

and *anni fa* (years ago) or by adverbs of frequency such as *di solito (*usually). Prescriptive

grammar identifies semantic contexts in which *imperfetto* seems to be the most appropriate

tense/aspect. *Imperfetto* is commonly used with physical and/or psychological descriptions of

people as well as description of places, location, items, and of weather conditions.

The auxiliary selection in Standard Italian

In Standard Italian, the auxiliary selection pertains to the morphology, syntax and

semantics of the compound past tense named *passato prossimo*, made by one of the two

auxiliaries *essere* or *avere* conjugated in present tense and the past participle of the verb

endowed. In addition, verbs selecting *essere* require gender and number agreement of the past

participle with the speaker's gender. The *passato prossimo*, endowed with the salient function

of perfective action (Rosi, 2007), expresses completion of telic predicates, and it establishes

termination of actions also for atelic predicates. The selection of the auxiliary in Standard Italian

seems to be related to the verbs semantics and to the verbs' type.

a. Anna   ha   mangiato   la pizza
    N.subj   V *avere* III.sig PP   N.object
    Anna   has   eaten   the pizza
    Anna eat pizza

b. Anna   è   andata   al cinema
    N.subj   V *essere* III.sig PP   locative
    Anna   is   gone   to the cinema
    Anna went to the cinema

Italian unaccusative verbs require the use of *essere* (to be) in the *passato prossimo*,

while transitive verbs require *avere (*to have).

The auxiliary Selection Hierarchy (ASH)

Sorace (2000) investigated the sensitivity of Italian speakers towards the auxiliary

selection, which she explained through the Auxiliary Selection Hierarchy (ASH). According to

Sorace, "the auxiliary selection with some verbs is characterized by gradiance: Some verbs

more consistently select a particular auxiliary than others" (Sorace, 2000, pg. 886). She

captured gradience in the auxiliary election through a continuum model of seven lexical-

semantic classes of verbs, as reported below. The core verbs at the end points of the continuum,

like *andare* (to go) and *tossire* (to cough), are unaccusative and unergative verbs, which encode

respectively telicity and agentivity and display syntactic invariable behavior in the auxiliary

selection. They select respectively *essere* (to be) and *avere* (to have), as in *sono andato* (I went)

and *ho tossito* (coughed). The peripheral verbs between the two extremes, exhibit different

degrees of variability, depending on their distance from the core and from the core verbs.

The following table displays the continuum of verbs' degree of unaccusavity (Sorace, 2000)

Table 4. The Auxiliary Selection Hierarchy (ASH)

The Auxiliary Selection Hierarchy, Sorace (2000)	
Change of location (CL) Change of state (CS) Continuation of a pre-existing state (COS) Existence of state (ES) Uncontrolled process (UP) Controlled motional process (CMP) Controlled non-motional process (CNMP) incompatibility	Selection of *essere (to be)* / *Ne* compatibility Selection of *avere* (to have) /*Ne*

According to the model, the acceptability of *essere* gradually decreases from the verbs

expressing change of location, towards the verbs that express existence, while the acceptability

of *avere* decreases from the controlled non-motional process verbs towards the uncontrolled

process ones. According to Sorace (2000), the rigidity of core verbs in the auxiliary selection

reflect their only one structural meaning, while intermediate verbs, are more compatible with

more than one structural configuration. For example, weather verbs like *piovere* (to rain) or

*nevicare (*to snow), which fall into the middle of Sorace's hierarchy, allow the use of both

auxiliaries. The preference for one auxiliary as opposed to the other often reflects the choice of

speakers from different regions in Italy. In Northern Italian regions the most common auxiliary

is *essere* as in *è piovuto* (it rained), while in the Centre and South of Italy the most common

form is with *ha piovuto* (it rained). Sorace predicts that, "It should not be possible for a

language to exhibit consistent auxiliary selection behavior with intermediate verbs but not with

core verbs"(Sorace, 2000, pg. 887).

The present study investigates how heritage speakers of Italian behave in the choice of *essere* and *avere* in the *passato prossimo* in order to see if the heritage grammar follows the Auxiliary Selection Hierarchy (ASH).

Structure 4: The construction of the verb *piacere* (to like)

The present study investigates the acceptability of different uses of *piacere* verb in present tense sentences. The verb *piacere* belongs to the group of verbs expressing emotions, often known as psych verbs*.* The structure of *piacere* in Italian, like *gustar* in Spanish, follows a reverse construction in comparison with the construction of the correspondent English verb *to like* (Belletti & Rizzi, 1988). In English, the verb *to like* projects subject and object in nominative and accusative case, while in Italian the verb *piacere*, like *gustar* in Spanish, projects two arguments, theme and experiencer. According to Belletti and Rizzi (1988) these two arguments are originated inside the verb phrase (VP) where the theme moves into subject position and the experiencer is generated as an indirect object, marked with dative case.

The following examples show the use of the same psych verb, *to like* and *piacere*, in English and in Italian.

a. I   like   coffee
    Subj.pron   V I.sig   N. object
    Nominative   V   accusative
    I like coffee

b. Mi   piace   il caffè
    Indir.pron.   V.III.sig   N. subject
    Dative   V   nominative
    To me   likes   the coffee
    I like coffee.

In this type of verb, the argument that maps to the syntactic subject is the theme, which agrees in number and gender with the verb, and appears in post-verbal position. The argument experiencer, mapped onto a syntactic object, appears in preverbal position, but doesn't share any verb agreement like real subjects do. In sentences with this type of verbs, *piacere* agrees with the theme, which has become the syntactic subject, while the experiencer holds the role of an oblique argument, as shown in the following examples where both permutations are allowed (Belletti and Rizzi, 1988, 337). In fact, in the Italian language the dative case can be expressed by the use of the preposition *a* followed by the full lexical noun as experiencer or by the use of the indirect clitic pronoun, as shown in the following examples

a. A   Marco   piace   il caffè
    Prep. N-dative   V III.sig   N-nominative
    Experiencer   theme
    To   Marco   is pleasing   the coffee
    Marco likes coffee

b. Gli   piace   il caffè
    Pron-dative   V III.sig   N.nominative
    Experiencer   theme
    To him   is pleasing   the coffee
    He likes coffee

Description of the Tasks

This section provides a detailed description of the tasks administered in the study, designed in oral and written modalities with the goal of investigating the subjects' spontaneous use and implicit knowledge of given structures. The full array of stimuli for each task can be found in Appendix A.

Modality and type of task

Task modality is both aural and written. The aural tasks make use of visual aid such as pictures from children's books, flashcards and power point slides. All written tasks display an aural counterpart, in the form of audio file (recorded with Praat). The audio support provides extra aural cues to the subjects and it can be used according to the subjects' preference. In fact, all written tasks can be administered in one of the following ways according to the subject's choice: 1) Subjects decide to only use the sheet of paper with the stimulus; 2) Subjects decide to use both the audio file and the written form; 3) Subjects decide to use the written form while the researcher's reads each target element out loud.

The following list reports the type of task and the target structure investigated between oral and/or written modalities.

Type of Oral Tasks	Structure Investigated
Elicitation with children book	Production of clitic object pronouns
Picture Description	Gender agreement between Det-N-Adj.
Sentence Building Picture	Use of preferred past tense
Semi-free speech	Different grammatical elements
Type of Written Tasks	**Structure Investigated**
Yes/No acceptability judgment	Different uses of the verb *piacere*
Binary acceptability judgment	Contrast between *imperfetto/pass.prossimo*
Forced-choice (FC) judgment	Auxiliary selection in *pass.prossimo*
Yes/No acceptability judgment	Position of clitic object pronouns

All tasks share important properties in terms of data analysis and of scoring procedures. The data gathered from the investigation of all target structures is individually analyzed in each

subject, through two types of analysis: errors analysis in obligatory occasions and interlanguage analysis. The first type of analysis highlights the subjects' productions in line with the rules of Standard Italian as target language, while the second aims to identify recursive patterns in the subjects' behavior as evidence of an independent linguistic system, which may or may not share properties with the language of origin. Each task will display the results from both types of data analysis.

Another element shared by all tasks is the scoring procedure, based on the number of times in which each subject produced, used or judged a given structure out of the total number of targets or out of the total number of uses of the same structure. The difference between the scoring in the two types of analysis resides in the presence of Standard Italian as target language. In fact, the scoring in error analysis is calculated by counting the number of uses or productions in line with Standard Italian, with the threshold of acquisition set at 80%, while the scoring in interlanguage analysis is calculated by counting the number of different uses or productions the subjects made as their own linguistic creations.

The following section describes the experimental design of each task. Each description includes: task goal, task type and task modality, material, procedure, data analysis and scoring procedure, stimulus and sample of stimulus.

TASK 1 Oral Picture Description Task - Gender Assignment

Task goal

The task is designed to explore the native intuition of heritage speakers of Italian in morphological gender assignment between the element of a noun phrase (determiner, noun, adjective), in both canonical and non-canonical nouns.

Task type and task modality

The modality of task is aural and the type of task is description based on given pictures. The task aims to favor the linguistic performance of the subjects and of their spontaneous production, targeting their implicit knowledge of gender agreement in the family language. The task in fact does not require any metalinguistic knowledge from the subjects.

Material

Power point displaying one object picture per slide, between people, animals, and objects. The subjects' productions are recorded with Praat.

Procedure

Subjects are asked to name and describe each item picture shown on a power point slide by producing a simple sentence, with or without copula, of the following kind: *La banana gialla*/ the yellow banana or *la banana è gialla*/ the banana is yellow. The same task is administered to both groups of subjects, children and parents. Their production is recorded and than transcribed. The presence of absence of the copula in the subjects' productions is not relevant for the purpose of the task. In addition, since the task is not designed to measure the subjects' vocabulary size and knowledge, the name of each item appears next to each picture. The researcher will explain the task and will provide an example. She will also prompt the

subjects with questions of this kind: *Cosa vedi? Che cos'e*? *Me lo descrivi*? (What do you see? What is it? Can you describe what you see?), with no morphological cues that could influence the subjects assignment of gender.

Data analysis and scoring procedure

The scoring for gender assignment is based on the following criteria:

a. Error analysis in obligatory occasion: Percentages are calculated by counting the number of times in which each subject uttered gender agreement between determiner and noun and between noun and adjective, in line with the rules of Standard Italian, first on the total of target nouns (48) and second, on total masculine and feminine nouns (24 each)

b. Interlanguage analysis: Percentages are calculated according to the number of preferred uses or productions of the target structure out of the total target nouns (48), with no target.

Stimulus

The overall design of the task is based on the study conducted by Montrul, S. et al. (2008) on the acquisition of gender agreement in adult second language learners of Spanish and in adult heritage speakers of Spanish. The stimulus used in the present task is my own creation.

I developed a list of 48 Italian nouns as targets, which share the property of frequency of use and of reference to common objects. In terms of meaning, all targets identify familiar items known to the majority of children, between inanimate and animate objects, while in terms of morphology they display masculine and feminine gender manifested through

canonical ending vowels, -o, -e or –a and non-canonical endings. All 48 targets are divided in

equal parts in two groups of feminine and masculine nouns. The development of the stimulus is

based on the observation made by Belletti and Guasti (2015), with respect to the acquisition of

syntax and morphology by monolingual Italian children. In fact, they point out that gender

assignment, acquired around the age of 5, appears first in canonical animate nouns, followed

by canonical inanimate ones and by non-canonical or irregular nouns. More specifically, the

stimulus is made by 64 nouns, of which 48 are targets and 16 are fillers or distractors, are in the

form of infinitive verbs like *mangiare* and proper names of famous individuals such as *Boccelli*

the singer, or of famous locations like *Piazza S. Marco*.

The 48 targets are equally divided in two groups of 24 nouns between masculine and

feminine. Each group of target nouns is divided in subgroups according to the object's animacy

and according to the kind of ending vowel. The group of masculine nouns displays: 6 animate

nouns (4 singular and 2 plural) /6 inanimate nouns (4 singular and 2 plural) /6 nouns ending in –

e (4 singular and 2 plural)/ 6 mixed ending nouns (4 singular and 2 plural), for a total of 16

singular and 8 plural forms. The group of feminine nouns displays: 6 regular animate (4 singular

and 2 plural)/6 regular inanimate (4 singular and 2 plural)/ 6 regular ending in –e (4 singular and

2 plural)/6 mixed ending (4 singular and 2 plural), for a total of 14 singular and of 8 plural forms.

I like to identify nouns displaying morphological ending variants, like vowel–*e* other than the

prototypical vowels –*o* for masculine and –*a* for feminine markers, as nouns displaying a covert

morphology as opposed to nouns with canonical ending vowels associated with gender, and

nouns displaying an "overt morphology". The distractors are 16 proper nouns if individuals

and/or places.

Sample of stimulus (Adapted from Montrul et al., 2008)

I provide here a few examples of targets nouns with their corresponding pictures, and a few expected answers. The full array of stimuli can be found in Appendix A.

Picture n.1

Target noun = *pasta*, inanimate feminine singular noun, canonical ending vowel -a
Researchers' prompt: *Puoi descrivere questa foto con una frase breve? (*Can you describe this picture with a short sentence?)

Pasta

Picture n. 2

Target noun = *cane,* animate masculine singular noun, canonical ending vowel *-e*
Researchers' prompt: *Puoi descrivere con una frase breve questa foto? (*Can you describe with a short sentence this picture?)
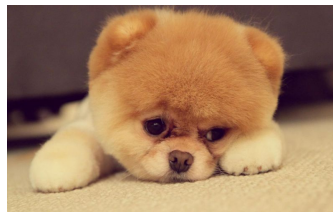
Cane

Picture n. 3

Target noun = c*amion*, inanimate masculine singular noun, non-canonical ending, in consonant. The noun displays a covert morphology for gender.

Researchers' prompt: *Puoi descrivere con una frase breve questa foto? (*Can you describe with a short sentence this picture?)

Camion

Expected answers for article, noun and adjective agreement

- *La pasta buona* (The good pasta) Target answer according to St. Italian

- *La pasta è buona* (The pasta is good) Target answer according to St. Italian

- *La pasta è buono* (The pasta is good) Mismatch agreement noun/adjective

- *Il pasta buona* (The pasta good) Mismatch agreement article/noun

TASK 2   Written Forced-Choice (FC) Judgment Task- auxiliary selection

Task goal

The task aims to investigate the behavior of heritage speakers of Italian in auxiliary

selection between *essere* and *avere*, required by the Italian past tense *passato prossimo*.

Task type and Task modality

The task is a written grammaticality judgment based on forced-choice, which means

that subjects don't have the possibility to provide their own form but are forced to choose

among four provided options. The task has the aural counterpart, in the form of an audio file.

Material

Sheet of paper displaying the stimulus of the task organized in a table.

Procedure

Subjects are presented with a sheet of paper displaying the stimulus, which is organized

in a two columns table. The researcher will explain to each subject the example reported in the

front page. Subjects are than asked to look at the sentence in present tense in the left column

and to choose the corresponding past tense sentence (in *passato prossimo*) in the right column,

among four given options. Only one of the four options is in line with Standard Italian, the other

three options are ungrammatical with respect to the Standard Italian system. Subjects are

encouraged to choose the form that best suits their use and their implicit knowledge of

auxiliary selection. The task is not timed and subjects are free to complete it at their own

individual pace.

Stimulus

The stimulus for auxiliary selection is my own creation therefore any error is to be attributed to myself. The stimulus consists of 24 target verbs, between transitive, unaccusative and unergative verbs, conjugated in present and past tense. The past tense options, displayed in the right column of the table, are 96 of which 24 are target options, displaying auxiliary selection according to Standard Italian and 73 are filler options. Specifically:

- 24 target options display the tensed verb with auxiliary selection in line with the rules of Standard Italian. Of the 24 target verbs:

- 14 verbs display the auxiliary *avere (*to have), of which 9 are transitive, as in *ho preparato la torta* (I prepared the cake) and 5 are unergative as in *ho corso* (I ran).

- 10 verbs display the auxiliary *essere (*to be) all unaccusatives, as in *sono andati in centro* (they went downtown).

- 73 filler options display ungrammatical forms of the tensed verb, with respect to the rules of Standard Italian, as follows:

    o 24 options display the opposite auxiliary (either *essere* or *avere)* from the target verb following the Standard Italian system as in *sono mangiato* (I have been eaten) as opposed to *ho mangiato* (I have eaten)

    o 24 options in the form of past participle alone as in *mangiat*o (eaten)

    o 24 with an impossible combination of verbs as in *sono guardo il film* (I am I watched the movie)

The verbs used in the task are: *Mangiare* (to eat), *guardare* (to watch), *scrivere (to write), nevicare (to snow), piovere* (to rain*), ascoltare* (to listen*), nuotare* (to swim), *correre* (to run,)

entrare (to enter), *grandinare* (to hail), *tornare* (to come back), *portare* (to bring*), nascere* (to

be born), *vedere (*to see), *chiudere* (to close), *telefonare* (to phone), *preparare* (to prepare*),*

morire (to die*), essere* (to be), *ridere* (to laugh), *lavorare* (to work*), partire* (to leave), *leggere* (to

read*), andare* (to go).

Data analysis and scoring procedure

The scoring is provided as follows:

a.   Error analysis in obligatory occasion: Percentages are calculated by counting the number

of times in which each subject chose only the target sentence with auxiliary selection in

line with Standard Italian.

b.   Interlanguage analysis**:** The scoring is not based on obligatory occasions but on the

number of times in which each subject chose one of the four options provided.

Specifically, each subject will display a score according to the following criteria:

- Number of times in which the subject choses the form with the *essere* auxiliary

- Number of times in which the subject choses the form with the *avere* auxiliary

- Number of times in which the subject choses the form with auxiliary omission

(presence of sole past participle)

- Number of times in which the subject choses the form with a creative (non-

possible) combination of verbs

Sample stimulus

The following table displays a sample sentence from the task stimulus. The left column

reports the target sentence in present tense while the right column reports 4 options of the

same verb in past tense *passato prossimo*, as follows: 1) Presence of auxiliary *avere* according

to Standard Italian 2) Absence of the required auxiliary 3) Use of the auxiliary not required by

Standard Italian 4) Ungrammatical combination of verbs.

a.   Present tense sentence

        Anna   scrive   una lettera
        N-subj   V III.sig   N-object
        Anna   writes   a letter
        Anna writes a letter

b.   Past tense options

        Anna   è   scritta   una lettera
        N.subj   V III.sig-aux *essere*   PP   N-object
        Anna   is   written   a letter
        Anna wrote a letter

        Anna   scritto   una lettera
        N-subj.   PP   N-object
        Anna   written   a letter
        Anna wrote a letter

        Anna   ha   scritto   una lettera
        N-subj   V III.sig-aux *avere*   PP   object
        Anna   has   written   a letter
        Anna wrote a letter

        Anna   scritta   letto   una lettera
        N-subj   PP-V1   PP-V2   N-object
        Anna   written   read   a letter
        Anna wrote a letter

TASK 3   Oral Elicitation-clitic object pronouns

Task Goal

The task aims to explore the subjects' preferred use between clitic pronouns and full lexical nouns in the role of direct object. The task does not investigate the forms of the clitic in terms of gender and number, nor its placement in the sentence, but only its use according to the speaker's preference and knowledge.

Task type and Task modality

The task is an oral elicitation of the clitic pronoun as direct object

Material

The stimulus is based on the pictures of an Italian children book, *Masha e Orso -"Il bambino ranocchio"*, Fanucci Editore, 2015. The book describes the adventures of a little girl named Masha and of her big bear friend. The subjects' responses are recorded with Praat on the researcher's laptop.

Procedure

The researcher presents the book to the subjects and briefly tells them the story of the main characters, Masha and the Bear. The researcher first utters a statement sentence introducing the context of the scene and providing a shared locus of attention with each subject. The researcher then asks the target question. The question is meant to elicit the subjects' use of the direct object in form of clitic. The content doesn't have to match the actual story of the book, but it can be the subjects' own invention. Subjects have to use in their responses, the same verb used in the questions. Productions are recorded, transcribed and than scored according to the scoring procedure. The following example displays a target pair

statement/question uttered by the researcher, in which the target direct object is the highlighted noun *I funghi/* the mushrooms.

Statement	*L'orso è andato in collina a raccogliere **I funghi.***
	The bear goes to the hills and picks up **mushrooms** (target direct object)

Question	*L'orso dove ha messo **I funghi***?
	Where did the bear put the **mushrooms?**

Requirement	*Usa il verbo mettere*
	Use the verb to put

Target answer	**Li** ha messi nel cestino
	He put **them** in the basket, where *Li* is the clitic pronoun as direct object

Stimulus

The stimulus consists of 30 pairs of statement/question, of which 23 are targets and 7 are fillers. Each target pair refers to a specific page in the book. Each pair contains a statement, which puts the situation in context, and a question, which is meant to elicit the use of the clitic object pronoun in the subjects' answer. The clitic pronoun is elicited for both animate object like *il ranocchio* (the froggy) and inanimate objects like il *cucchiaio* (the spoon)**.** The filler pairs are meant to elicit the subject's opinion on a specific event and they don't contain any direct object.

Data analysis and scoring procedure

The scoring for the elicited productions is calculated as follows:

a.   Error analysis in obligatory occasion: The scoring is based on the number of times in which each subject produced a clitic object pronoun and a full lexical object noun according to Standard Italian out of the total clitic and out of the total object nouns produced during the task. The threshold is set at 80%.

b.   Interlanguage analysis: Percentages are used to see if subjects displayed any

independent pattern in the use of the clitic pronoun, according to the number of times

in which each subject produced a specific form, based on the following criteria:

- Number of clitic pronoun uses

- Number of full lexical object noun uses

- Number of object omission

- Number of object reduplication

- Number of other creative productions.

Sample of stimulus (Adapted from Belletti & Leonini, 2012)

The following examples, A and B, show a sample of the task stimulus. In A the direct

object *I funghi* (the mushrooms) is highlighted in bold as the target element of both the

statement and the question, while example B displays possible uses of the direct object in the

elicited answers.

a. Target pair statement/question

Statement

L'orso	va	in collina	e	raccoglie	**I funghi**
Subj.m.s.	V	location	and	V	object.m.pl
The bear	goes	on the hill	and	picks up	the **mushrooms**

The bear goes up the hill and pick up mushrooms

Question

L'orso	dove	mette	**I funghi**?
Subj.m.s	interrogative	V. III.sig	obj.m.pl
The bear	where	puts	the mushrooms?

Where does the bear put the mushrooms?

b. Expected answers

Use of the clitic pronoun according to Standard Italian: the clitic in the correct form for gender and gender is in pre-verbal position

L'orso	**Li**	mette	nel cestino
N.S.m.sig.	obj-cltic.m.pl.	V.III.sig	location
The bear	**them**	puts	in the basket

*The bear puts **them** in the basket*

Omission of the clitic pronoun: the subject won't produce any object in the form of clitic or of lexical noun, not allowed by Standard Italian

*L'orso	Clitic omission	mette	nel cestino
N.S.m.sing	Clitic omission	V. III.sig	location
The bear	_____	puts	in the basket

The bear puts _____ in the basket

Use of full lexical noun as direct object: the subject will repeat the object noun, which can be placed in two positions, before or after the location (nel cestino-in the basket)

L'orso	mette	nel cestino	I funghi
Subj.m.sig	VIII.sig	location	object.m.pl
The bear	puts	in the basket	the mushrooms

*The bear puts **the mushrooms** in the basket*

Reduplication: the use of both noun and clitic as direct object, not in line with Standard Italian

*L'orso	**li**	mette	nel cestino	**I funghi**
Subj.m.sig.	obj-clit.m.pl	V	location	Obj.m.pl.
The bear	them	puts	in the basket	the mushroom

*The bear puts **them the mushroom** in the basket*

TASK 4 Written Yes/No Acceptability Judgment - clitic object pronoun placement

Task goal

The task aims to investigate the subjects' knowledge of clitic object pronouns'

placement, in the specific context of modal verbs and of negative imperative, in order to gain

insight as to the heritage system works with respect to the clitic's position. Specifically, the task

aims to investigate the subjects' judgments of the following clitic's positions: 1) Clitic placement

before the verbs; 2) Clitic placed after the verbs; 3) Clitic placement in between the verbs; 4)

Omission of the clitic, and 5) Reduplication of the clitic in different position. The positions

expressed in situation 3, 4 and 5 are not in line with Standard Italian while the positions

expressed in 1 and 2 are in line with the Standard Italian system.

Task type and Task modality

The task is a written judgment based on binary options, which means that Subjects have

to judge the clitic's position by choosing between Yes and No.

Material

Sheet of paper displaying the target sentences and the distractors, as well as the audio

file of the same task as oral support

Procedure

Participants are provided with a sheet of paper with the stimulus, made by given pairs

of related sentences. They are instructed to judge the acceptability of the object clitic pronoun

placement in the second sentence of the pair, in each test item. They are provided with a binary

choice as follows: "I would use it" and "I would not use it".

Stimulus

The stimulus consists of 66 pairs of related sentences of which 50 are targets and 16 are fillers. The target pairs display two grammatical contexts, one with modal verbs in present tense followed by an infinitive verb and one with negative imperative. In each target pair, the first sentence provides the necessary context for the use of the object pronoun, which is placed in the second sentence. The purpose of having two related sentences is to present the object clitic pronouns as authentically as possible. In Standard Italian, both contexts require specific placements of the object clitic pronoun. Specifically, the 50 target pairs contain 18 sentences in which the clitic is positioned as follows:

- 6 pairs with clitic positioned at the end of the sentence, after the two verbs (modal + infinitive)

- 6 pairs with clitic positioned at the beginning of sentence, before the two verbs (modal + infinitive)

- 3 pairs with clitic positioned after negation, in negative imperative context

- 3 pairs with clitic positioned after the infinitive, in negative imperative context.

- 8 pairs display omission of clitic

- 8 pairs display reduplication of clitic

- 8 pairs in modal verb context position the clitic between the two verbs

- 8 pairs in negative imperative context position the clitic before negation.

The fillers are 16 sentences not containing any clitic, of which:

- 8 are grammatical sentences in line with Standard Italian

- 8 sentences display morphological forms not in line with the rules of Standard Italian, in

terms of gender and number agreement between noun and adjective.

Data analysis and scoring procedure

The subjects' answers are analyzed and scored according to the following types of
analysis as follows:

a.   Error analysis in obligatory occasion**:** The scoring for error analysis is based on the
number of times in which each subject chose the option with clitic placement according
to Standard Italian, out of the total target sentences and the number of times in which
the subject chose the standard option out of the different clitic placements.

b.   Interlanguage analysis: The scoring for interlanguage analysis identifies the number of
answers in each contexts of use. Specifically, the subjects' judgments is analyzed
according to the following criteria: a) Number of acceptance of clitic in post verbal
position; b) Number of acceptance of clitic in pre-verbal position, and c) clitic positioned
after negation c) Number of acceptance of clitic's omission; d) Number of acceptance of
clitic reduplication; e) Number of acceptance of clitic positioned in between two verbs,
and f) Number of acceptance of clitic positioned before negation.

Sample of stimulus (Adapted from Chan, 2011)

The following examples show two pairs of target sentences for each context
investigated, and one example of filler sentence without any clitic.
In each pair, the first sentence provides the necessary context for the use of the object
pronoun, while the second statement always displays the clitic object pronoun as target
element. Example a. displays the context of modal verb + infinitive, where the clitic is placed
before the modal verb. Example b displays the context of negative imperative with the clitic in

post verbal position, where the target verb is the infinitive. In both examples a. and b., the clitic

placement follows the rules of Standard Italian. The direct object and the clitic pronoun are

highlighted in bold. Example c displays the filler. The filler sentence displays a mismatch in

gender and number agreement between the noun and the adjective.

Modal verb context

Context sentence

Lascio	**I libri**	sul tavolo.
V.I.sig	obj. N.m.pl	locative
I leave	the books	on the table

I leave the books on the table

Clitic sentence

Carlo	**li**	puo`	prendere
Subj.	obj.clit.pron.m.pl.	V1 (modal)	V2 (infinitive)
Carlo	them	can	take

Carlo can take them
Clitic placement: pre-verbal position, where the target is the modal verb *poter* (To can)

Negative imperative context

Context sentence
Ho fatto	la torta.
V.past I.sg	object-N.f.sig
I made	the cake

I made   *a cake*

Clitic sentence
Non	mangiar-	**la**
Negation	V-imperative	obj.cli.pron.f.sig
Not	to eat	it

Don't eat it.
Clitic placement: post verbal position, where the target verb is the infinitive

Distractor sentence

Gli studenti	sono	**simpatico**
N.subj.m.pl	V.III pl	adj. m.sig
The students	are	nice

The students are nice

TASK 5   Oral Sentence Building Picture Task- past tense production

Task goal

The task aims to investigate the subjects' preferred past tense form in oral production.

Task type and Task modality

Oral sentence building task based on pictures displayed on different flashcards

Material

Two sets of flash cards with pictures. One set reports pictures of individuals and the other set reports different Italian verbs in infinitive form

Procedure

Subjects are asked to produce a sentence in the past by using two flashcards, one from each sets of cards presented to them by the researcher. Before their production, subjects are instructed to match with the researcher's help, one card from the set of individuals as subject, with one verb from the other set. In this preliminary matching phase, they familiarize with the vocabulary while thinking of their sentence making.

The uttered sentences for each subject are 12. In fact, the verbs available to the subjects are 24 while individuals are only 12. The subjects' production is recorded with Praat, transcribed and then scored.

Stimulus

The stimulus consists of 2 sets of flashcards. One set displays 14 animate and inanimate objects and one set reports the infinitive form of 24 different Italian verbs, with one verb per card.

Scoring

The subjects' productions will be scored according to the following criteria in each type of data analysis:

a. Error analysis in obligatory occasion: The score is based on the number of times in which subjects produced a past tense of their choice, according to Standard Italian, out of the 12 target sentences.

b. Interlanguage analysis: The score is based on the number of times in which subjects produced their preferred past tense form

Sample Stimulus (Adapted from Montrul, 2009)

The following is a sample from the task stimulus, showing the content of each set of flashcards: The picture of a child as animate subject on the left and the verb in infinitive form, on the right.

Animate Subject   Target Verb

        Il bambino (the child)   *Andare* (to go)

The following are examples of expected oral productions, displaying some of the past tense forms allowed by the Standard Italian system.

Expected productions   *Type of Past tense*

    Il bambino **è andato** a scuola (The child went to school)   Passato prossimo
    Il bambino **andava** a scuola (The child used to go to school)   Imperfetto
    Il bambino **ando`** a scuola (The child went to school)   Passato remote

TASK 6   Binary Written Acceptability Judgment – Contrast between *passato prossimo* and

imperfetto

Task goal

The task aims to investigate the presence of the contrast between two Italian past

tenses *passato prossimo* and *imperfetto* in the same narrative, as well as the pattern of use of

both tenses in heritage speakers of Italian.

Task type and Task modality

Written grammaticality judgment task, which requires the choice of one of two

contrastive tenses in the same sentence.

Material

Sheet of paper reporting the task's stimulus and the audio file of the same task, as oral

support

Procedure

Subjects are asked to read a paragraph presented on a sheet of paper, as the task's

stimulus. They are instructed to choose one of the two verbs in past tense for each pair of verbs

in the paragraph, according to what they would use in conversation. The task is not timed and

subjects can complete it at their pace

Stimulus

The stimulus consists of a written paragraph, describing last vacation of a group of

friends. The paragraph displays 36 verb pairs, of which 29 are target pairs displaying the same

verb in both past tense forms of *passato prossimo* and i*mperfetto* and 7 are filler pairs

displaying the same verb in present and future tense. Specifically, the 29 target pairs display 15 verbs in *passato prossimo* and 14 verbs in *imperfetto*.

Data analysis and scoring procedure

The subjects' judgments will be scored according to the following criteria in each type of data analysis:

a.   Error analysis in obligatory occasion**:** The score is based on the number of tense choice out of 29 targets in line with the Standard Italian system. In addition, the subjects' judgment is also according to the number of choices for *passato prossimo*, out of 15 targets and for *imperfetto*, out of 14 targets, in line with Standard Italian.

b.   Interlanguage analysis**:** The score is based on the number of times in which subjects chose *passato prossimo* over *imperfetto* and vice-versa out of the 29 target pairs. In fact, the analysis of the subjects' choices aims to identify the presence or lack of tense contrast as a specific feature of the heritage system.

Sample of stimulus

The following is an extract from the task stimulus displaying 5 pairs of verbs, of which 4 present the same verb in *passato prossimo* and i*mperfetto* and 1 filler pair, with the same verb in present and future tense.

The x indicates the choice of one of the two forms in each verb pair according to Standard Italian.

Alle 10.00 di mattina X **siamo arrivati** (target) **/arrivavamo** all'aereoporto,

(*At 10.00 am **we arrived/we were arriving** ate the airport*)

X **abbiamo aspettato (target) /aspettavamo** per quasi un'ora I nostri bagagli, poi

(*We **waited/we were waiting** for our luggage for almost an hour, than*),

X **siamo usciti** (target) **/uscivamo** e X **abbiamo preso** (target)**/prendevamo** un taxi.

(*We **went out/we were going** out and **we took/we were taking** a taxi*)

Il tassista purtroppo X **è/sarà** antipatico e arrogante (filler sentence)

(*The taxi unfortunately **is/will be unpleasant and arrogant***)

TASK 7 Written Yes/No Acceptability Judgment Task- different uses of the verb *piacere*

Task goal

The task aims to explore the heritage speakers' acceptance of different forms of the target verb and its arguments.

Task type and Task modality

Written acceptability judgment task, in binary form, with the audio file as aural support

Material

Sheet of paper reporting the stimulus, composed of 25 target sentences

Procedure

The researcher provides each subject with the sheet of paper containing the target sentences. Subjects are asked to judge each target sentence according to what they would use or not use in conversation.

Stimulus

The stimulus is made by 25 sentences with different uses of the target verb *piacere* as follows*:*

o   5 sentences in which the experiencer is expressed by a full lexical noun*,* preceded by the proposition "a" as in *A Marco piace la pizza* (Marco likes pizza), in which *a* is the preposition "to", *Marco* is the experiencer and *piace* is the target verb

o   6 sentences in which the experiencer is expressed by the clitic indirect pronoun followed by the target verb, as in *gli piace la pizza*, (He likes the pizza), in which *gli* is the indirect clitic pronoun "to him" followed by the target verb.

o   2 sentences in which the theme is omitted as in *mi piace* (I like ___) in which *mi* is the indirect pronoun "to me" followed by the target verb.

o   4 sentences out of the 13 targets, display a non-canonical placement of the experiencer that is in post-verbal position. In fact, the Italian language allows for a flexible placement of the experiencer in pre and/or post verbal position. The latter is considered the non-canonical (or the least common) experiencer placement in Standard Italian. The form of the experiencer as indirect clitic pronoun or as full lexical noun preceded by the preposition did not seem to matter much in the subjects' judgments.

o   4 sentences with reduplication of the experiencer argument, expressed by the clitic pronoun or by the full lexical noun

o   3 sentences with omission of the required preposition *a,* placed before a full lexical noun as experiencer

o   5 sentences with mismatch agreement for singular/plural, between the target verb and the argument.

Data analysis and scoring procedure

Each one of the subjects, parents and children, will be scored according to their preferential choices in both kinds of analysis:

a.   Error analysis in obligatory occasion**:** The score is based on the number of acceptability of *piacere* verb in line with Standard Italian in all target sentences.

b.   Interlanguage analysis**:** The subjects' preference will be scored in each of the following situations

Acceptability of *piacere* in all sentences (13) in line with Standard Italian

a.	Acceptability of *piacere* in the structure *[Preposition "a" + Full lexical noun experiencer + piacere]*

b.	Acceptability of *piacere* with indirect clitic pronouns as experiencer

c.	Acceptability of *piacere* when theme is omitted

d.	Acceptability of non-canonical experiencer placement

 Acceptability of *piacere* in all sentences (12) not in line with Standard Italian

e.	Acceptability of *piacere* with experiencer reduplication

f.	Acceptability of *piacere* with omission of the required preposition *a*

g.	Acceptability of *piacere* with mismatch agreement verb-argument

Sample of stimulus (Adapted from Miglio & Gries, 2012)

The sentences below are part of task's stimulus and show the use of the verb *piacere* in line and not in line with the rules of Standard Italian.

Use of the verb *piacere* in line with Standard Italian

a.	Use of *piacere* with experiencer in form of full lexical noun preceded by the proposition

A Marco	piace	la pizza
Experiencer	V	theme
To Marco	likes	pizza
Marco likes pizza

b.	Use of *piacere* with experiencer expressed by indirect clitic pronoun

Vi	piace	l'Italia
Exper.	V	theme
To all of you	likes	Italy
You all like Italy

c. Use of *piacere* with omission of theme

Mi	piace
Indirect clitic-exper.	V
To me	*likes*

I like _____

d. Use of experiencer in pre-verbal position (most common)

A Carlo	piace	la pizza
Prep+N-exper	V	theme
To Carlo	is pleasing	the pizza

Carlo likes pizza

e. Use of experiencer in post-verbal position (least common)

La pizza	piace	a Carlo
N-Theme	V	prep+ N-exper
The Pizza	is pleasing	to Carlo

Carlo likes pizza

Use of the verb *piacere* not in line with Standard Italian

f. Use of *piacere* with experiencer reduplication

A	Lia	le		piace	cantare
Prep.	N-Exper.	indirect clit-exper.		V	theme
To	Lia	to her		likes	to sing

*Lia she likes to sing
Lia likes to sing

g. Use of *piacere* with preposition omission, before the experiencer

*___	Leonardo	piace	fumare
____	N-exper	V	theme
____	Leonardo	likes	to smoke

Leonardo likes to smoke

h. Use of *piacere* with agreement mismatch between argument and verb

*Il mare	mi	piacciono molto
Subj-N-theme	clitic-exper.	V III.pl
The sea	to me	like

*I likes the sea
I like the sea

TASK 8   Semi-Free Speech Task as re-telling story

Task goal

The task aims to investigate the spontaneous use of different grammatical structures by heritage speakers of Italian in semi-free speech.

Task type and Task modality

Semi-free oral production of a generic given topic such as the re-telling of a common children's story like *Little Red Riding Hood*

Material

Voice recorder and a pre-made card with the name of the story's main characters.

Procedure

Subjects are asked to narrate the story of *Cappuccetto Rosso*/ Little Red Riding Hood in the past, as they remember it. Subjects review vocabulary with researcher prior to the recording. Specifically, subjects are helped with noun referencing the main characters of the story. If needed, they can have a few minutes to reorganize their thoughts about the story.

Stimulus

The main characters in the story *Cappuccetto Rosso*/Little Red Riding Hood:

Cappuccetto Rosso	Red Riding Hood
La nonna	The grandmother
La mamma	The mother
Il lupo	The wolf
Il cacciatore	The Hunter

Data analysis and scoring procedure

The analysis of the present semi-free speech task aims to describe the individual language production of each subject, in terms of the grammatical structures that are expected to be found in their speech, such as:

- Use of one or more preferred past tense forms

- Use of direct clitic pronouns

- Use of indirect clitic pronouns

- Use of double clitic pronouns (indirect+direct)

- Auxiliary selection in *passato prossimo*

- Contrastive use and context of use of *passato prossimo* and *imperfetto*

- Use of gender agreement between subject and past participles and clitics

- Use of regional or dialectal expressions and/or vocabulary

The subject's judgments are analyzed according to the following procedures:

a. Error analysis in obligatory occasion: The error analysis in the semi-free speech task is based on the number of each subject' productions conforming to Standard Italian, in some or all of the expected structures. Specifically, the scoring for the past tense use as one of the expected structures is based on the number of times in which each subject produced a past tense form out of the total number of past tense verbs used by the same subject during the story telling.

b. Interlanguage analysis: The interlanguage analysis aims to identify patterns of use of the expected structures in the subjects' language as evidence of the heritage system's development.

CHAPTER IV

Results from error analysis

The chapter reports the results from error analysis, based on identifying the subjects' errors in obligatory contexts of use scoring them according to the rules of the Standard Italian system as target language. Percentages are calculated by identifying the number of times in which a grammatical feature has been supplied, produced, or judged in all contexts required by the target (Standard Italian). The scoring procedure is the same in each task. The threshold is set at 80%. Percentages equal or above this number indicates the acquisition of a given structure in the case of the children as heritage speakers, while in the case of the parents as input source, number equal of above the threshold indicates the lack of any restructuring process due to cross linguistic influences between the parents' two languages, English and Italian. Pseudonyms are used to indicate each child as heritage speakers.

Why error analysis?

Error analysis provides relevant information about the subjects' linguistic behavior in with regard to Standard Italian and focuses on the part of the heritage grammar that functions like the target language. In this view, the heritage system is equated to the system of the language of origin as idealized target and the analysis of the subjects' behavior "only provides information about the extent to which the learner's language approximates to the target language" (Ellis, 2008, pg. 75). In the case of the parents, the error analysis highlighted alternative results from the expected behavior of native speakers of the language of origin in the target structures. While in the case of the children as heritage speakers, the results from error analysis are relevant only with respect to understanding what they did in relation to the

target language. The analysis in fact only describes the behavior in line with Standard Italian, disregarding the analysis of the subjects' responses not in line with the target language.

Results from error analysis

The following section presents the results from error analysis in obligatory occasions in all tasks. Standard Italian is used as target language. The results are organized as follows:

TASK 1

Results from Oral Picture Description on morphological gender assignment

TASK 2

Results from Written Forced-Choice (FC) Judgment on auxiliary selection

TASK 3

Results from Oral Elicitation on use of clitic direct object pronouns

TASK 4

Results from Written Yes/No Acceptability Judgment on clitic object placement

TASK 5

Results from Oral Sentence Picture Making on paste tense use

TASK 6

Results from Binary Written Acceptability Judgment on contrast between *passato prossimo* and *imperfetto*

TASK 7

Results from Written Yes/No Acceptability Judgment on different uses of *piacere* verb

TASK 8

Results from Semi-free Speech task on re-telling of a common folklore story

TASK 1

Type of task   Oral Picture Description Task

Structured investigated   Morphological gender assignment between the elements

                                       of a noun phrase: determiner, noun and adjective

Scoring procedure   Number of times in which each subject produced gender

                                       assignment in line with the rules of Standard Italian.

                                       Specifically, the subjects' behavior is identified as

                                       "standard" when the subjects' choice follows the rules of

                                       the Standard Italian system

Threshold   80%

Score 1   Number of gender assignments in line with Standard

                                       Italian, out of the 48 targets nouns, with no distinction

                                       between feminine and masculine nouns

Score 2   Number of gender assignments in line with Standard

                                       Italian in each group of masculine and feminine nouns (24

                                       target nouns each).

Results from Score 1: the subjects' behavior in all target nouns

The following table (Table 5) reports the subjects' behavior in all the 48 target nouns, without distinction between feminine and masculine one while the second table (Table 6) shows the presence and absence of acquisition of the target element in the children, and the presence or absence of deviations from the standard language in the parents, expressed respectively by +/-.

Table 5. Percentage of parents and children's behavior in gender assignment and gender agreement in all masculine and feminine target nouns

SUBJECT	F+M as in Standard Italian		SUBJECTS	F+M as in Standard Italian	
Children	D-N	N-Adj	Parents	Det-Noun	N-Adj
Rom	93%	89%	Mother Rom	100%	100%
Isa	100%	100%	Mother Isa/Lollo	100%	100%
Lollo	98%	88%			
Cesco	100%	100%	Mother Cesco	100%	100%
Avve	88%	90%	Mother Avve	100%	100%
Elli	92%	86%	Mother Elli	100%	100%
G.	90%	88%	Father G.	100%	100%

Table 6. Parents and children's behavior in gender assignment and gender agreement in all masculine and feminine target nouns, in line with Standard Italian

SUBJECT	F+M as in Standard Italian		SUBJECT	F+M as in Standard Italian	
Children	D-N	N-Adj.	Parents	D-N	N-Adj
Rom	+	+	Mother Rom	+	+
Isa	+	+	Mother Isa/Lollo	+	+
Lollo	+	+			
Cesco	+	+	Mother Cesco	+	+
Avve	+	+	Mother Avve	+	+
Eli	+	+	Mother Eli	+	+
G.	+	+	Father G.	+	+

In the case of the children, Table 1 shows that two children out of seven reached a full score of (100%) in both agreements between determiner and noun and between noun and adjective, while the rest of the children displayed different scores, all above the 80% threshold. In addition, six children displayed a higher score in determiner-noun agreement, while only one child (Subj: *Avve*) displayed higher percentage in noun-adjective agreement. The data displayed in Table 6 shows that all children acquired gender assignment in all target nouns between determiner, noun and adjective.

In the case of the parents, results show that all of them reached full score (100%) in gender agreement between determiner and noun and between noun and adjective. The presence of the symbol + displayed in Table 6 indicates the lack of deviations from the native language Italian.

Results from Score 2: the subjects' behavior in feminine and in masculine nouns

The following table (Table 7) shows the subjects' behavior in gender assignment between determiner and noun and between noun and adjective within two groups of target nouns: 24 feminine and 24 masculine nouns. Table 7 indicates the presence and absence of acquisition of the target element in the children, and the presence or absence of deviations from the native language in the parents, expressed respectively by + and -.

Table 7. Percentages of the subjects' behavior in gender agreement between determiner and noun and noun and adjective with feminine and with masculine nouns.

Subjects	D-N agreement		N-Adj agreement	
Children	**Feminine N**	**Masculine N**	**Feminine N**	**Masculine N**
Rom	96%	91%	78%	100%
Isa	100%	100%	100%	100%
Lollo	96%	100%	80%	96%
Cesco	100%	100%	100%	100%
Avve	79%	96%	83%	96%
Eli	92%	92%	71%	100%
G.	75%	96%	79%	96%
Parents	**Feminine N**	**Masculine N**	**Feminine N**	**Masculine N**
Mother Rom	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mother Isa/Lollo	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mother Cesco	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mother Avve	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mother Eli	100%	100%	100%	100%
Father G.	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 8. Presence/absence of acquisition in the children' behavior and presence/absence of deviations in the parents' behavior in gender assignment and agreement

Subjects	D-N agreement		N-Adj agreement	
Children	**Feminine N**	**Masculine N**	**Feminine N**	**Masculine N**
Rom	+	+	-	+
Isa	+	+	+	+
Lollo	+	+	+	+
Cesco	+	+	+	+
Avve	-	+	+	+
Eli	+	+	-	+
G.	-	+	-	+
Parents	**Feminine N**	**Masculine N**	**Feminine N**	**Masculine N**
Mother Rom	+	+	+	+
Mother Isa/Lollo	+	+	+	+
Mother Cesco	+	+	+	+
Mother Avve	+	+	+	+
Mother Eli	+	+	+	+
Father G.	+	+	+	+

All parents reached full score (100%) in gender agreement between determiner, noun and adjective, for all masculine target nouns and all feminine ones, and that their productions did not display any deviation from the native language. In the case of the children results display more variability and show that gender assignment in masculine nouns is different from that performed with feminine ones, as specified below

- Three children out of seven reached the 80% threshold of acquisition in gender agreement between the elements of a noun phrase, for both masculine and feminine targets, of which two reached full score.

- Four children out of seven did reach the threshold of acquisition for all masculine targets but not for feminine nouns, of which:

  o Two children scored below 80% for agreement between noun and adjective

- One child scored below 80% for agreement between determiner and noun

- One scored below 80% for agreement between determiner and noun and between noun and adjective.

TASK 2

Type of task   Written Forced-Choice (FC) Judgment Task

Structure investigated   Auxiliary selection between *avere* (to have) and *essere* (to be*)* in the Italian compound past tense *passato prossimo*.

Scoring procedure   Number of selections in line with Standard Italian among the different options provided. Specifically, the subjects' judgment is identified as "standard" when the subjects' choice follows the rules of the Standard Italian system

Threshold   Set at 80%. Any number equal or above this number indicates the acquisition of the given structure in the children and the lack of cross-linguistic influence in the parents.

Score 1   Number of standard auxiliary selections, which means in line with Standard Italian, out of all the target verbs

Score 2   Number of standard auxiliary selections, which means in line with Standard Italian, within each verb semantic group: unaccusative, unergative and transitive verbs.

Results from Score 1: the subjects' behavior in all target verbs

       The following table shows percentages of the subjects' auxiliary selections in all the target verbs, as well as the presence and/or absence of acquisition in the children and the absence of deviations from the native language in the parents with the use of +/-

Table 9. Percentages of the subjects' auxiliary selection as well presence/absence of acquisition in the children and deviations from the native language in the parents

Children	Standard Behavior	Presence of acquisition	Parents	Standard Behavior	Absence of deviations
Rom	92%	+	Mother Rom	100%	+
Isa	100%	+	Mother Isa/Lollo	100%	+
Lollo	83%	+			+
Cesco	96%	+	Mother Cesco	100%	+
Avve	96%	+	Mother Avve	100%	+
Elli	83%	+	Mother Elli	100%	+
G.	92%	+	Father G	96%	+

The table shows that all children reached the 80% threshold of acquisition performing the auxiliary selection according to the rules of the Standard Italian system, and that one child out of seven reached full score (100%). In the case of the parents, the table shows that 5 parents out of 6 reached full score (100%) and that all of them reached the threshold, which means that the parents' language, did not display any deviation from the native language. It is interesting to note that the only parent not reaching full score

(Subj.: *Father G)* displays a behavior more similar to the children as heritage speakers of Italian than to the other parents as native speakers of the language of origin.

Score 2: The subjects' behavior in each verb group

The subjects were also scored according to their behavior in the three semantic groups in which the target verbs were divided. Table 10 specifically shows the subjects' auxiliary selection in line with the rules of Standard Italian with unaccusative (10), unergative (5) and transitive verbs (9). Table 11 displays the presence and/or absence of acquisition in the children and the presence and/or absence of cross-linguistic influences in the parents.

Table 10. Percentage of the subjects' auxiliary selection in line with Standard Italian, in three semantic verb groups

Children	Unacc.V	Unerg.V	Tr.V	Parents	Unacc.V	Unerg.V	Tr.V
Rom	80%	100%	100%	Mother Rom	100%	100%	100%
Isa	100%	100%	100%	Mother Isa/Lollo	100%	100%	100%
Lollo	80%	80%	89%				
Cesco	100%	100%	89%	Mother Cesco	100%	100%	100%
Avve	90%	100%	100%	Mother Avve	100%	100%	100%
Elli	70%	80%	100%	Mother Elli	100%	100%	100%
G.	90%	80%	100%	Father G.	94%	100%	100%

Table 11. Presence/absence of acquisition in children and presence/absence of deviations in parents

Presence of Acquisition				Absence of deviations			
Children	Unacc.V	Unerg.V	Tr.V	Parents	Unacc.V	Unerg.V	Tr.V
Rom	+	+	+	Mother Rom	+	+	+
Isa	+	+	+	Mother Isa/Lollo	+	+	+
Lollo	+	+	+				
Cesco	+	+	+	Mother Cesco	+	+	+
Avve	+	+	+	Mother Avve	+	+	+
Elli	_	+	+	Mother Elli	+	+	+
G.	+	+	+	Father G.	+	+	+

According to Table 10, six children out of seven scored above the threshold in all verb groups. This means that their auxiliary selection was conformed to the rules of Standard Italian with unaccusative, unergative and with transitive verbs. Only one child (Subj: *Isa*) reached full score (100%) in all three verbs' groups. Four children reached full score in different groups with no significant pattern behavior across the groups, while the remaining child (Subj.: *Elli*) scored below the threshold, displaying non-standard auxiliary selection only with unaccusative verbs. Table 11 shows that six children out of seven displayed the acquisition of auxiliary selection as required by Standard Italian in all three verb semantic groups, while the remaining child

(Subj.: *Elli*) displayed acquisition of auxiliary selection only with transitive and with unergative verbs, not with unaccusative ones. In the case of the parents, five parents out of six reached full score in all groups of verbs and that only one parent (Subj: *Father G*.) displayed a lower percentage in auxiliary selection with unaccusative verbs. No parent displayed any deviation from the native language in each one of the verb semantic groups.

TASK 3

Task type   Oral Elicitation Task

Structure investigated   Clitic Object Pronouns

Scoring procedure   Number of productions in line with the target language

among the total number of utterances displaying that

specific element. Specifically, the subjects' production is

identified as "standard" when the subjects' choice follows

the rules of the Standard Italian system.

Threshold   Set at 80%. Any number equal or above this number

indicates the acquisition of the given structure in the

children and the lack of deviations from the native

language in the parents.

Score 1   Number of clitic productions as well as number of full

lexical noun productions in line with Standard Italian out

of the total number of clitic and of lexical nouns produced

by each subject.

Results from the scoring

The following table (Table 12) shows the percentage of the subjects' productions of clitic

and lexical noun in line with Standard Italian out of the total use that each subject made of each

given form. Since Standard Italian doesn't display any constraint for the use of one form as

opposed to the other, the subjects' productions are considered in line with Standard Italian

only if form and placement of the clitic object pronoun as well as form and placement of the object lexical noun follow the rules of the Standard Italian system.

Table 12. Percentages of the subjects' productions in line with Standard Italian for clitic object pronoun and for object noun

Children	Standard Production		Parents	Standard Production	
	Clitic	Lexical Noun		Clitic	Lexical Noun
Rom.	100%	84%	Mother Rom	100%	100%
Isa	100%	100%	Mother Isa/Lollo	100%	100%
Lollo	No use	86%			
Cesco	No use	100%	Mother Cesco	100%	100%
Avve	No use	96%	Mother Avve	100%	100%
Elli	100%	100%	Mother Elli	100%	100%
G.	No use	91%	Father G.	100%	100%

The table shows that four children out of seven did not produce the clitic object pronoun at all and that their productions of the full lexical noun as object were all in line with Standard Italian, since they displayed a score above the 80% threshold. The three remaining children produced both object forms, reaching the threshold for both clitic and lexical nouns. Two of these children reached full score in clitic and noun production, while one child reached full score for the clitic but not for lexical noun. Overall, the three children who produced the clitic pronoun in form and placement according to Standard Italian, with full score also scored above the threshold for the production of the lexical noun. No use of clitic may indicate lack of acquisition. The table also shows that all parents reached full score (100%) and behaved according to the rules of Standard Italian in use and form of the clitic object pronoun as well as in use and form of the lexical noun.

TASK 4

Type of task   Written Yes/No Acceptability Judgment Task

Structure investigated   Placement of clitic object pronoun in the contexts of use of

negative imperative and of modal verb followed by

infinitive

Scoring procedure   Number of judgments conformed to the target language

Specifically, the subjects' judgment is identified as

"standard" when the subjects' choice follows the rules of

the Standard Italian system

Threshold   Set at 80%.

Score 1   Number of judgments in line with Standard Italian in all

the target sentences

Score 2   Number of judgments in line with Standard Italian in each

context of use (negative imperative and modal verb +

infinitive)

Score 1: The subjects' behavior in all target sentences

The following tables show the subjects' percentage in terms of judgment of the clitic

placement according to Standard Italian. Specifically, Table 13 shows the percentage of answers

in line with Standard Italian out of the total number of target sentences, without distinction

between the two contexts of use.

Table 13.   Percentage of the subjects' judgments of the object clitic pronouns' placement in both contexts of use

Children	Standard Clitic Positions	Presence Acquisition	Parents	Standard Clitic Positions	Absence of deviations
Rom	85%	+	Mother Rom	96%	+
Isa	88%	+	Mother Isa/Lollo	100%	+
Lollo	71%	-			
Cesco	96%	+	Mother Cesco	100%	+
Avve	75%	-	Mother Avve	98%	+
Elli	75%	-	Mother Elli	98%	+
G.	60%	-	Father G.	94%	+

According to the table, four children out of seven did not reach the threshold of acquisition set at 80% for the position of the clitic object pronoun in both contexts of use. This means that four children judged as grammatical some clitic placements not accepted by the Standard Italian system. In the case of the parents, the table shows that none of them displayed any deviations from the native language and that only two parents out of six reached full score (100%) in the given structure.

Score 2: the subjects' behavior in each context of use

The following table (Table 14) displays the percentage of standard answers in negative imperative context and in modal verb context.

Table 14.   Percentages of the subjects' judgments of clitic placement in line with Standard Italian, in each context of use

Children	Negative Imperative	Modal Verb	Parents	Negative Imperative	Modal Verb
Rom	94%	81%	Mother Rom	95%	97%
Isa	83%	84%	Mother Isa/Lollo	100%	100%
Lollo	73%	68%			
Cesco	89%	97%	Mother Cesco	100%	100%
Avve	56%	87%	Mother Avve	100%	97%
Elli	72%	74%	Mother Elli	100%	97%
G.	67%	58%%	Father G.	89%	97%

The table shows that the majority of the children (four on 7) displayed a grammaticality judgment in line with Standard Italian for the clitic position in modal context, while the lowest percentage of standard judgments was displayed in the negative imperative context (three on seven).

In the case of the parents, the table also displays two parents out of six with full scores in the modal context, while four parents out of six reached full scores in their judgments of the clitic position in negative imperative context. Overall, results show that no parents displayed deviations from the native language. The parents' performance reached an overall higher score in the negative imperative context, in which four parents out of six reached full score. The children's performance seems to display the opposite pattern. In fact, four children out of seven reached higher scores in the context of use with modal verbs followed by infinitive, while the remaining children, displayed a higher score in the negative imperative context.

TASK 5

Task type   Oral Sentence Picture Making Task

Structure investigated   Preferred past tense form

Scoring procedure   Number of times in which each subject produced any past

tense of their choice according to Standard Italian, out of

the total number of utterances (12). Specifically, the

subjects' production is identified as "standard" when the

subjects' tense choice follows the rules of the Standard

Italian system, and as "non-standard" when the subjects'

choice is not confirming with the rules of the same Italian

system.

Results

Subjects were asked to create a sentence based on given pictures, using a past tense of their choice. The following table shows the percentage of the subjects' production of their past tense selection, in line with Standard Italian. The table displays with +/- the presence of acquisition of past tense in the children' language as well as the absence of deviations from the native language in the parents' responses, according to the 80% threshold.

Table 15. Percentage of the subjects' past tense productions in line with Standard Italian

Children	Standard Past tense use	Presence of Acquisition	Parents	Standard Past tense use	Absence of deviation
Rom,	93%	+	Mother Rom	100%	+
Isa.	100%	+	Mother Isa/Lollo	100%	+
Lollo	86%	+			
Cesco	100%	+	Mother Cesco	100%	+
Avve	93%	+	Mother Avve	100%	+
Elli	93%	+	Mother Elli	100%	+
G.	73%	-	Father G.	100%	+

All subjects (parents and children) were consistent in using the same past tense form in every sentence produced. Results show that six children out of seven reached the threshold of acquisition by producing the past tense of their choice according to the rules of Standard Italian. Two of them reached full score. Only one child did not reach the 80% threshold and as a consequence did not display acquisition of the chosen past tense as required by Standard Italian. In the case of the parents, all of them scored 100%. They produced a past tense of their choice with no deviations from the native language.

TASK 6

Type of task   Binary Written Acceptability Judgment Task

Structure investigated   Contrast between *passato prossimo* and *imperfetto*

Scoring procedure   Number of judgments in line with the target language provided

for each verb pair, in which the two tenses are used in alternation,

out of the total 29 target pairs. Specifically, the subjects' tense

production is identified as "standard" when the subjects' tense

choice follows the rules of the Standard Italian system

Threshold   Set at 80%. Specifically for the children, score equal or above the

threshold indicates the presence of tense contrast, therefore the

acquisition of the target structure

Results from the scoring

The following table (Table 16) displays the score of the subjects' judgments for the

choice of the target tense in each verb pair, out of all target verbs.

Table 16. Percentages of the parents and children' judgment for the use of *passato prossimo* and i*mperfetto*

Children	Standard Pair use	Presence Acquisition	Parents	Standard Pair use	Absence Deviations
Rom	93%	+	Mother Rom	100%	+
Isa	90%	+	Mother Isa/Lollo	100%	+
Lollo	93%	+			
Cesco	90%	+	Mother Cesco	100%	+
Avve	90%	+	Mother Avve	100%	+
Elli	76%	-	Mother Elli	100%	+
G.	69%	-	Father G.	93%	+

Results show that five children out of seven scored above the threshold set at 80% displaying contrast between the two tenses in line with the rules of Standard Italian, although none of them reached full score (100%). Among the seven children, two scored below the threshold displaying a tense judgment not in line with Standard Italian. A score below the threshold implies the lack of contrast between the two tenses used in the same sentence.

The table also shows that five parents out of six reached full score in their tense judgment according to the rules of Standard Italian, while the only one parent who did not reach full score, displayed a small percentage of non-standard tense use. In addition, no parent displayed deviation from the native language.

TASK 7

Type of task   Written Yes/No Acceptability Judgment

Structure investigated   Different uses of the verb *Piacere*

Scoring procedure   Number of **Yes-answer** provided by each subject out of

the total target sentences (25). Specifically, the subjects'

judgment is identified as "standard" when the subjects'

choice follows the rules of the Standard Italian system.

Threshold   Set at 80%.

Results from the scoring

The following table (Table 17) displays the percentages of the subjects' acceptance of

piacere verbs in line with Standard Italian.

Table 17. Percentages of the subjects' acceptance of *piacere* verb in all target sentences

Piacere Acceptability in line with Standard Italian					
Children	**Overall Acceptance**	**Presence Acquisition**	**Parents**	**Overall Acceptance**	**Absence Deviation**
Rom	60%	-	Mother Rom	88%	+
Isa	52%	-	Mother Isa/Lollo	84%	+
Lollo	72%	-			
Cesco	60%	-	Mother Cesco	92%	+
Avve	48%	-	Mother Avve	100%	+
Elli	56%	-	Mother Elli	88%	+
G.	52%	-	Father G.	72%	-

The table shows that none of the seven children reached the threshold of acquisition set

at 80%. This means that all children expressed acceptability for some uses of *piacere* verb not in

line with the target language and that they also judged as ungrammatical other uses of the

target verb that conforming to Standard Italian. All children display lack of acquisition of the

target verb use as required by the rules of Standard Italian.

In the case of the parents, the table shows that five parents out of six scored above 80% and that only one of them reached full score. One parent scored below the threshold, which means that he expressed acceptability for *piacere* use, not in line with Standard Italian. The presence acceptance and/or production of the target element not coforing to Standard Italian indicate the presence of deviations from the native language.

TASK 8

Type of task | Semi-free production of the story *Cappuccetto Rosso*

Structure investigated | The same grammatical domains investigated in previous tasks are investigated here, as follows:

1. Use/Form of verb conjugation, mode and tense

2. Use/Form of clitic pronouns

3. Morphological gender assignment between determiner, noun and adjective.

Scoring procedure | Number of target productions in line with Standard Italian in terms of use/form/placement, out of the total number of utterances of the same element. Specifically, a structure is considered "in line with Standard Italian" if all use-form-placement are in line with the rules of the target system. For example, if a subject produced 3 past tense forms, the count for standard productions is calculated out of the 3 uttered past tenses.

Threshold | 80%. Children who produced a score equal or higher than the threshold in each target element, display acquisition of the same element, while parents who scored above the threshold don't display any deviations from the native language.

Results

Each subject was asked to re-tell the story of an old folklore tale, *Cappuccetto Rosso* in the past. The following table reports the results from subjects' behavior during the oral semi-free speech for use, form and placement of verbs, clitic pronoun and gender agreement. The presence of 0% indicates the lack of production of the given element.

Table 18. Children's behavior in line with Standard Italian in each target structure

Verb form/use (conjugation, mode, tense)	Rom	Isa	Lollo	Cesco	Avve	Elli	G.
Use/Form of preferred past tense	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Use/Form of other verb tenses and modes	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Use/Form of *Piacere* verb	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Clitic use and form	**Rom**	**Isa**	**Lollo**	**Cesco**	**Avve**	**Elli**	**G.**
Use /Form/Placement of direct clitic pron.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Use /Form/Placement of indirect clitic pr.	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Use /Form/Placement of double clitic	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Gender agreement (D-N-Adj, Aux.)	**Rom**	**Isa**	**Lollo**	**Cesco**	**Avve**	**Elli**	**G.**
Overall agreement between Det-N-Adj.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The table above (Table 15) shows that each subject produced form-use-placement of the target elements in line with Standard Italian. It's interesting to note that subjects like Subject: *Lollo* and Subject: *Avve,* who did not produce any object clitic pronoun during the elicitation task, produced both direct and indirect object in the form of clitic in line with the Standard Italian requirements. The following table reports the results from parents' behavior during the oral semi-free speech for use, form and placement of verbs, clitic pronoun and gender agreement.

Table 19. Parents' behavior in line with Standard Italian for use, form, placement of verbs, clitic pronouns and gender agreement

Verb form and use (Conjugation, mode, tense)	Mother Rom	Mother Isa-Lollo	Mother Cesco	Mother Avve	Mother Elli	Father G.
Use, form of preferred past tense	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Use, form of verbs' tenses and modes	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Use, form of *Piacere* verb	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Clitic Use and Form	**Mother Rom**	**Mother Isa/Lollo**	**Mother Cesco**	**Mother Avve**	**Mother Elli**	**Father G.**
Use, form, placement of direct clitic	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%
Use, form, placement of indirect clitic	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Use, form, placement of double clitic	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Gender agreement	**Mother Rom**	**Mother Isa-Lollo**	**Mother Cesco**	**Mother Avve**	**Mother Elli**	**Father G.**
Overall agreement between D-N-Adj.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The results show that the parents did not display any deviation from the standard in the given structures and that the production of clitic pronouns represents the linguistic choice of the individual speaker.

Synoptic view of the children' behavior

The following table displays the synoptic view of the results from the children's behavior in each task. The threshold of acquisition is set at 80% and scores equal or above this number indicate the acquisition of a given structure, while any number below the threshold indicates lack of acquisition.

Table 20. Synoptic view of the error analysis results in all tasks except for semi-free speech

	ORAL MODALITY					WRITTEN MODALITY			
Children	**Agreem** Det-N	**Assign** N-Adj	**Object** Clitic	Object DP	**Past Tense**	**Clitic** position	*Piacere* Verb	Aux. Choice	*Imperf. VS P.prossimo*
Rom	93%	89%	100%	84%	93%	85%	60%	92%	93%
Isa	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	88%	52%	100%	90%
Lollo	98%	88%	0%	86%	86%	71%	72%	83%	93%
Cesco	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	96%	60%	96%	90%
Avve	88%	90%	0%	96%	93%	75%	48%	96%	90%
Elli	92%	86%	100%	100%	93%	75%	56%	83%	76%
G.	90%	88%	0%	91%	73%	60%	52%	92%	69%

The table shows that the presence of acquisition in all the heritage speakers of Italian in the study, is identified in the following grammatical structures: 1) Gender assignment 2) Production of the direct object as lexical noun 3) Auxiliary selection in the past tense *passato prossimo.* In addition, six out of seven children reached the threshold of acquisition in the production of the preferred past tense form. No children reached the threshold in the acceptability of different uses of *piacere* verb and four children out of seven scored below 80% in the judgment of the object clitic position and of the past tense contrast. The table also shows that most of the scores above the threshold are in oral tasks while in written tasks, the percentages display more individual variability and more numbers below the threshold.

Viewing the heritage grammar according to the results from error analysis in obligatory occasions means to consider only the scores above the threshold as evidence of the subjects' attempt at reaching the target. This view is not supported in the present study. In fact, error analysis provides only a partial understanding of the subjects' behavior because it disregards their judgments not in line with the target. According to table 17, six children out of seven

scored above 90% in gender assignment, which means that despite scoring above the threshold

of acquisition, they didn't reach the native baseline, represented by the threshold of 80%.

The limitations of error analysis

Let's now compare results from table 13 and from table 14 for clitic use. Sme of the

children scored 0 in more than two oral tasks. In the oral elicitation of object clitic pronouns,

four children did not display any clitic production. According to the threshold set at 80%, the

result shows lack of acquisition of the given element. This result is in contrast with that of the

semi-free speech displayed in table 14, in which the same children who scored 0% in clitic

elicitation, spontaneously produced object clitic pronouns. The different results from two

distinct tasks may raise questions on the possible limitations of error analysis and on the role of

obligatory occasions. In the specific case of clitic pronoun, Standard Italian doesn't display

constraints on form and use of a direct object. Speakers of Italian can choose to express the

object with a full lexical noun or with a clitic pronoun, and the syntax and semantic of the

sentence would not be affected.

Many studies identify the absence of the target structure with the speakers' lack of

knowledge and competence. The investigation of language acquisition in young subjects (such

as children between the age of 2 and 6) views the adult language as the target. Therefore, any

omission and/or non-adult like productions, are considered evidence of lack of acquisition of

the target element as well as evidence of the children' language development at a specific point

in time in their life. In addition, the presence or lack of obligatory occasions for the use of a

target structure doesn't influence the way we view the children's productions. For example,

monolingual Italian children (Belletti & Guasti, 2015) produce the object clitic pronoun after the

age of 4. Before than, they tend to omit the object or they produce the object as a lexical noun.

The lack of object clitic in the production of 2 or 3 years old speakers, whether constrained or not by obligatory contexts of use, can be viewed as lack of acquisition of the element, caused by age factor and by cognitive development. The same children will produce the given form later in life, after the age of 4 (Belletti & Guasti, 2015). But in the case of adult speakers we should reconsider what counts as obligatory occasion and what counts for the presence/absence of acquisition. Going back to the subjects from the present study, as adult heritage speakers with full cognitive development, the lack of a target structure in production such as object clitics doesn't imply lack of acquisition of the same element, especially without constraints in the language of origin. Therefore, the absence of a target element or the zero score is viewed in the present study as the speakers' choice between two contrastive forms.

CHAPTER V

Results from interlanguage analysis

This chapter reports the results from the interlanguage analysis in all the tasks

administered in the present study. The notion of interlanguage is used as a metaphor for the

heritage grammar. The analysis focuses on the subjects' production as their own creations, not

compared against the rules of a target language. The analysis is based on identifying their

linguistic preferences in terms of form and use of a given element. In some case, the analysis

uses a scoring procedure, calculated by counting the number of times in which a feature has

been supplied, produced, or judged by each subject independently from the rules of Standard

Italian as language of origin. Even though the presence of a threshold in interlanguage analysis

is not necessary nor always easy to set, some tasks (as in the case of acceptability of p*iacere*

uses) display a threshold of the scoring as a way to facilitate the analysis and the comparison

among speakers.

The same pseudonyms used to indicate each child in the error analysis are used here.

Why interlanguage analysis?

I believe that the notion of interlanguage (Selinker, 1972), as a separate system created

by the speaker during the learning process allows the most adequate investigation of the

heritage grammar as a unique system with its own set of rules, developed independently from

the language of origin, with which it may or may not share the same properties.

The interlanguage analysis allows the investigation of any grammatical element

supplied, produced, or judged by the subjects whether the production is line with the rules of a

target language or not.

Results

The following section presents the results from the interlanguage analysis in all tasks.

The results are organized as follows:

TASK 1

Results from Oral Picture Description on morphological gender assignment

TASK 2

Results from Written Forced-Choice (FC) Judgment on auxiliary selection

TASK 3

Results from Oral Elicitation on use of clitic direct object pronouns

TASK 4

Results from Written Yes/No Acceptability Judgment on clitic object placement

TASK 5

Results from Oral Sentence Picture Making on past tense use

TASK 6

Results from Binary Written Acceptability Judgment on contrast between *passato prossimo* and

imperfetto

TASK 7

Results from Written Yes/No Acceptability Judgment on different uses of *piacere* verb

TASK 8

Results from Semi-free Speech on re-telling of a common folklore story

TASK 1

Type of task   Oral description picture task

Structured investigated   Morphological gender assignment

Scoring procedure   Number of times in which each subject produced masculine or

feminine gender assignment, between determiner and noun and

between noun and adjective, in each type of masculine and

feminine target nouns. In addition, the subjects' behavior is

analyzed according to their creative production, such as omission

of determiner and/or adjective.

Children's behavior

In the case of the children as heritage speakers of Italian, the analysis highlighted the

presence of three significant pattern behaviors as follows: 1) Preference for masculine form

over the feminine one with feminine nouns; 2) Annulment of the contrast between two

complementary forms of masculine determiner, *il* and *lo*, and 3) Omission of determiner and/or

adjective.

Behavior 1: preference for masculine gender assignment

The following table (table 21) shows the children' preferred gender assignment with

specific type of nouns. The starting point of the analysis is gender assignment according to

Standard Italian. The table specifically reports the percentage of masculine gender use in place

of feminine, with feminine nouns and the percentage of feminine gender use in place of

masculine, with masculine nouns. The score 0% indicates the absence of gender overuse and

therefore, it indicates gender assignments according to the rules of the source language.

Table 21. Percentages of the subjects' preferences in gender assignment and agreement

Rom	Masculine Preference		Rom	Feminine Preference	
Feminine N	**D-N**	**N-Adj.**	**Masculine N**	**D-N**	**N-Adj**
Animate regular-A	0%	0%	Animate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -E	10%	10%	Inanimate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -A	0%	0%	Mix ending nouns	10%	0%
Mix ending	0%	0%	Regular noun -E	0%	0%
Isa	**Masculine Preference**		**Isa**	**Feminine Preference**	
Feminine Nouns	**D-N**	**N-Adj.**	**Masculine N**	**D-N**	**N-Adj**
Animate regular-A	0%	0%	Animate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -E	0%	0%	Inanimate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -A	0%	0%	Mix ending nouns	0%	0%
Mix ending	0%	0%	Regular noun -E	0%	0%
Lollo	**Masculine Preference**		**Lollo**	**Feminine Preference**	
Feminine Nouns	**D-N**	**N-Adj.**	**Masculine N**	**D-Noun**	**N-Adj**
Animate regular-A	10%	10%	Animate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -E	10%	0%	Inanimate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -A	10%	10%	Mix ending nouns	0%	0%
Mix ending	0%	10%	Regular noun -E	0%	0%
Cesco	**Masculine Preference**		**Cesco**	**Feminine Preference**	
Feminine Nouns	**D-n**	**N-Adj.**	**Masculine N**	**D-N**	**N-Adj**
Animate regular-A	0%	0%	Animate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -E	0%	0%	Inanimate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -A	0%	0%	Mix ending nouns	0%	0%
Mix ending	0%	0%	Regular noun -E	0%	0%
Avve	**Masculine Preference**		**Avve**	**Feminine Preference**	
Feminine Nouns	**D-N**	**N-Adj.**	**Masculine nouns**	**D-N**	**N-Adj**
Animate regular-A	0%	10%	Animate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -E	10%	10%	Inanimate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -A	10%	0%	Mix ending nouns	0%	0%
Mix ending	10%	10%	Regular noun -E	0%	0%
Elli	**Masculine Preference**		**Elli**	**Feminine Preference**	
Feminine Nouns	**D-N**	**N-Adj.**	**Masculine N**	**D-N**	**N-Adj**
Animate regular-A	0%	30%	Animate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -E	30%	50%	Inanimate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -A	0%	0%	Mix ending nouns	50%	50%
Mix ending	10%	10%	Regular noun -E	0%	0%
G.	**Masculine Preference**		**G.**	**Feminine Preference**	
Feminine Nouns	**D-N**	**N-Adj.**	**Masculine nouns**	**D-N**	**N-Adj**
Animate regular-A	0%	0%	Animate regular -O	0%	0%
Inanimate regular -E	10%	0%	Inanimate regular -O	0%	10%
Inanimate regular -A	0%	0%	Mix ending nouns	10%	0%
Mix ending	0%	0%	Regular noun -E	0%	0%

The table lists the types of nouns on the left column, grouped btween masculine eand feminine nouns. The right columns display the percentage of the subjects' preference for one gender over the other, in each group of nouns. Some children displayed a preference for masculine over the feminine and this preference took place with specific groups of nouns. In addition, the predominance of the masculine gender is higher between noun and adjective than between determiner and noun. I report here the specific groups of nouns in which the heritage speakers relied on the use of masculine as default. The nouns are ranked from high to low according to the number of productions made by each subjects.

1. Feminine Inanimate Nouns ending in *–e* (five children out of seven): *Canzone* f.s (song), *colazione* f.s (breakfast), *luce* f.s (light), *carne* (f.s)

2. Feminine Inanimate Nouns ending in *–a* (four children out of seven): *Statua (f.s.)* (statue), *lettera* f.s (letter), *erba f.s (*grass)

3. Feminine Inanimate Mix Ending (three out of seven): *Moto f.s* (motorbike), *auto f.s (*automobile*), università f.s* (university)

4. Feminine Animate Nouns in *–a* (three out of seven): *Balena f.s* (whale), *maestra f.s* (teacher), *bambine f.s* (little girls)

5. Masculine Inanimate Nouns in *–e* (one out of seven): *Mare* m.s. (sea)

Children expressed the highest preference for masculine gender assignment over feminine with feminine inanimate nouns ending in *–e* and *-a* and displaying mix-ending vowels/consonant. Within this group of nouns, the masculine gender predominance is mostly displayed in gender agreement between noun and adjective and less in gender assignment between determiner and noun. Less predominance of masculine gender assignment over the feminine emerged with

119

feminine animate nouns ending in –*a*. I report here examples of productions with

predominance of masculine gender assignment in specific types of feminine nouns

Feminine Inanimate nouns ending in –*e*

La canzone-le canzoni (the song): Masculine gender assignment between
determiner/noun

I	canzon-i
Det.m.pl	N.f.pl
The	*songs*

La luce/le luci (the light): Masculine gender agreement between noun/adjective

Quell-e	Luc-i	bell-i
DP.f.pl	N.f.pl	adj.m.pl
Those beautiful lights		

La carne-le carni (the meat): Masculine gender assignment and agreement between
determiner/noun/adjective

Il	carn-e	è	giall-o
Det. m.sig.	N.f.sig	V	Adj.m.sg
The meat is yellow			

La televisione-le televisioni (the television): Masculine gender agreement between noun
and adjective

La	television-e	è	noios-o
Det.f.sig.	N.f.sig.	V.	Adj.m.s.
The	television	is	boring

La stazione- le stazioni (the station): Masculine gender assignment between
determiner/noun

Il	stazione
Det.m.sig	N.f.sig
The station	

Feminine Inanimate nouns ending in –*a*

La statua-Le statue (the statue): Masculine gender agreement between noun/adjective

Le	statu-e	alt-i
Det. f.pl	N.f.pl	adj.m.pl

The tall statues

La lettera-le lettere (the letter): Masculine gender agreement between noun/adjective

La	letter-a	vecchi-o
Det.f.sig	N.f.sig	adj.m.sig

The red letter

Feminine Inanimate nouns with mix ending

La moto-le moto (the motorbike): Predominance of masculine gender assignment and agreement, between determiner/noun/adjective

Il	mot-o	gross-o
Det.m.sig	N.f.sig	adj.m.sig

The big motorbike

La università-Le università (the university): predominance of masculine gender agreement between noun/adjective

L'	Università	è	vecchi-o
Det.	N.f.sig	V	adj.m.sig

The university is old

In the case of nouns starting with a vowel, whether they are masculine or feminine, such as *università* (university), *auto* (car) or *albero* (tree) the determiner is uttered in conjunction with the noun, therefore is very hard to discriminate the ending vowel of the determiner and identify the gender.

La auto-le auto (the car): Predominance of masculine gender agreement between noun/adjective

L'	Auto	costos-o
Det.	N.f.sig	adj.m.sig.

The expensive car

Feminine Animate Nouns in –a

La balena-le balene (The whale): Predominance of masculine gender agreement between noun/adjective

La	balen-a	è	grigi-o
Det f.sig	N f.sig	V.	adj m.sig

The whale is gray

In the production of nouns starting with a vowel, whether they are masculine or feminine, such as *università* (university), *auto* (car) or *albero* (tree) the determiner is uttered in conjunction with the noun, therefore, in the absence of specific acoustic measurement, it is very hard to discriminate the ending vowel of the determiner and identify the gender. The preference for feminine gender, although not as common, is identified in gender agreement between determiner and noun with specific types of nouns ending in vowels –e and –o, and ending with mix ending vowel/consonant, both animate and inanimate such as:

Il panda –I pand*a* (the panda)

La	pand-a	è	content-o
Det.f.sig	N.f.sig	V	adj.m.sig

The panda is happy

Il problema –I problemi (the problem):

Una	problem-a
Det.f.sig	N.m.sig

A problem

Less frequent feminine gender agreement between noun and adjective emerged with

inanimate nouns ending with vowel -o, and–e, as shown in the following examples:

Il mare-I mari (the sea): Predominance of feminine gender agreement between noun and adjective

Il	mare	azzurr-e
Det.m.sig	N.m.sig	adj.f.pl

The blue sea

Il cappello-I cappelli (the hat): Predominance of feminine gender agreement between noun and adjective

Il	cappell-o	grigi-a
Det. m.sig	N.m.sig	adj.f.sig

The gray hat

Behavior 2: Lack of the contrast between two complementary forms of masculine determiner.

The second behavior identified among the children was the preference displayed by six

children out of seven, for the masculine determiner form *il* in place of the complementary form

lo. Six children out of seven produced the masculine form *Il* with the target noun *yogurt* and

four children out of seven produced *il,* with the taget noun a*lbum,* both belonging to the group

of mix ending nouns. The remaining children avoided the production of the determiner by using

a bare noun or a quantifier in determiner position, like *questo (*this)*.* The children who

produced *il* expressed a preference in terms of forms between two contrastive determiners (lo

and il) not in terms of gender assignment. The following examples display the use of the

masculine determiner *il* according to the subjects' production

Example 1:   Children' production

Il	yogurt	è	buon-o
Det.m.sig	N. m.sig	V	adj.m.sig

The yougurt is good

Behavior 3: Omission production

The subjects produced some interesting omissions of determiner and/or adjective. Adjective omission happened when subjects described the target item with a periphrasis, as in *gli studenti studiano* (the students study), as opposed to the use of the modifier, as in *gli studenti sono attenti* (the students are focused). In terms of determiner omission, I identified two different types of omission as explained below:

TYPE A: The determiner omission takes place with the use of bare noun followed by a modifier, as shown in the following example:

Casa	*bella*
N.f.sig	adj. f.sig
Beautiful	house

TYPE B*:* The determiner omission takes place within a noun phrase, as shown in the example below:

_____	*casa*	*è*	*bella*
_____	N.f.sig	V	adj.f.sig
_____	house	is	beautiful

The house is beautiful

The following table identifies with + the subjects who produced the omission of determiner and/or the omission of the adjective, in all the target elements, between feminine and/or masculine nouns.

Table 22: Presence of omission of determiner and/or adjective in all subjects' performance of gender agreement

Subject	TYPE A-bare noun		TYPE B-Noun phrase		Adjective Omission	
Children	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**
Rom	-	-	-	-	+	+
Isa	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lollo	-	-	-	-	+	+
Cesco	+	-	-	-	-	-
Avve	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eli	-	-	-	-	-	-
G.	-	-	+	-	-	-

According to the table, one child produced TYPE B determiner omission, uttering a noun phrase lacking the presence of the determiner. The TYPE B determiner omission takes place with inanimate feminine nouns, as shown in the following extract from the subjects' productions:

Luc-e (the light): Feminine, inanimate, singular noun

    *_____   luc-i   sono   luminous-e
    _____   N.f.pl.   V   adj.f.pl
Lights are bright

Colazion-e (song): Feminine, inanimate, singular noun

    *_____   colazion-e   è   buon-a
    _____   N.f.sig   V   adj.f.sig
Breakfast is   good

Statu-e (statues): Feminine, inanimate, plural

    *_____   statu-e   sono   bell-i
    _____   N.f.pl.   V   adj.f.pl
Statues are beautiful

Another child produced TYPE A determiner omission in the form of a bare noun with feminine nouns ending in –e and –a. In terms of adjective omission, two children preferred the use of a periphrasis in place of a modifier as shown in the following examples:

Television-e (the television): Feminine, inanimate, singular noun

<table>
<tr><td>La televisione</td><td>ha</td><td>tutti</td><td>colori</td></tr>
<tr><td>DP-Subj.f.s</td><td>V</td><td>adj.m.pl</td><td>N-obj.m.pl</td></tr>
</table>

The television has all colors

Canzon-e: Feminine, inanimate, singular noun

<table>
<tr><td>Le canzoni</td><td>sono</td><td>in italiano</td></tr>
<tr><td>DP-Subj.m.pl</td><td>V</td><td>quality</td></tr>
</table>

The songs are in Italian

Stazion-e: Feminine, inanimate, singular noun

<table>
<tr><td>La stazione</td><td>ha</td><td>I treni</td></tr>
<tr><td>DP-subj.f.pl</td><td>V</td><td>N-obj.m.pl</td></tr>
<tr><td>*The station*</td><td>*has*</td><td>*the trains*</td></tr>
</table>

Studenti: Masculine, nimate, plural

<table>
<tr><td>Gli studenti</td><td>studiano</td></tr>
<tr><td>DP-Subj.m.pl</td><td>V</td></tr>
</table>

The students study

Genitori (Masculine-Animate-Plural)

<table>
<tr><td>I genitori</td><td>ti</td><td>amano</td><td>tanto</td></tr>
<tr><td>DP-subj m.pl</td><td>Clit-obj</td><td>V</td><td>adverb</td></tr>
<tr><td>The parents</td><td>you</td><td>they love</td><td>a lot</td></tr>
</table>

The parents love you very much

The use of a periphrasis in place of the modifier systematically took place with inanimate feminine nouns ending in –e while it was more random with masculine and feminine nouns displaying a canonical ending vowel -a or –o.

Parents' behavior

The analysis of the parents' performance highlighted their behavior in gender assignment as in line with the rules of Standard Italian. The parents in fact, did not display any preference for one gender over the other in both groups of target nouns, as shown in the following table (table 23). The 0% means, lack of use of masculine gender assignment with feminine nouns, and lack of preference of feminine gender assignment with masculine nouns.

Table 23. Parents' preference of one gender over the other

Parents	Masculine preference with feminine nouns		Feminine preference with masculine noun	
	D-N	N-Adj	D-N	N-Adj
Mother Rom	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mother Isa/Lollo	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mother Cesco	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mother Avve	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mother Eli	0%	0%	0%	0%
Father G.	0%	0%	0%	0%

In terms of determiner and/or adjective omission, five parents out of six didn't produce any omission of articles and did not use any periphrasis in place of the modifier. The behavior of one parent Subj. *Mother Rom* stood out from the others. This subject displayed TYPE A omission of determiner as well as omission of adjective for both feminine and masculine nouns. She preferred the use of periphrasis in place of the adjectives as well as the use of bare nouns.

More specifically, determiner omission was produced with the following groups of nouns: inanimate regular nouns ending in –*a* and –*o*, as *mele rosse* (red apples) or *letto matrimoniale* (queen bed), inanimate nouns ending in -*e* for both masculine and feminine, as in *carne tagliata* (cut meat), *televisione con tanti colori* (TV with many colors), *colazione italiana*

(Italian breakfast) or *fiore giallo* (yellow flower), *mezzo bicchiere di vino* (half a glass of wine), and masculine mix ending nouns as in *problemi difficili* (difficult problems), *yogurt bianco buono (good white yogurt)*. In terms of adjective omission, the same subject produced periphrasis in place of the modifier, with feminine animate nouns ending in *-a,* as in *la tartaruga cammina pianino* (the turtle walks slowly), with feminine inanimate nouns ending in *–e* as in *luci di natale gialle* (Christmas lights white), and with mix ending nouns for both gender, as in *è il film di Benigni (*it's Benigni's movie)*, un panda allo zoo (*a panda at the zoo) or *l'Università di Bologna* (the University of Bologna).

TASK 2

Type of task   Written Forced-Choice (FC) Judgment Task

Structured investigated Auxiliary selection in the compound past tense *passato prossimo*

Scoring procedure   Number of selections of each auxiliary (*essere* or *avere*) and

         number of auxiliary omissions, out of the total target verbs (24).

         More specifically, the total number of *essere* selections is

         assumed with 10 unaccusative verbs while the total number of

         avere selections is assumed to with the 14 unergative verbs and

         transitive verbs.

Threshold   There is no threshold since the scoring indicates the auxiliary

         selection tendency identified in the subjects' behavior.

Children's selection

   The children' answers are reported in Table 21, which shows the number of each

auxiliary selection as well as the number of auxiliary omissions, out of the total target verbs.

Table 24. Subjects' tendency in auxiliary selection and in auxiliary omission

Children	Number of *Essere* selection (10)	Number of` *Avere* selection (14)	Number of Auxiliary omission (24)
Rom	8	16	0
Isa	10	14	0
Lollo	9	12	3
Cesco	9	15	0
Avve	9	15	0
Elli	8	15	1
G.	9	15	0

The table highlights a preference for *avere* selection over *essere.* In fact, four children out of seven made more *avere* selections than the *essere* ones and two children, Subj. *Lollo* and Subj. *Ell*i, selected auxiliary omissions. Specifically, Subj. *Lollo* made three selections of auxiliary omission and Subj. *Ell*i made one selection of omission. The remaining child Subj. *Isa* made 10 *essere* selections with unaccusative verbs and 14 *avere* selections with the remaining verbs. The following table (table 25) shows the subjects' preference for one auxiliary over the other, in terms of verb semantic, with unaccusative verbs

Table 25. **Subjects' *avere* selection with unaccusative verbs**

UNACCUSATIVE	Rom	Isa	Lollo	Cesco	Avve	Elli	G.
Essere (to be)	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Avere	Essere
Entrare (to enter)	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere
Tornare (to come back)	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	**Avere**	**Avere**
*Nascere (*to be born)	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere
*Morire (*to die)	**Avere**	Essere	Essere	Omission	Essere	Essere	Essere
Andare (to go)	**Avere**	Essere	**Avere**	Essere	Essere	**Avere**	Essere
Partire (to leave*)*	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	**Avere**	Essere	Essere
*Nevicare (*to snow)	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere
*Grandinare (*to hail)	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere
Piovere (to rain)	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere	Essere

The preference for *avere* over *essere* is found in four children out of seven in the following unaccusative verbs: *andare* (to go), *partire (*to leave), *entrare* (to enter), *morire* (to die), *tornare* (to come back), *essere* (to be), while the preference for *essere* over *avere* is found in only one child with the unergative verb *nuotare* (to swim). Only one child, Subj. *Cesco*, displayed omission with the verb *morire* (to die) and Subj. *Isa* displayed all *essere* selection in each unaccusative verb.

The following table displays the subjects' behavior with unergative and transitive verbs.

Table 26. Subjects' behavior with unergative and transitive verbs

UNERGATIVE	Rom	Isa	Lollo	Cesco	Avve	Elli	G.
Nuotare (To swim)	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Essere
Ridere (To laugh)	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Telefonare (To phone)	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Correre (to run)	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Lavorare (to work)	Avere	Avere	Omission	Avere	Avere	Omission	Avere
TRANSITIVE	**Rom**	**Isa**	**Lollo**	**Cesco**	**Avve**	**Elli**	**G.**
Mangiare (to eat	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Guardare (to watch)	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Scrivere (to write)	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Ascoltare (to listen)	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Vedere (to see	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Chiudere (to close)	Avere	Avere	Omission	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Preparare (to prepare)	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Portare (to bring)	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Leggere (to read)	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere

The majority of the children chose *avere* as auxiliary of unergative and transitive verbs. Only Subj. *G.* displayed a preference for *essere* over *avere* with the verb *nuotare* (to swim), while Subj. *Lollo* and Subj. *Elli* preferred the omission of the auxiliary *avere* instead of the option with *essere*, with the following verbs: the transitive verb *chiudere (*to close), the unergative verb l*avorare* (To work) and the unaccusative verb *partire* (to leave).

Parents' selection

The behavior of the parents is the same across subjects. The parents selected the auxialiry according to the verb semantics as follows: *essere* with unaccustaive, and *avere* with unergative and transitive verbs. Only one parent, Subj. *Father G.* preferred *avere* selection in place of *essere w*ith the unaccusative verb *partire (*to leave). The same a*vere* selection with the verb *partire* was made by two of the children.

TASK 3

Type of task	Oral Elicitation Task
Structured investigated	Clitic direct object pronouns
Scoring procedure	Number of time in which each subject produced one of the following elements: clitic object pronoun, full lexical noun as direct object, object omission, object reduplication and other creative productions, out of 24 target questions.
Threshold	The threshold is set at 80% only for ease of analysis, with respect to identifying the subjects' preference in their direct object production. In fact, the threshold only allows saying what subjects produce more clitic or lexical nouns than other subjects. (For example, the threshold provides sense to descriptive words like "small" or "big" use of clitic/nouns)

The Children's behavior

I report here the analysis of the children' behavior during the elicitation task, classified according to the following productions:

- Use of clitic pronoun in the role of direct object

- Use of a full lexical nouns in the role of direct object

- Use of object omission

- Use of direct object reduplication, in the form of clitic and of lexical noun

- Use of other creative forms.

132

The following table (table 27) displays the children' preferred form of a direct object.

Table 27: Percentages of the children' direct object production as clitic pronoun, as full lexical noun, as omission, as reduplication and other creative forms

Children	Obj. Clitic	Obj. Noun	Obj. Omission	Obj. Reduplication	Creative Behavior
Rom.	17%	70%	13%	0%	
Isa	39%	61%	0%	0%	
Lollo	0%	88%	4%	4%	4% (Passive voice)
Cesco	0%	100%	0%	0%	
Avve	0%	96%	0%	0%	4% (Subj. pronoun)
Elli	9%	87%	0%	0%	4% (Passive voice)
G.	0%	80%	16%	0%	4% (Subj. pronoun)

The table displays the children' ibject production and their preferred object form. The highest scores are found in the production of full lexical nouns in the role of object, in four children out of seven, who chose not to produce any clitic pronoun at all. Of these four children, one reached full score, in the production of direct object as full lexical noun, which means no clitic production. The remaining three children produced direct objects in forms of clitic pronouns and in form of full lexical nouns, although the use of the lexical noun is predominant. The table also displays the subjects' alternative productions, such as object omission in three children out of seven, object reduplication in one child out of seven and the creative use of the passive voice in which the initial direct object has become the subject of the new sentence, in two out of seven children.

Children' individual analysis

Subject *Rom:* The subject preferred the overall use of a full lexical noun as direct object in place of a clitic pronoun, and produced a small percentage of clitics and of object omissions. The following examples show the subject's production in response to the target question provided.

Question 1   *Masha Dove ha tenuto il ranocchio?*
                Where did Masha hold the froggy?
Answer 1   *Ha tenuto in braccio*
                She hold___ on her lap

Question 2   *Perche' Masha ha fermato orso?*
                Why did Masha stop the bear?
Answer 2   *Ha fermato per dire no*
                She stopped___ to say no

Question 3   *Masha come guarda il ranocchio?*
                How does Masha look at the froggy?
Answer 3   *Guarda arrabbiata*
                She looks at___ angry

Subject *Isa:* The subject displayed the highest production of clitic pronouns among all children although she preferred the use of full lexical nouns. She did not produce any creative or alternative forms.

Subject *Lollo:* The subject seems to be the most creative of the children in the production of direct objects in different forms. He preferred the use of full lexical nouns in place of the clitic form, which was never produced. He also uttered sentences displaying object omission, object reduplication, and the passive voice. The subject produced a sentence with no object in line with the rules of Standard Italian, triggered by the focus of the eliciting question being more on the location where the action takes place, than on the direct object, as shown in the following example. The example displays the pair question/answer and the subject's own production

Question   *Il ranocchio dove ha mangiato la zuppa?*
                Where did the froggy eat the soup?

Answer   *Il ranocchio ha mangiato (__la zuppa__) sul tavolo*
                The froggy eat (the soup) on the table

The subject also made use of the passive voice. He produced accordingly to the grammar of Standard Italian, the direct object of the active sentence, *the froggy* as subject of the new passive sentence, as shown in the following example.

Target question   *Masha dove ha invitato il ranocchio?*
                      Where did Masha invite the froggy?

Expected answer   *Masha ha invitato il ranocchio in casa*
(Active voice)   Masha invited the froggy inside the house

Subject answer   *Il ranocchio è stato invitato a casa*
(Passive voice)   The froggy was invited at home

The last type of object production displayed by Subject *Lollo* is that of object reduplication. *T*he subject produced the direct object in the double form of clitic pronoun and of a full lexical noun, as shown in the example below. The eliciting question focuses on the noun "ball" as direct object, which is rendered as the clitic pronoun *la* and as the repeated full lexical noun, *la palla.* The subject also used two synonyms displaying opposite morphological gender: *La palla* (f.s) and *il pallone* (m.s.). The subject used both. He used the feminine clitic pronoun in reference to the feminine noun, *la palla*, while he used the masculine lexical noun as object reduplication.

Question   *Dove ha lanciato **la palla** Masha?*
              Where did Masha throw **the ball**?
Answer   L'ha lanciata…[pause] … il suo pallone nell'acqua
              She threw it…[pause]….. her ball in the water

Subject *Cesco:* he is the only subject reaching full scoreof 100%, which means that he only produced one type of object form: the full lexical noun and no clitic.

Subject *Avve:* this subject also displayed a very high percentage of use of full lexical nouns, with respect to the threshold and the other subjects' productions. He displayed the creative use of

the subject pronoun *loro* (them) in place of the clitic pronoun *li/le* (them) in the role of direct

object, applying subject inversion (subject in post verbal position) as shown in the following

example reporting the target question and the subject's answer.

Question   *Il ranocchio dove ha seguito Masha e Orso*?
                 Where did the froggy follow Masha and Orso?
Answer   *Segue loro a casa*
         `   He follows them home

The use of the form *loro,* which is in complementary distribution with the correspondent clitic

form *li/le,* is not common but it's attested in Italian conversation.

Subject *Elli:* The subject produced a small percentage of clitics and preferred the use of full

lexical nouns. He also displayed the use of passive voice as shown in the following example

Question   *Chi ha colpito il ranocchio?*
                 Who hit the froggy?
Answer   *Il ranocchio è colpito da Masha*
                 The froggy is hit by Masha

Subject *G.* The subject displayed a preference for full lexical nouns and did not produce any

clitics. She also displayed a small percentage of object omissions. Some of the object omissions

were in line with Standard Italian as shown in the following example reporting the target

question and the subject's answer.

Question   *Con cosa ha mescolato la minestra*?
                 With what did Masha stir the soup?
Answer   *Ha mescolato con il cucchiaio*
                 She stirred with the spoon

Question   Dove ha mangiato il ranocchio?
                 Where did the froggy eat?
Answer   Il ranocchio ha mangiato sulla tavola
                 The froggy eat on the table

The subject used the verbs *mangiare* (to eat) and *mescolare* (to stir), which don't always

require a direct object. In addition, both questions focused more on the location where the

action took place and on the instrument used to perform the action, more than on the direct

object. The subject also produced the use of the subject pronoun *lui (*he) in place of the clitic *lo*

(him), as shown in the following example.

Question *Come hanno guardato il bambino?*
          How did they look at the child?
Answer   *Hanno guardato **lui** sorpresi*
          They look at he surprised instead of they looked at him, surprised

The parents' behavior

The parents' performance is analyzed according to the same uses identified for the

children: Use of clitic pronoun and of full lexical nouns as objects, use of object omission, use of

object reduplication and other creative behavior. The following table (table 28) reports the

different uses displayed by the parents during the task.

**Table 28. Percentages of the parents' direct object production as clitic pronoun, as a full
lexical noun, as omission, as reduplication and other creative forms**

Parents	Object clitic	Object coun	Object omission	Object reduplication	Creative behavior
Mother Rom	26%	70%	4%	0%	0%
Mother Isa/Lollo	**78%**	22%	0%	0%	0%
Mother Cesco	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%
Mother Avve	30%	65%	0%	5%	0%
Mother Elli	**83%**	17%	0%	0%	0%
Father G.	35%	65%	0%	0%	0%

The table shows that the main uses in the parents' performance are the productions of

object clitic and of full noun object. In fact, two parents out of six preferred the use of clitic

pronouns while the remaining four parents preferred the use of the full lexical nouns as direct object. Other uses are not identified except for one parent, as described below.

Subject *Mother Rom*: She preferred the use of lexical nouns as direct object, although she produced some clitics. In addition she produced a sentence with object omission accepted as a grammatical sentence, as shown in the following example displaying the target question and the answer provide by the parent.

Question   *Dove ha mangiato la zuppa il ranocchio?*
             Where did the froggy eat the soup?
Answer   *Ha mangiato sul tavolo*
             He eat on the table

Like two of the children, mother Rom produced an answer with object omission to the same question, which focused more on where the action took place, than on the direct object.

Subject *Mother Isa & Mother Elli*: They are the only two parents who preferred the use of the clitic in place of a full lexical noun.

Subject *Mother Cesco & Father G*: They are the two parents producing more lexical nouns than clitic pronouns as direct object, without producing any other form.

Subject: *Mother Avve:* She preferred the use of a full lexical noun as direct object and produced a small percentage of clitics. In addition, she produced object reduplication as shown in the following example.

Question   *Chi ha preso la palla?*
             Who took the ball?
Answer   *Secondo me, **la palla l'**ha presa il ranocchio*
             In my opinion, the ball...(paused and rephrasing) the froggy took it

The mother produced object reduplication: She produced the first direct object as a full lexical noun followed by the object clitic pronoun.

TASK 4

Type of task   Written Yes/No Acceptability Judgment Task

Structured investigated   Clitic object placement

Scoring procedure   Number of specific clitic placements in the negative imperative

                                context and in the modal verb context, out of the total target

                                sentences in each context.

Threshold   The threshold is set at 80% only for purposes of comparison

                                among the subjects. In fact, the presence of a percentage

                                indicates the speaker's judgment for a specific clitic placement,

                                and the acceptance of that position as grammatical.

Children's behavior

The following tables (table 29 and table 30) display the percentage of acceptability

expressed by each child for five different clitic' placements in two contexts of use, with modal

verb followed by infinitive and with negative imperative. Specifically, the acceptability indicates

the number of YES answer provided by the subjects during the task.

Table 29. Percentage of YES acceptability of the clitic placement in modal verb context

Children	Clitic placement in modal verb context				
	Pre verbal Clit+V1+V2	Post verbal V1+V2+Clitic	Omission V1+V2 ___	Between verbs V1+Clit+V2	Reduplication Clit+V1+V2+Clit
Rom	83%	67%	100%	100%	67%
Isa	83%	67%	100%	88%	100%
Lollo	50%	83%	100%	88%	67%
Cesco	100%	100%	0%	67%	100%
Avve	83%	100%	50%	100%	67%
Elli	100%	100%	50%	63%	50%
G.	100%	100%	0%	63%	67%

Table 26 shows the following results:

Six children out of seven expressed a positive judgment for the pre-verbal clitic position as in:

Lascio	**i libri**	sul tavolo.	Carlo	**li**	può prendere.
V I.sig	N.obj	locative	N.subj	Cl.obj	V1-mod-V2 Inf
Leave	the books	on the table.	Carlo	**them**	can take

I leave the books on the table. Carlo can take them

Five children out of seven expressed a positive judgment for the clitic position between two verbs as in:

Lascio	**i libri**	sul tavolo.	Carlo	può	**li**	prendere
V	N.obj	locative	N.subj	V1-modal	Cl.obj	V2 Inf
Leave	the books	on the table.	Carlo	can	**them**	take

I leave the books on the table. Carlo can take them

Five children out of seven expressed a positive judgment for the post verbal clitic position as in:

Lascio	**i libri**	sul tavolo.	Carlo	può	prender-**li**
V	N.obj	locative	N.subj	V1.modal	V2.Inf +Cl.Obj
Leave	the books	on the table.	Carlo	can	take them

I leave the books on the table. Carlo can take them

Three children out of seven fully accepted clitic omission and 2 children reached a 50% score expressing linguistic insecurity in their judgment. Only Subj. *Cesco,* and Subj. *G.* did not find acceptable the omission of the clitic as in:

Lascio	**I libri**	sul tavolo.	Carlo	____	puo`prendere	___
V	N.obj	locative	N.subj	obj.omiss	modal + Inf	obj.omiss
Leave	the books	on the table.	Carlo	_____	can take	_____

*I leave the books on the table. Carlo can take (them***)**

Two children out of seven positively judged clitic reduplication, with one clitic positioned in preverbal position and the second clitic placed at the end of the infinitive, four children displayed the score of 67% and the remaining child displays 50% as in:

Lascio	**I libri**	sul tavolo	Carlo	li	può prender-**li**
V.	N.obj	locative	N.subj.	obj.clit	V1-mod V2-+Cl.Obj
Leave	the books	on the table	Carlo	them	can take-them

I leave the books on the table. Carlo can take them

Table 30. Percentage of YES acceptability of the clitic placement in negative Imperative context

Children	Clitic placement in negative imperative context				
	NON+Clit+V	**NON+V+Clitic**	**Omission**	**Reduplication**	**Clit+ NON+V**
Rom	100%	80%	100%	100%	100%
Isa	83%	80%	100%	100%	83%
Lollo	100%	40%	100%	67%	100%
Cesco	100%	100%	0%	0%	33%
Avve	33%	60%	50%	67%	83%
Elli	83%	60%	50%	67%	16%
G.	67%	60%	0%	67%	33%

Table 27 shows the following results:

Five children out of seven expressed a positive judgment for the clitic positioned

between negation and the infinitive as in (Non+cl+V):

Le sigarette	fanno male.	Non	le	fumare
NP.Subj	V	negation	obj.clit	V inf-imperative
The cigarettes	are bad.	not	them	to smoke

Cigarettes are bad! Don't them smoke!

Four children out of seven scored above the threshold, finding acceptable the clitic

positioned before the negation (Clit + neg + V) as in:

Le sigarette	fanno male.	Le	non	fumare
N.Subj	V	Obj.clit	negation	V inf. imperative
Cigarettes	are bad.	Them	not	to smoke

Cigarettes are bad! Don't smoke them

Three children out of seven found acceptable the omission of the clitic (__non + V) as in:

Le sigarette   fanno male.   _____   non   fumare__
N. Subj   V   Obj.clit omission   neg   inf-imperative
Cigarettes   are bad.   _____   not   to smoke
Cigarettes are bad! Don't smoke them

Three children out of seven expressed a positive judgment for the clitic positioned after

the infinitive (non+V+cl) as in:

Le sigarette   fanno male.   Non   fumar-le!
N.Subj.   V   negation   Inf.imperat + clitic
The cigarettes   are bad.   not   to smoke-them
Cigarettes are bad! Don't smoke them

Two children out of seven found clitic reduplication acceptable as in:

Le sigarette   fanno male.   Le   non   fumar-le
N subj.   V   obj.clitic 1   negation   inf.imp+clitic 2
Cigarettes   are bad.   Them   not   to smoke them
Cigarettes are bad! Don't smoke the

The interlanguage analysis also highlighted the subjects' acceptability of clitic omission,

of object clitic reduplication in both contexts and of placement between the verbs in

restructuring context and before negation in the negative imperative. Specifically for the object

omission, three children out of seven fully accepted the omission of the object clitic pronoun.

Parents' behavior

The following tables (table 31 and table 32) display the percentage of acceptability

expressed by each parent for five clitic placements in two contexts of use, with modal verb

followed by infinitive and with negative imperative. Specifically, the acceptability indicates the

number of YES answer provided by the subjects during the task.

Table 31. Percentage of YES acceptability of the clitic placement in modal verbs context

Parents	Clitic placement in modal verb context				
	Pre verbal Clit+V1+V2	Post verbal V1+V2+clit	Omission V1+V2 __	Between V1+clit+V2	Reduplication Clit+V1+V2+ clit
Mother Rom	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Mother Isa/Lollo	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Mother Cesco	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Mother Avve	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Mother Elli	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Father G.	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%

Table 31. Percentage of YES acceptability of the clitic placement in negative Imperative context

Parents	Clitic placement in negative imperative context				
	Pre verbal Clit+NON+V	Post verbal NON+V+Clit	Omission NON+V _	Between NON-clit-V	Reduplication Clit+NON+V+clit
Mother Rom	0%	100%	0%	**83%**	0%
MotherIsa/Lollo	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Mother Cesco	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Mother Avve	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Mother Elli	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Father G.	0%	100%	33%	100%	33%

The parents' behavior produced acceptability only for pre and post verbal clitic position in modal verb context and they produced acceptabily for clitic placement in post verbal position and after negation in negative imperative context. One parent accepted omission and reduplication (Subject *Father G)* in negative imperative context.

TASK 5

Type of task   Oral Sentence Picture Making Task

Structured investigated   Preferred past tense form and use

Scoring procedure   Number of specific tense productions made by each subject out of

the total uttered sentences as target.

Threshold   There is no threshold since the percentage indicates the speaker's

preferred past tense form.

Children's behavior

The following table reports the percentages of the children' past tense preferences,

among all the past tenses in the Italian temporal system.

Table 33. Percentages of the subjects' past tense preference

Children	Pass.Pross	Trap.pross	Pass.Remoto	Trap.Rem	Imperf	*Imp stare+V* gerund
Rom	27%	7%	0%	0%	67%	0%
Isa	73%	7%	7%	0%	13%	0%
Lollo	27%	7%	0%	0%	89%	0%
Cesco	27%	0%	0%	0%	0%	60%
Avve	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Elli	93%	0%	0%	0%	7%	0%
G.	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Individual analysis

I present here the interlanguage analysis of each subject production

Subject *Rom:* The subject preferred the use of imperfect aspect with past tense form

*imperfet*to, as in *Era spaventata* (she was scared). She also produced one *trapassato prossimo*

as in *era nata* (she was born) and two *passato pross*imo as in *ha telefonato* (he/she phoned), of

which one is missing the auxiliary, as in ___ *corso* (he has run).

144

Subject *Isa:* The subject preferred the perfective aspect with *passato prossimo*. She also produced one *trapassato prossimo* as in *era nata* (she/he was born), one *passato remoto* as in *lei nuoto`* (she had swum) and one *imperfetto*, as *era chiuso* (it has been closed).

Subject *Lollo:* The subject preferred imperfect aspect with i*mperfetto*, as in *era stressata* (she was stressed) and he also made use of perfective aspect with *passato prossimo*. He also produced the impersonal form *si mangiava* (one could eat). He produced the form *nasciata*, from the verb "*nascere*-to be born" in place of *nata* (born).

Subject *Cesco*: The subject preferred imperfect aspect with the tense i*mperfetto*, used in the following construction of: Imperfect of *Stare* + Gerundive of verbs, used in Italian to express continuous actions in the past, as in *stava nuotando* (he/she was swimming).

Subject *Avve:* The subject preferred the perfective aspect with past tense *passato prossimo* and also used *trapassato prossimo* for description as in *era stata bella (*she/he was beautiful)

Subject *Elli:* The preferred aspect is perfective, and the preferred past tense form is *passato prossimo,* in combination with *one imperfetto* for physical describing *era bella (*she/he was beautiful.

Subject *G:* The subject preferred aspect is perfective and the preferred past tense is *passato prossimo*. The subject also used the *trapassato prossimo* for physical description as *in era stata bella* (She had been beautiful). In terms of auxiliary selection the subject made the following productions: a. One missing auxiliary, as in ___ *piovuto,* in place of *è piovuto* (It rained) b. One use of *avere* with the unaccusative verb a*ndare* (to go) as in *ha andato* (he/she has gone) c. The preference of *essere* with the unergative *correre* (to run) as in *l'uomo è corso* (the man is run) as opposed to *l'uomo ha corso* (the man has run)

145

Results show that the children preferred the use of perfective aspect with the

compound tense *passato prossimo* and its derived form *trapassato prossimo*. The subjects' past

tense preferences are reported below according to the following hierarchy:

1. Passato prossimo (chosen by seven out of seven)

2. Imperfetto (chosen by four out of seven)

3. Trapassato prossimo (chosen by four out of seven)

4. Passato remoto (chosen by one out of seven)

5. Imperfetto of *stare* + gerund of verb (chosen by one out of seven)

The following table (Table 31) displays the most significant past tense production in each

subject, under the column *Type.* In addition, the table displays in each column the verb's

temporal information of tense, aspect, semantics, mood and English meaning.

Table 34. Verb's temporal features: tense, aspect, semantics, mood, English meaning (Modified from Bertinetto, 2015, 1139)

Subj	Lemma	Type	Semantics	Tense	Aspect	Mood	Meaning
Rom	Essere + Adjective	*Era spaventata*	Stative	Imperfetto	Imperfective	Indicative	She was scared
	Nascere	*Era nata*	Achievement	Trapass. Prossimo	Perfective	Indicative	She was born
	Telefonare	*Ha telefonato*	Activity	Pass. Prossimo	Perfective	Indicative	She phoned
Isa	Essere + Adjective	*Era chiuso*	Stative	Imperfetto	Imperfect	Indicative	It was closed
	Nuotare	*Nuoto`*	Activity	Pass. Remoto	Perfective	Indicative	He had swam
	Nascere	*Era nata*	Achievement	Trapass. Prossimo	Perfective	Indicative	She was born
Lollo	Essere + Adjective	*Era stressata*	Stative	Imperfetto	Imperfect	Indicative	She was stressed
	Nascere	*E`nata*	Achievement	Pass. Prossimo	Perfective	Indicative	She was born
	Mangiare	*Si mangiava*	Activity	Imperfetto	Imperfective	Indicative	One could eat
Cesco	Stare + Gerundive	*Stava nuotando*	Activity	Imperfetto	Imperfective	Indicative	He was swimming
	Nascere	*E' nata*	Achievment	Pass. Prossimo	Perfective	Indicative	She was born
Avve	Essere + Adjective	*Era stata bella*	Stative	Imperfetto	Imperfective	Indicative	She had been pretty
	Leggere	*Hanno letto*	Activity	Pass. Prossimo	Perfective	Indicative	They read
Elli	Essere + adjective	*Era bella*	Stative	Imperfetto	Imperfective	Indicative	She was pretty
	Andare	*E`andata*	Activity	Pass. Prossimo	Perfective	Indicative	She went
G.	Essere + adjective	*Era stata bella*	Stative	Imperfetto	Imperfective	Indicative	She had been pretty
	Mangiare	*Ha mangiato*	Activity	Pass. Prossimo	Perfective	Indicative	He eat

The parents' behavior

The following table (table 35) reports the percentage of the parents past tense preference. Results show that five parents out of six displayed the preference for both perfective and imperfective aspects, used with the compound tense *passato prossimo* and with i*mperfett*o. In addition, two parents out of six produced a small percentage of *trapassato prossimo* and of *passato remoto*.

Table 35. Percentages of the subjects' past tense preference

	Pss.Pross	Trp.pross	Pss.Remoto	Trpss.Rem	Imperf.	Imp +Stare
Mother Rom	27%	0%	13%	0%	60%	0%
Mother Isa/Lollo	0%	0%	27%	0%	73%	0%
Mother Cesco	40%	0%	0%	0%	60%	0%
Mother Avve	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mother Elli	73%	13%	0%	0%	13%	0%
Father G.	73%	0%	0%	0%	67%	0%

Most of the children made subject-verb agreement. Auxiliary selections were made according to the verbs' semantic and I identified only one use of *avere* with the unaccusative verb a*ndare* (to go) as in *ha andato* (he/she has gone) and one use of *essere* with the unergative *correre* (to run) as in *l'uomo è corso* (the man is run)*.* In terms of form, I dentified the use of the past particple *nasciuta* in place of *nata* (born), from the verb *nascere (*to be born) as attempt of following the verb's root.

TASK 6

Type of task   Binary Written Acceptability Judgment

Structured investigated   Contrast between *passato prossimo* and *imperfetto*

Scoring procedure   Number of tense preferences out of the total target verbs for

each past tense. Specifically, the score is based on the number of

tense choice out of the total 15 target verbs conjugated in

passato prossimo as well as on the number of tense choice out of

the total 14 target verbs conjugated in *imperfetto.*

Threshold   There is no threshold. This kind of scoring allows to identifying the

preference of one tense over the other and to make comparison

amonge the heritage speakers's performace during the task

Results

The following table (table 36) displays the children's tense preferences in terms of number of times in which they chose one tense over the other in each target pair, for a total of 15 *passato prossimo* and of 14 *imperfetto.*

Table 36. Subjects' tense-preference in each target tense group (15 *passato prossimo* and 14 i*mperfetto*)

Children	Tense preference			
	Imperfetto	*Pass. Prossimo* Choice	Predominance *Pass. Prossimo*	Predominance *Imperfetto*
Rom	14 on 14	15 on 15	1	1
Isa	11 on 14	18 on 15	3	0
Lollo	14 on 14	15 on 15	1	0
Cesco	11 on 14	17 on 15	2	0
Avve	11 on 14	18 on 15	3	0
Elli	8 on 14	21 on 15	6	0
G.	5 on 14	24 on 15	9	0
Parents	*Imperfetto* Choice	*Pass. Prossimo* Choice	Predominance *Pass. Prossimo*	Predominance *Imperfetto*
Mother Rom	14 on 14	15 on 15	0	0
Mother Isa/Lollo	14 on 14	15 on 15	0	0
Mother Cesco	14 on 14	15 on 15	0	0
Mother Avve	14 on 14	15 on 15	0	0
Mother Elli	14 on 14	15 on 15	0	0
Father G.	13 on 14	16 on 15	0	3

The table shows that all children expressed a preference for *passato prossimo* over *imperfetto*

at least in one production and in the following verbs:

- Essere + adjective (to be)   6 children out 7   Unaccusative

- Esserci (there is)   5 children out of 7   Unaccusative

- Ridere (to laugh)   3 out of 7   Unergative

- Uscire (to go out)   2 out of 7   Unaccusative

- Camminare (to walk)   2 out of 7   Unergative

- Sembrare (to look like)   1 out 0f 7   Unaccusative

The preferred verbs for the use of *passato prossimo* over *imperfetto* are unaccusative verbs

expressing existence like *esserci* (to be), *Sembrare* (to look like) and the construction of *essere* +

adjective as in *rra bello* (It was nice), as well as unaccusatives expressing motion like *uscire (*to

go out). While, the unergative verbs in which subjects preferred to use *passato prossimo,* are

decidere (to decide), *parlare* (to speak), *ridere* (to laugh), *camminare* (to walk). The verb in

which the children expressed a preference for *imperfetto* over *passato prossimo* are: *Decidere*

(to decide) and *fermarsi* (to stop). In the case of the parents, five parenst out of 6 chose

imperfetto 14 times and *passato prossimo* 15. Only one parent, Subject *Father G.*, displayed a

preference for *imperfetto* over *passato prossimo* with the verbs *decidere* (to decide) and

fermarsi (to stop).

Perfectivity with stative verbs

Differences in the subjects' behavior rise with respect to the task modality and only in

relation to grammatical aspect. (Productions from the semi-free speech task did not display any

predominance of *passato prossimo* over i*mperfetto* or the presence of any alternative and

creative behavior not in line with Standard Italian).

The interlanguage analysis highlighted the subjects' preference for perfectivity in

specific types of verbs, which fall into Vandler's (1957) semantic groups of state verbs, such as

essere-esserci (to be-there is) and *sembrare* (to look like) in combination with descriptive

adjectives, and of achievement verbs like *fermarsi* (to stop), *uscire (*to go out), *camminare* (to

walk)*, decidere* (to decide) and also *parlare* (to speak) and *ridere* (to laugh). The subjects

displayed knowledge of the contrast between the two past tense forms although they displayed

a preference for *passato prossimo* with atelic predicates*,* such as *decidere* (to decide) and

fermarsi (to stop). Only one parent, Subj. *Father G.*, displayed a preference for *imperfetto* over

passato prossimo with the verb *decidere* (to decide) and *fermarsi* (to stop). The remaining

parents displayed the contrastive use of both tenses with 14 *imperfetto* preferences and 15 *passato prossimo*.

The following examples are an excerpt from the children' responses in the written acceptability task, displaying the predominance of their *passato prossimo* choices with the uneragtive verb r*idere (tolaugh)* and with unaccusative verb *essere* and the preference for *imperfetto* with the verb *decidere (to decide)*

Target verb pair	*Subject's acceptability*
Era bello/ è stato bello	è stato bello
Eravamo/siamo stati stanchi	siamo stati stanchi
Sembrava/ è sembrata deserta	è sembrata deserta
Hanno riso/ridevano	hanno riso

Example of the two productions displaying *imperfetto i*n place of *passato prossimo*

Target verb pair	*Subject's acceptability*
Decidevamo/abbiamo deciso	decidevamo
Camminavano/hanno camminato	hanno camminato

TASK 7

Type of task   Written Yes/No Acceptability Judgment Task

Structured investigated   Different uses of the verb *Piacere* as follows*:*

1. Preposition *a* + full lexical noun experiencer + *piacere*

2. *Piacere* used with experiencer in the form of indirect clitic

   pronouns

3. *Piacere* used with omission of theme

4. *Piacere* used with experiencer reduplication

5. *Piacere* used with omission of the required preposition *a*

   before the experiencer as full lexical noun

6. *Piacere* used with non-canonical experiencer placement

7. *Piacere* used with non-canonical experiencer placement

Scoring procedure   Number of Yes-Answers as acceptance of *piacere* verb, in the 25

target sentences (The stimulus contains 13 uses of the target verb

in line with Standard Italian and 12 uses of the same verb not in

line with Standard Italian)

Threshold   The threshold is set at 70% only for purposes of comparison

among the subjects. A score above the threshold indicate a higher

percentage of acceptancy as positive judgment of *piacere* use in

specific contexts. Overall, the percentage of use indicates the

subjects' acceptance of *piacere* uses as grammatical

constructions.

Results

The scoring procedure is the same for children and parents. I provide here the analysis

of the subjects' acceptability of *piacere* verb in all contexts of use as reported below (Four of

the following uses, specifically a, b, c, d are allowed by Standard Italian, while the remaining

ones, specifically d, e, f are not allowed by the Standard Italian system).

a.   *Piacere* used within the structure made by: Preposition *a* + full lexical noun experiencer +
      piacere as in:

      A Marco   piace   la pizza
      Experiencer   V III.sig   theme
      To Marco   likes   pizza
      Marco likes pizza

b.   *Piacere* used with experiencer in the form of indirect clitic pronouns as in:

      Vi   piace   l'Italia
      Experiencer   V III sig   theme
      To all of you   likes   Italy
      You all like Italy

c.   *Piacere* used with omission of theme as in:

      Mi   piace   _____
      Ind.clitic-exper   V III sig   (theme)
      To me   likes   _____
      *I like __

d.   *Piacere* used with non-canonical experiencer placement as in:

      La pizza   piace   a   Carlo
      Theme   V III sig   preposition   N-experiencer
      The Pizza   is pleasing   to   Carlo
      Carlo likes pizza

e.   *Piacere* used with experiencer reduplication

A	Lia	le	piace	cantare
Prep.	N-experiencer	ind.clit-exper	V III sig	theme
To	Lia	to her	likes	to sing

*Lia she likes to sing
Lia likes to sing

f.   *Piacere* used with omission of the required preposition "a" before the experiencer as full lexical noun as in:

*___	Leonardo	piace	fumare
Preposition	N-experiencer	V III sig	theme
To	Leonardo	likes	to smoke

Leonardo likes to smoke

g.   *Piacere* used with mismatch agreement between verb and argument in terms of number as in:

*A	Carlo	piacciono	la pizza
Preposition	N-experiencer	V.III.pl	theme
To	Carlo	are pleasing	the pizza

Carlo likes pizza

Children's acceptability

The following table (table 37) displays the children's percentage of acceptance of the target verb in all contexts of use. The behavior of one particular child-subject (Subject *G.*) stands out from the other children' performance. In fact, Subject *G.* reached full score (100%) in all the 25 target sentences, accepting as grammatical constructions all the *piacere* uses.

Table 37. Percentage of the children's *piacere* acceptability in all seven contexts of use

Total 25	Acceptability of *piacere* use	Rom	Isa	Lollo	Cesco	Avve	Elli	G.
Use a (6)	Preposition *a* (to) + N experiencer + V	17%	33%	50%	33%	17%	67%	100%
Use b (5)	Experiencer as clitic + V	100%	100%	100%	80%	80%	60%	100%
Use c (2)	Theme omission	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%
Use d (4)	Experiencer non canonical placement	0%	85%	50%	0%	100%	50%	100%
Use e (4)	Reduplication of experiencer	75%	75%	50%	75%	25%	67%	100%
Use f (3)	Omission of preposition *a* (to) Before experiencer	67%	33%	33%	33%	100%	67%	100%
Use g (5)	Mismatch agreement V-argument sig/pl	0%	100%	20%	40%	60%	60%	100%

Acceptability of *piacere* uses

I present here the analysis of the children's acceptability of *piacere* verb in each

contexts of use.

Use a: Preposition a + experiencer as lexical noun + verb

Two children out of seven reached 17% as the lowest score, one child reached full 100% and

the remaining children display a score between 30% and 60%. Overall, all children did not find

completely acceptable the use of the target verb within this specific construction, in which the

experiencer is expressed through a full lexical noun preceded by the *preposition a.*

Use b: Experiencer in form of indirect clitic pronoun + verb

Four children out of seven reached full score, two children score above 80% and only child

reached 70%. This means that the majority of the children accepted as grammatical

construction the use of *piacere* with the experiencer in form of indirect clitic pronoun.

Use c: Theme omission

Four children out of seven scored 100%, indicating their acceptability for the omission of theme. One child scored 50%, showing linguistic insecurity in his judgment. Only one child did not find acceptable at all the use of the target verb when the theme is not explicitly expressed.

Use d: Experiencer non-canonical placement

Two children out of seven did not find the post verbal position of the experiencer to be grammatical, two children scored 50% in their acceptability indicating linguistic insecurity on whether to view the post-verbal experiencer position as grammatical or not grammatical while three children scored above 70%, accepting the non-canonical experiencer position as grammatical construction.

Use e: Reduplication of Experiencer

In fact five children out of seven scored above 60%. One child scored 50% and the remaining one scored 25%. All of them judged to different degrees, the use of *piacere* with experiencer reduplication as a grammatical construction.

Use f: Omission of preposition a before Experiencer

All children judged the use of *Piacere* with omission of the required preposition *a* (to) in pre-experiencer position as an acceptable construction. In fact, two children out of seven rscored 100%, indicating whole acceptance of this type of *piacere* use, two children scored 67% showing that their judgment leaned towards a full acceptance of this context of use. The remaining three children scored 33% each, showing acceptance for preposition omission in some sentences but not in all.

Use g: Mismatch agreement Verb-Argument singular/plural

Four children out of seven scored above 60%, one child displayed 20% as the lowest score, and

one child scored 40%. The remaining child displayed 0%. The percentages indicate that six

children out of seven expressed different degrees of acceptability for the use of *piacere* with

mismatch agreement between Verb and Argument in terms of number (singular/plural). Only

one child judged this specific context of use as ungrammatical.

Results show that the children' acceptability rate ranks from high to low in the following

contexts of use 1) Presence of experiencer in form of indirect clitic pronoun; 2) Omission of the

second argument as theme 3) Reduplication of the experiencer 4) Presence of experiencer in

form of a full lexical noun within the structure *preposition a + full lexical noun experiencer +*

piacer 5) Omission of preposition *a* before the experiencer 6) Experiencer non canonical

placement 6) and 7) Mismatch agreement between the verb and its theme argument.

Parents' acceptability

The following table (table 38) displays the percentages of the parents' acceptance of

piacere verb in all contexts of use.

Table 38. Percentage of the children's *piacere* acceptability in all contexts of use

Total 25	Acceptability of *piacere*	Mother Rom	Mother Isa/Lollo	Mother Cesco	Mother Avve	Mother Elli	Father G.
Use a (6)	Preposition *a* + Exper + V	100%	50%	50%	100%	67%	67%
Use b (5)	Experiencer as clitic + V	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Use c (2)	Theme omission	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Use d (4)	Experiencer non canonical placement	67%	75%	25%	100%	50%	25%
Use e (4)	Reduplication of experiencer	100%	75%	0%	0%	25%	100%
Use f (3)	Omission of preposition *a* (to) before experiencer	75%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%
Use g (5)	Mismatch agreement Verb-Argument Sig/Pl	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Acceptability of *Piacere* use

I present here the analysis of the parents' acceptability of *piacere* verb in each of the seven contexts of use.

Use a: Preposition a + experiencer as lexical noun + verb (In line with Standard Italian)

Two parents out of six scored 100% showing full acceptance of the verb used with this specific construction. Two parents scored 67% showing a predominant positive judgment towards this *piacere* use and the reaming 2 parents scored 50% showing linguistic insecurity on whether or not to fully accept or not the construction as grammatical.

Use b: Experiencer in form of indirect clitic pronoun + verb

All parents reached full score, showing their full acceptance of *piacere* use with experiencer in form of indirect clitic pronoun

Use c: Theme omission

All parents reached full score, showing their full acceptance of *piacere* use with omission of them as a grammatical construction.

Use d: Experiencer non-canonical placement

One parent reached full score showing full acceptance of locating the experiencer in post verbal position, as non-canonical placement. Two parents scored 50% showing linguistic insecurity on whether to accept or not as grammatical construction the non-canonical placement of the argument. The remaining two parents reached a score between 60% and 70%. Although they did not reach full score, they still expressed a positive judgment towards the use of the target verb with a non-canonical experiencer placement as grammatical construction.

Use e: Reduplication of Experiencer

Two parents out of six displayed 0% showing lack of acceptance for the use of *piacere* with experiencer reduplication as a grammatical construction. One parent scored 25%, showing little acceptability for this context of use of the target verb. On the contrary, two parents reached full score showing full positive judgment towards experiencer reduplication as a grammatical use of *piacere* verb. The remaining parent scored 75% showing predominant acceptance of experiencer reduplication as grammatical use of the target verb.

Use f: Omission of preposition a before Experiencer

Four parents out of six display 0%, which indicates a judgment towards the omission of the required preposition as a non-grammatical use of the verb *piacere.* One parent scored 20%, indicating little acceptance for this type of use and the remaining parent scored 75%, showing on the contrary, the highest acceptance rate for preposition omission as a grammatical context use of the target verb.

Use g: Mismatch agreement Verb-Argument singular/plural

All six parents scored 0%, judging as a non-grammatical context of use of the target verb, the mismatch agreement between *piacere* and the argument.

Results show that the parents' acceptability rate ranks from high to low in the following contexts of use 1) Presence of experiencer in form of indirect clitic pronoun2) Omission of the second argument as theme 3) Presence of experiencer in form of a full lexical noun within the structure *preposition a + full lexical noun experiencer + piacere 4)* Experiencer non canonical placement 5) Omission of preposition *a* before the experiencer 6) Reduplication of the experiencer 7) Mismatch agreement between the verb and its theme argument.

All parents judged as grammatical the use of the target verb with the experiencer expressed in form of indirect clitic pronoun. The same full acceptability is also expressed for the use of *piacere* with theme omission, followed by the use of experiencer as a full lexical noun, preceded by the required preposition *a* in both pre and post-verbal positions. Two parents out of six, expressed acceptance for the use of *piacere* with omission of the required preposition in front of the experiencer as lexical noun while four parents displayed acceptability for the use of p*iacere* with reduplication of the experiencer argument. All parents expressed zero acceptance of *piacere* verb when number agreement between verb and theme is not assigned.

TASK 8

Type of task   Semi-free production of the story *Cappuccetto Rosso*

Structure investigated   The analysis will focus on the language used to re-tell the story,

specifically looking at the production of the following elements:

1. Verb conjugation, mode and tense

2. Clitic pronouns (direct and indirect)

3. Morphological gender assignment between determiner, noun

and adjective.

4. Any specific use and form as the subject's own creation

Children' individual analysis

The individual analysis showed that all children displayed contrastive use of past tense

forms such as *passato prossimo* and *imperfetto,* and that all of them produced clitic pronouns,

as direct and indirect objects, terms of morphological gender and number agreement and

placement.

Subject *Rom:* The subject produced the target structures as described below:

1. Verb conjugation, mode and tense: The preferred tense is *passato prossimo*, in alternation

with *imperfetto.*

2. Clitic pronouns (direct and indirect): the subject produced clitic objects with past tense

passato prossimo as in *il lupo l'ha mangiato* (The wolf eat it)

3. Morphological gender assignment, as well as different degrees of adjective, were produced

4. The interesting element of the subject's language is the use of the clitic "ci" commonly used

in the region in which the subject's mother was born, Emilia Romagna, in Northern Italy. The

clitic is attested not only in local dialects of the region but also in the neo-standard Italian as variety of Italian (Berruto, 1987) aslo known as the Italian of middle use (*l'italiano dell'uso medio*) (Sabatini, 1985).

Example A

Il lupo	*c'*	*ha detto*
DP	Cl.ind	V.
The wolf	to her	told

The wolf told her

In this example the clitic *ci* is used in place of the indirect pronoun *le* (Her, to her)

Example B

c'	*hai*	*il naso*	*grande!*
Cl.	V.II.p.sig	DP-obj	adj
Cl.	You have	the nose	big

You have a really big nose!

In this example the clitic doesn't refer to any element in the phrase and doesn't hold any syntactic or semantic property. It provides emphasis to the direct object.

Subject *Isa:* The subject produced the following target structures

1. Verb conjugation, mode and tense**:** The subject produced *passato prossimo* in alternation with *imperfetto* as well as *passato remoto,* the non-compound past tense form. The subject also produced the forms a. and b. displayed in the following table (table 36), which differ from the morphological rules of the verbs' conjugation in the source language.

a. *Un lupo la **vise***   **b.** *Quando il lupo **entrasse***

In a. the subject seems to have produced her own combination of subjunctive form and of *passato remoto* form, while in b. she used the past subjunctive of the verb in place of the regular indicative past tense.

Table 39. Example of morphological verb root in Standard Italian and in the subjects' production

Italian form for the past tense *passato remoto of vedere (to see)*	Italian form for the past subjunctive of *vedere (to see)*
Vid *- e* Verb root - verb ending, III p.sig He/she saw Entr- - ò Verb root - verb ending, III p.sig He entered	*Ved* *- esse* *Verb root* *- verb ending, IIIp.sig* He/she saw Entr- - asse Verb root - verb ending, III p.sig
Subject's form	Subject's form
Viss *- e* *Verb root* - verb ending- III p.sig	Entr- - asse Verb root - verb ending, III.sig

2. Clitic pronouns (direct and indirect): The subject produced clitic object with past tense

passato prossimo as in *il lupo l'ha mangiato* (The wolf eat it) and with present tenses as in *il*

cacciatore lo taglia (The hunter cuts it). The subject also produced reduplication of the object,

expressed by the clitic and by the full lexical noun, allowed in neo-Standard Italian (Berruto,

1987, 2012) as in *l'ha mangiata la nonna* (he eat her, the grandmother*).*

3. Morphological gender: Gender assignment as well as different degrees of adjective, were

produced.

Subject Lollo**:** The subject produced what follows:

1. Verb conjugation, mode and tense**:** The subject preferred past tense form for the story is

passato prossimo in alternation with *imperfetto* and with present tense**.** The subject also used

the imperative as in *vieni dentro* (come inside).

2. Clitic pronouns (direct and indirect): the subject produced direct and indirect clitic pronouns,

as in the following examples:

Clitic object with *passato prossimo*

Quando	*il lupo*	*l'*		*ha*	*vist-a*
When	N.subj	obj.clitic.f.sig		aux	past participle-f.sig
When	the wolf	her		has	seen

When the wolf saw her

Lui	l'	ha	lasciata
Subj.pron	obj.clit.m.sig	aux	past participle-f.sig
He	her	has	seen

He saw her

Clitic object with infinitive

Per	veder-	ti	meglio
Prep.	V-inf	obj.clitic	adverb
To	see	you	better

To better see you

Clitic Indirect object with *passato prossimo*

Il lupo	le	ha	detto
N.subj	ind.clitic	aux	past particple
The wolf	to her	has	said

The wolf told her

3. Morphological gender: Gender assignment as well as different degrees of adjective, were produced.

Subject Cesco**:** The subject produced what follows:

1. Verb conjugation, mode and tense: The preferred tense is the present tense as a substitute for the past tense. The subject frequently produced the following structure: Present and/or past of verb Stare + gerundive as in *stava guardando* (he was looking at). The subject also produced *passato prossimo* in alternation with *imperfetto.* The subject also used conditional mode as in *alla nonna piacerebbero molto I fiori* (grandma would really like the flowers)

2. Clitic pronouns (direct and indirect**)**: the subject produced indirect and direct clitic pronouns

as well as the combination of both as shown in the following examples:

Mia mamma	mi	ha detto	
N.Subj	ind.clitic	V. past tense	
My mom	to me	told	

My mom told me

Io	me	lo	ricordo
Pron.Subj	ind.clitic	dir.clitic	V.present
I	to me	it	remember

I remember it

3. Morphological gender: Gender assignment as well as different degrees of adjective, were

produced.

Subject Avve: The subject produced what follows:

1. Verb conjugation, mode and tense: the preferred tense used by the subject is *passato*

prossimo in alternation with *imperfetto.* He also produced *trapassato prossimo* as *in era*

arrivato (He had arrived)

2. Clitic pronouns (direct and indirect): The subject produced indirect and direct clitic pronouns

as well as the combination of both and direct clitic with causative infinitive as shown in the

following examples:

Ti	faccio
Ind.clitic	V
To you	I do
I do for you for	

Ce	ne	sono	due
Clitic 1	clitic 2	V	numeral
There	of them	are	two

There are two of them

Per	trovar-	la
Prepositin	V infinitive	obj.clitic
For	to find	her
To find her		

3. Morphological gender: Gender assignment as well as different adjective degrees, were in line with Standard Italian.

Subject Elli: The subject produced what follows:

1. Verb conjugation, mode and tense: The preferred tense used by the subject is *passato prossimo* in alternation with *imperfetto* and present tense*.

2. Clitic pronouns (direct and indirect): The subject produced indirect and direct clitic pronouns, with *passato prossimo* as in *l'ha trovata* (He found her) as shown in the following example:

Lui	l'	ha	trovat-a
Subj.pron	obj.clit.m.sig	aux	PP-f.sig
He	her	has	found
He found her			

3. Morphological gender: Gender assignment as well as different degrees of adjective were produced. One mismatch agreement between past participle in the compound form of *passato prossimo*, and the subject as shown in the following example:

Agreement according to the subject

La	bambina	è	scappat-o
Det.f.sig	N.subj.f.sig	aux	PP.m.sig
The	girl	is	escaped
The girl escaped			

Agreement according to the source language

La	bambina	è	scappat-a
Det.f.sig.	N.subj.f.sig	aux	PP.m.sig
The	girl	is	escaped
The girl escaped			

The subject also displayed the preference for one of the contrastive masculine forms for

definite determiner *il/lo* in which the subject produced the form *il* in place of *lo,* as shown in the

following example. (In Standard Italian the form *lo* is used with nouns starting with s+consonant

st, sp, sb, with vowel*,* with *z,* with cluster consonant, while the form *il* is used with any other

noun as shown in the following examples). The same preference is also identified in the

morphological task.

Subject's determiner choice

> Il **st**omaco
> Det.m.sig.   N.m.sig: starting with cluster **st**
> The   stomach
> *The stomach*

Determiner use in the source language

> Lo **st**omaco
> Det.m.sig.   N.m.sig: starting with cluster **st**
> The   stomach
> *The stomach*

4. The interesting element of the subject's language is the dialectal use of the clitic *ci* typical of

the region in which the subject's mother was born, Emilia Romagna, in Northern Italy. The clitic

is attested not only in local dialects of the region but also in the variety of Italian known as low

regional Italian (Berruto, 2005, pg. 84), where the clitic is used with the syntactic property of

subject (t*u* -you) as shown in the following example:

> Che   bella   carne   che   c'   hai!
> Exclamation adj.f.sig. N.f.sig.   R.pronon   ind.clitic V.II p.sig
> What   beautiful   meat   that   you   V.II p.sig
> *What a beautiful meat you have*!

*Subject G***:** The subject produced what follows:

1. Verb conjugation, mode and tense: the preferred tense used by the subject is *passato*

prossimo in alternation with *imperfetto,* present and future tense*.*

2. Clitic pronouns (direct and indirect): the subject only produced one indirect clitic pronoun as

shown in the following example:

> Le va vicino
> Ind.pron.f.sig. V.III.sig adverb
> To her goes nearby
> *He goes near her*

3. Morphological gender: gender assignment as well as different degrees of adjective, were

produced.

Subject G. was the only one among children who produced the shortest story, less than a

minute long, while the other children all produced a story longer than one minute.

Parents' individual analysis

The individual analysis showed that the parents produced what follows:

1. Verb conjugation, mode and tense: all parents produced alternation between *passato*

prossimo and *imperfetto* and between present and future tense. Subject *Mother Isa/Lollo*,

Subject *father G.* and Subject *Mother Avve* also produced the preferred *passato remoto.*

2. Clitic pronouns (direct and indirect): all parents produced direct and indirect clitics

3. Morphological gender: all parents produced gender agreement in line the source language

Subject *Father G.* also used the word *figliola* (little girl) typical of the region of Tuscany from

where he is originally from.

The children' behavior in the semi-free speech was very similar to that of the parents, in terms of clitic use, forma dn placement, in terms of gender assignment and agreement and in terms of tense/aspect use and form.

CHAPTER VI

Discussion

The chapter first provides the answers to the initial research questions, with respect to the hypotheses tested in the study, followed by the discussion on the findings from the interlanguage analysis and on the differences between the heritage language and the source language, in each grammatical structure. The chapter will end with an overview on the methodological challenges encountred in the study as well as on the overall implications of the study.

Answer to the initial research questions and hypothesis

I provide here the answers to the initial research questions and I indicate whether or not the thypotheses are conformed. With the first research question I intended to explore the heritage speakers' behavior in each target structure, while with the second research question I intended to provide evidence of similarities and differences between two independent yet related linguistic systems, the heritage language (HL) and the source language (SL).

RQ 1   How do the heritage speakers behave with respect to the given structures?

A1   Yes. Heritage speakers of Italian display native intuition about the specific
        domains of grammar investigated, and therefore they behave like native
        speakers of their heritage language in each structure

RQ 2   Do the heritage grammars of individuals differ from Standard Italian?

A2   Yes. The heritage grammars of individual speakers displayed variations from the
        source language.

With respect to RQ1, results showed that heritage speakers of Italian display a native in-built knowledge of the heritage language and that they rely on native strategies as native speakers of other languages do. For RQ2, results identified in each subject, differences between the two native systems not only at level of language use but also at level of structure.

In addition, results from the present study confirmed both hypotheses.

H1   Heritage speakers rely on native intuition of their family language when employing a re-structuring process of grammatical aspects of their heritage language. Therefore the heritage grammar is an independent linguistic system with its own set of rules

H2   The HL restructuring process takes place in specific domains of grammar that are particular to the source language and in which the source language displays degree of variability and/or language specific behaviour.

The study provides evidence in support of H1, confirming the fact that the heritage grammar is a system with its own set of rules, which independently developed from the language of origin. The results also support H2, identifying the existence of structural differences between the heritage grammar and the source language, in specific domains of grammar. Differences take place in grammatical areas particular to the source language and in which the source language displays degrees of variability as well as language specific properties.

The following section provides a discussion of the findings in each structure and explains the hypotheses with respect to the findings.

Discussion on gender assignment

Native speakers of gender-based languages, like Italian or Spanish, assign gender to nouns through rules based on the linguistic properties of the nouns in terms of the semantics,

phonology and morphology (Corbett, 1991). Specifically, semantic rules determine gender assignment on the base of the noun meaning while formal rules determine gender assignment on the base of a noun's phonology and morphology (Thornton, 2009). For example, feminine gender can be assigned through the following semantic and formal rules across languages. A semantic based rule determines that nouns referring to female humans are feminine, while a phonological based rule indicates that nouns ending in an accented vowel are feminine and a morphological based rule indicates that nouns derived by means of the suffix *-tion* are also feminine (Audring, 2008). When no specific semantic or formal rule applies to a noun, different gender based languages tend to use masculine as default.

In Italian, as in in Spanish and French, all nouns display a specific grammatical gender which manifests not only at the level of the lexicon but also at the level of syntax, since all descriptors of the noun must agree in gender with that noun. So, how do heritage speakers of Italian assign gender to a noun? Results from the oral picture description task administered in the present study suggest that heritage speakers of Italian display the same intuition as native monolingual speakers of gender based languages, through phono-morphological rules and through sematic rules. Specifically, heritage speakers of Italian displayed a preference for the masculine form over the feminine only with a specific group of nouns, which means that they assigned masculine gender to nouns displaying word-final *-o* and feminine gender to those displaying word-final - *a,* employing formal rules based on the phonological and morphological properties of the nouns. Results from the oral sentence description task, shows that the predominance of the masculine over feminine occurred with feminine inanimate nouns ending in *–e* , *–a* and displaying mix-ending vowels/consonant as in *la moto* f.s (the motorbike). Within

this group of nouns, the masculine gender predominance is mostly displayed between

determiner and noun (gender assignment) and less between noun and adjective (gender

agreement). Less predominance of masculine gender over the feminine emerged with feminine

animate nouns ending in *–a*, mainly between noun and determiner and less between noun and

adjective. The use of a periphrasis in place of the modifier systematically took place with

inanimate feminine nouns ending in *–e* while it was more random with masculine and feminine

nouns displaying a canonical ending vowel *-o* or *–a.* On the contrary, the subject parents as

input providers and as native speakers of the language of origin did not display the same

behavior and produced all gender agreement and gender assignment in line with their native

language. Therefore, the heritage grammar (HL) is not the same as the source language (SL), as

native language of the input providers.

The difference between children and parents relies in the type and frequency of tokens

as nouns for gender assignment, not in the strategies employed to assign morphological

gender. The children, as heritage speakers of Italian, displayed the same behavior in gender

assignment and agreement, identified in other bilingual speakers of different languages. For

example the adult Italian–German simultaneous bilinguals in Bianchi's study (2012, pg.16) as

well as the French-German simultaneous bilingual speakers from Kupish et al's. (2013)'

investigation displayed the same tendency to use the default masculine form in both gender

agreement and in gender assignments. The same preference has been highlighted in Montrul et

al., (2008) for heritage speakers of Spanish, who live in the US. The subjects from the present

study, like the bilingual speakers from Kupisch et al. (2013) and from Bianchi (2013) studies,

performed gender assignment with nouns that followed common formal assignment rules,

while in the presence of "nouns involving conflicting cues and exceptions to assignment rules" (Kupisch et al., 2013, pg. 175) they preferred to rely on the masculine form as default.

The analysis of the interlanguage as the independent heritage system of the subjects, suggests that heritage speakers of Italian are sensitive to the following gender assignment rules, as identified in the oral picture description task:

a. Nouns with word ending -*o* are assigned masculine gender while nouns with word ending -*a* are assigned feminine.

b. Nouns denoting biological males are masculine while nouns denoting biological female are feminine

c. Nouns denoting conflicts between semantic and formal gender assignments rules are (most of the time) masculine

All the above rules (a, b, c) are also commonly employed by native speakers of Standard Italian. The difference between heritage speakers of Italian and monolingual native speakers of Italian resides in the frequency of nouns for the application of rule c. In fact, monolingual native speakers of Italian tend to apply rule c with borrowed and unknown words. The heritage speakers of Italian from the present study used masculine form as default with a specific group of nouns displaying contrastive semantic and formal properties, that is with:

1. Feminine inanimate nouns ending in –*e* and -*o,* such as *la luce* f.s (the light), which was assigned masculine gender *il luce*, or *la colazione* f.s (the breakfast) or *la moto* f.s (the motorbike), which were rendered as masculine *il colazione* and *il moto*, as its morphological properties may suggest.

2. Feminine **i**nanimate nouns ending in –*a*, used in their plural form – *e*, such as *le statue* f.pl (the statues) were rendered as masculine *i statue.*

Different scholars provide different explanations on why heritage speakers' display specific tendency in gender assignment. For example Montrul et al., (2008) view their subjects' behavior of relying on the masculine gender form as default as evidence of the "heritage language grammars incomplete acquisition", which "might be due to impoverished input" (Montrul et. al., 2008, p. 536). On the contrary Kupisch et al. (2013) as well as Bianchi (2013) view their subjects' tendency as specific assignment strategy with nouns that do not follow common semantic and formal assignment rules, stating that only gender assignment "may be (mildly) affected in a minority-language context due to a reduced input exposure" (Kupisch et al., 2013, pg.175).

I believe that the subjects' tendency to use the masculine form as default with inanimate nouns ending in –*e* and - *o* and displaying mix ending, can be viewed as a necessary generalization strategy needed to overcome the challenges of gender assignment rules displayed by the source language, in this case Standard Italian, due to the conflicting semantic and formal properties of some nouns. In fact, native speakers of Italian tend to solve assignment conflicts by either storing the gender of individual noun in the lexicon as a property of a specific noun (Vigliocco, Antonini, & Garrett, 1997), or by relying on one gender form like the masculine, as default, especially in presence of neologism and loan-words. Heritage speakers seem to rely on a similar strategy. The fact that heritage speakers behave similarly to other native speakers of various languages, suggests the possibility of conducting typological investigation in order to see if universals apply or not to the heritage language under

investigation. The heritage grammar in fact, can share properties not only with the language of origin, but also with heritage languages

Discusion on form and placement of object clitic pronouns

Three different tasks (oral elicitation task / semi free speech task / written acceptability task) were administered to investigate the subjects' knowledge of object clitic pronouns. Results showed that all subjects as heritage speakers of Italian displayed a robust yet implicit knowledge of object clitic pronouns, suggesting that they have developed a specific "slot" for the object clitic use, form and placement in the grammar of their heritage language. Differences are identified at level of use between two contrastive forms. The heritage speakers from the study preferred to express the direct object as a full lexical noun in sentences with canonical word order SVO, in place of the clitic form, during the oral elicitation task. No omission or reduplication of the clitic is identified in the task. The "omission" of the object in the elicitation task was expressed through the use of the passive voice in which the initial direct object has become the subject of the new sentence.

Specifically for clitic placement, heritage speakers of Italian expressed preference for pre-verbal clitic position with finite verbs and in front of the auxiliary *avere* with the compound past tense *passato prossimo* in spontaneous speech and for both pre and post verbal positions in the written acceptability task with restructuring verbs and with negative imperative. They also expressed acceptability for other clitic positions in both contexts of use, as indicated in the following table.

Table 40. Order of acceptability of the clitic placement in both contexts of use for parents and children, from high to low

Children	Parents
Modal verb context	*Modal verb context*
I. Pre verbal Cl+V1+V2	I. Pre verbal Cl+V1+V2
II. Post verbal V1+V2+Cl	II. Post verbal V1+V2+Cl
III. Between V V1+Cl+V2	III. No acceptability
IV. Omission V1+V2 ___	IV. No acceptability
V. Reduplication Cl+V1+V2+Cl	V. No acceptability
Children	**Parents**
Negative imperative context	*Negative imperative context*
I. Pre-verbal Non+Cl+V	I. Post verbal Non+V+Cl
II. Before Neg Clit+Non+V	II. Pre verbal Non+Cl+V
III. Omission __Non+V	III. Omission___ Non+V
IV. Post verbal Non+V+Cl	IV. Reduplication Cl+Non+V+Cl
V. Reduplication Cl+Non+V+Cl	V. No acceptability

It is interesting to note that only one parent (Subj. *Father G*.) expressed acceptability for reduplication and omission. His behavior is in line with that of the children as heritage speakers. In fact, he was exposed to two languages from very early on in life, and grew up between two countries, while the other parents were born and raised monolingually and become proficient second language learners at an adult age. The table shows that HL is different from the SL.

The findings from the three tasks on clitics seem in line with results from previous investigations on clitic productions in adult heritage speakers of Spanish (Montrul, 2004), with respect to two clitic placements. In previous studies, the clitic pronouns were mainly used and placed according to the rules of the language of origin. Heritage speakers of Spanish of second and third generation also demonstrated a high level of accuracy in clitic use and placement,

with a low rate of clitic omission in Silva-Corvalan's study (Silva-Corvalán, 1994). Results from

the present study are not as found in Silva-Corvalan's study (1994). In fact, the present

findings suggest that the syntax of clitic pronouns, as part of the heritage system' core

grammar, displays features of stability as opposed to features of vulnerability, which means

that clitics are not subject to attrition and/or process of simplification in use, form and

placement (Silva-Corvalan, 199).

From the acquisition perspective, this grammatical stability may be a consequence of

age of acquisition of the given element (Chan, 2011). For example, monolingual Italian children

acquire object clitic pronouns very early in their language development. They produce object

clitics in preverbal position with finite verbs before the age of two (Guasti, 1994). The accuracy

of clitic use and placement increases along with the children' cognitive development and with

their expanding language proficiency. In the same way, object clitic pronouns may emerge early

in bilingual heritage speakers acquiring their family language (whether the societal language is

introduced simultaneously or sequentially). Therefore, assuming that distinct preconditions of

language acquisition lead to the development of distinct linguistic systems, the heritage

speakers' preferences in clitic placement and use can be seen as the result of the acquisition

process in heritage context and as a defining element of their adult language.

Discussion on tense and aspect

The subjects' knowledge of the linguistic properties defining the temporal system,

namely tense and aspect was investigated through different tasks in oral and written

modalities.

According to Li & Shirai (2000) the linguistic category of tense "is used to locate the time

of the event being talked, (the *event time)* with respect to the time at which the speaker utters

the sentence (the *speech time*)" (Li & Shirai, 2000, pg. 2), while the category of aspect

"characterizes how speakers view the temporal contour of a situation" (Li & Shirai, 2000,

pg. 2). Aspect can be lexical, grammatical and compositional. Lexical aspect refers to the

inherent semantic properties of verbs, classified by Vendler (1957) in four groups based on

their features of durativity, dynamicity and/or telicity. The relationship between verb semantics

and lexical aspect is never clear-cut (especially across languages) and different verbs may

display various semantic properties. In fact, they may belong to more than one semantic group

according to the speakers' viewpoint.

In the specific case of Standard Italian the difference between imperfective and

perfective aspects is morphologically expressed by two past tense paradigms. Perfective aspect

is expressed through the compound form *passato prossimo,* which indicates completion of telic

and atelic predicates, establishing an endpoint of events, while imperfective aspect is conveyed

by the simple past *imperfetto*, which expresses durative events and suggests ongoing actions

for both telic and atelic verbs.

The features of tense-aspect morphology identified in the heritage grammar, resemble

the temporal system of Standard Italian as source language in form and use. Not only they use

tenses according to how they commonly used in Standard Italian, but they also displayed a

native intuition about the inherent semantic ambiguity of some Italian verbs, which may

receive two or more actional readings, depending on the context of use and on the speakers'

intention.

Results show that the heritage speakers from the present study display the use of various tense forms as listed below, according to their degree of preference from high to the low:

I. *Passato prossimo*: The most used tense, made by the present tense of the *avere* auxiliary + verb past participle of the given verb.

II. *Imperfetto:* Highly used in contrast with *passato prossimo* as well as in individual sentences with no specific context.

III. *Trapassato prossimo:* Used by half of the heritage speakers in oral productions. Compound form that carries the same aspectual meaning as *passato prossimo.*

IV. *Passato remoto*: A simple past form, mainly used in texts, used in oral productions only by the members of two family nuclei with origin in Tuscany. This tense is commonly used in conversation in central and southern Italian regions.

Heritage speakers of Italian also display a preference for perfective aspect over the imperfective one. Perfectivity is expressed through the use of *passato prossimo*, *trapassato prossi*mo and p*assato remoto* (mainly in oral tasks) of telic predicates expressing endpoint events. Imperfectivity was expressed by the use of *imperfetto* with atelic verbs indicating durative and on going actions and with the construction of verb *Stare* (imperfect aspect) + gerundive, used in Standard Italian for continuous and progressive actions in the past, as in *stava nuotando* (He/she was swimming).

In the written grammaticality judgment task on the contrastive tense use, subjects chose the perfective tense *passato prossimo*, expressing telicity with unaccusative verbs like *essere,* used in conjunction with adjectives and r*idere* (to laugh), as shown in the following

examples, displaying a sentence from the task stimulus. Example a. shows the use of i*mperfetto* as in Standard Italian while example b. displays the same sentence with the other contrastive past tense form *passato prossimo* as one the subject's choice:

a. Imperfect aspect/i*mperfetto*   *la piazza era piena* (the square was full)

b. Perfective aspect/*pass. prossimo*   *la piazza è stata piena (*the square was full)

In terms of perfective/imperfective aspect choice, results are in line with the findings from previous investigations on heritage speakers of Spanish and Russian (Silva-Corvalan, 1994; Montrul, 2008; Cuza et al., 2013; Polinsky, 2011), in which subjects preferred the use of perfective aspect and perfective tense forms over the imperfective ones. The same aspectual preference for perfectivity is also attested in bilingual children. According to Cuza et al., (2013) Spanish/English bilingual children display a low use of imperfect tense and the consequent overextension of preterit, used as default past marker. In the use of contrastive forms, heritage speakers of Italian behaved differently from heritage speakers of Spanish in Silva-Corvalan' study (1996), in which subjects seemed to "confuse" meaning and form of the preterit/imperfect contrast in spontaneous speech (Silva-Corvalan, 1996). The subjects from this study displayed perfectivity preference only in the written acceptability task. Both heritage speakers of Spanish and Italian expressed overextension of perfective aspect with stative verbs as well as the preference for imperfectivity with achievement predicates.

Discussion on auxiliary selection

The choice of the auxiliary in *passato prossimo* is investigated through a force-choice judgment task in written modality. Results show that heritage speakers of Italian are guided in their selection by sensitivity to the semantic and syntactic properties of intransitive verbs

whose gradient of unaccusativity determines the auxiliary selection in the compound past tense

passato prossimo. In fact, the interdependency between verbs' semantics and gradient of

unaccusativity is responsible for the verbs' auxiliary requirement.

The following chart reports the semantic verb groups in Sorace's model (2000). The

groups are located in the continuum according to their level of unaccusativity from which

depends the selection of the auxiliary. The shift from unaccusative to unergative verbs is

identified in the class of uncontrolled process verbs. The peripheral verbs between the two

extremes, exhibit different degrees of variability, depending on their distance from the core

and from the core verbs.

Table 41. The Auxiliary Selection Hierarchy (ASH)

Endpoint	
1. Change of location (CL)	Selection of *essere (to be)* / Compatibility with *ne*
2. Change of state (CS)	
3. Continuation of a pre-existing state (COS)	
Center	
4. Existence of state (ES)	
5. Uncontrolled process (UP)	
6. Controlled motional process (CMP)	
7. Controlled non-motional process (CNMP)	
(Have in common the lack of volitionality)	Selection of *avere* (to have) /Incompatibility with *ne*
Endpoint	

According to the model, the acceptability of the auxiliary *essere* gradually decreases from the

verbs expressing change of location, towards the verbs expressing existence, while the

acceptability of the auxiliary *avere* decreases from the controlled non-motional process verbs

towards the uncontrolled process ones. The high degree of unaccusativity is displayed by the

verbs near one end point of the continuum, which select the auxiliary *essere* in Italian. The

degree of unaccusativity progressively decreases along the continuum line, shifting into the

group of unergative verbs with zero degree and with *avere* selection.

The subjects' behavior in auxiliary selection

All children displayed sensitivity to the gradient of unaccusativity in the way they

selected the auxiliary along the continuum. Most of the *essere* auxiliary selections were made

with unaccusative verbs. Some of the children selected *avere* in place of *essere* with intransitive

verbs expressing change of location, change of state and existence. These verbs display a high

degree of unaccusativity and fall into one end-point of Sorace's continuum (2000). Other

options like auxiliary omission as well the choice of *essere* in place of *avere,* were selected with

unergative verbs, grouped by Sorace in the category of unergative verbs expressing non-

motional unaffecting process, like *lavorare* (to work) and those expressing motional affected

process (*correre*-to run). These verbs fall into the other end-point of the same continuum.

The following table displays the subjects' selection of *avere* as well as auxiliary omission

with unaccusative verbs.

Table 42. **Subjects'** *avere* **selection and subjects' auxiliary omission with unaccusative verbs**

UNACCUSATIVE	Rom	Isa	Lollo	Cesco	Avve	Elli	G.
Essere (to be)						X	
Entrare (to enter)							
Tornare (to come back)						X	X
Nascere (to be born)							
Morire (to die)	X						
Andare (to go)	X		X			X	
Partire (to leave)			Omission		X		
Nevicare (to snow)							
Grandinare (to hail)							
Piovere (to rain)							

Some of the heritage speakers from the study selected the auxiliary *avere* with verbs expressing change of location (CL) such as *tornare* (to return*), andare* (to go), *partire* (to leave). These verbs are identified in Standard Italian as unaccusative verbs, which select the auxiliary *essere* (to be) in the compound past tense *passato prossimo*. Six children out of seven selected the auxiliary *avere* with verbs expressing change of state, such as *morire* (to die) and *nascere (*to be born). A few children selected the auxiliary a*vere* with the verb *morire* (to die), as in *ha morto* (he/she died or is died) as opposed to *è morto* (he/she died or has died). Generally speaking, verbs expressing a change of state like *morire* or *nascer*e tend to "encode telicity to variable degrees" (Sorace, 2000, pg. 867) without a specific telic end point. This inherent property of the verb allows for variability in the auxiliary selection within individual languages like French or Dutch.

A few subjects also used *avere* with verbs expressing existence (ES) such as e*ssere* (to be), with no change component at all. This type of verbs are located in the middle of the continuum, farther away from both end points, where verbs display highest degree of unaccusativity. The center position provides them with some degree of variability in their auxiliary selection. One subject chose the option displaying the auxiliary omission for the verb *lavorare.* Unergative verbs like *lavorare* (to work), *giocare* (to play), *correre (*to run) express agentive processes in which the subject is not undergoing the action expressed by the verb, but represents the entity in control of the event. They are located at the other end point of the continuum and they display low degree of unaccusativity and consequent high degree of ergativity. Different languages display variability in the auxiliary selection with these verbs, according to the agentive role of the subject. For example, Standard Italian allows both

185

auxiliaries with the verb *correre (*to run). The last group of verbs, in which subjects (both parents and children) displayed variability in auxiliary selection is that of verbs expressing weather conditions such as *piovere* (to rain), *nevicare (*to snow) and *grandinare* (to hail). These verbs fall into the middle of Sorace's hierarchy allowing the selection of both *essere a*nd *avere* in different languages. In fact all verbs between the two extremes of the continuum identify an area of variability in auxiliary selection, depending on their distance from the core verbs. Both parents (three out of six) and children (three out of seven) allowed for more variability in their judgment of intermediate unaccusative and unergative verbs, located far from the continuum endpoints, displaying a non-consistent pattern in their auxiliary selection for weather verbs. Another element of variability identified in both parents and children, is the auxiliary selection of the verb *correre,* which allows the use of both *essere* and *avere.* The following table displays the auxiliary selection from both parents and children with weather verbs.

Table 43. Auxiliary selections with "weather verbs" and with *correre*

Children	Nevicare (To snow)	Grandinare (To hail)	Piovere (To rain)	Correre (To run)
Rom	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Isa	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Lollo	Essere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Cesco	Avere	Avere	Avere	Essere
Avve	Avere	Essere	Essere	Essere
Elli	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
G.	Avere	Avere	Avere	Essere
Parents	**Nevicare**	**Grandinare**	**Piovere**	**Correre**
Mother Rom	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Mother Isa/Lollo	Avere	Essere	Essere	Avere
Mother Cesco	Essere	Avere	Essere	Essere
Mother Avve	Essere	Essere	Essere	Avere
Mother Elli	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere
Father G.	Avere	Avere	Avere	Avere

Results show that heritage speakers of Italian select the auxiliary by relying on their sensitivity on the unaccusativity gradient displayed by verbs along Sorace's continuum (2000). Their behavior fit not only the auxiliary selection strategy employed by various native speakers, but is also in line with the variability displayed by other romance languages with the same verbs, whether their selection is in line or not with rules of the source language.

Continuum of acceptability of *piacere* uses

The last structure investigated in the study is the acceptability of different uses of the verb *piacere* (to like). Results highlighted different degrees of acceptance in both parents and children. The children' acceptability of *piacere* can be represented by a continuum line, from the highest acceptance rate (Use a and b) to the lowest (Use g), as indicated below

Use a   *Piacere* + experiencer as indirect clitic pronoun

Use b   *Piacere* + theme omission

Use c   *Piacere* + experiencer reduplication

Use d   *Piacere* + omission of the required preposition *a* before N-experiencer

Use e   *Piacere* + mismatch agreement between the verb and its theme

Use f   *Piacere* + experiencer as full lexical noun, preceded by preposition *a* (to)

Use g   *Piacere* + alternative placement of N-experiencer, preceded by *a* (to)

All children accepted use a and use b of the target verb, also allowed by Standard Italian, in which p*iacere* is used with the experiencer expressed by a clitic pronoun, in which the theme can be omitted. More specifically, they fully accepted the use of *piacere* verb as a grammatical structure when the dative argument in the role of experiencer is expressed in the form of indirect clitic pronoun and is placed in pre-verbal position, as shown in Example 1. The highest

187

acceptability rate in fact, is found in this specific context of use.

Example 1

Vi	piace	l'Italia
Experiencer-clitic	V.III sig	theme
To all of you	likes	Italy

You all like Italy

All children also expressed full acceptability of *piacere* used with theme omission, as shown in Example 2. The absence of the second argument in the role of theme, whose semantic value depends on the discourse topic, represents a high frequent context of use of the target verb in Standard Italian. The children judgments indicate familiarity of use with this specific use, which is not allowed in their other language, English.

Example 2

A	Marco	piace	_____
Prep	N. experiencer	V	_____
To	Marco	likes	

*Marco likes

Children accepted as a grammatical structure the use of *piacere* with experiencer reduplication and the use of *piacere* with omission of the required preposition *a* before the noun-experiencer, as shown in Example 3 and Example 4. Four children out of seven judged as grammatical the reduplication of the dative argument as experiencer.

Example 3

A	Lia	le	piace	cantare
Prep.	N-exper	ind.cl. exper	V III p.sg	theme
To	Lia	to her	likes	to sing

*Lia she likes to sing
Lia likes to sing

Example 4

	Leonardo	piace	fumare
Preposition	N-experiencer	V III p.sig	theme
To)	Leonardo	likes	to smoke

Leonardo likes to smoke

The children' acceptability of *piacere* verb seems to decrease when the experiencer is expressed in form of a full lexical noun, preceded by the required preposition *a* (to), *and* also placed in pre or post verbal positions, as shown in Example 5. Low acceptability rate is found in this context of use. Children judged the placement in pre and post verbal position of the noun-experiencer, preceeded by the preposition *a* (to), as a non-grammatical use of the verb. This may indicate less familiarity with the less common use of *piacere* with experiencer as full lexical noun.

Example 5

	Carlo	piace	la pizza
Prep	N-experiencer	V III.p.sig	theme
To	Carlo	is pleasing	the pizza

Carlo likes pizza

Children also expressed a positive judgment for the use of *piacere* with mismatch agreement between verb and argument in terms of number, as shown in Example 6.

Example 6

Mi	piacciono	il mare
S-exper.	V-III pl	them-sig.
To me	are pleasing	the sea

**I likes the sea*

The presence in six children out of seven of percentage of acceptance of the miss-match agreement indicates that most of the children judged as grammatical this use of *piacere*. Only

one child judged this specific context of use as ungrammatical. The low acceptance for the experiencer as a full lexical noun seems to be linked to the acceptance of the omission of the required preposition *a* (to) as shown in Example 7. On the contrary, the preferred use of the target verb is that with the experiencer in form of indirect clitic pronoun which doesn't require the presence of the preposition *a* (to).

Example 7

La pizza	piace	a	Carlo
N-Theme	V III p.sig	Prep.	N-Experiencer
The Pizza	Is pleasing	to	Carlo

Carlo likes pizza

The parents' behavior

Results show that the parents' acceptability rate ranks from high to low in the following contexts of use allowed by Standard Italian: 1) Presence of experiencer in form of indirect clitic pronoun 2) Omission of the second argument as theme 3) Presence of experiencer in form of a full lexical noun within the structure *preposition a* (to) *+ full lexical noun experiencer + piacere.* This means that all parents judged as grammatical the use of the target verb with the experiencer expressed in form of indirect clitic pronoun. The same full acceptability is also expressed for the use of *Piacere* with theme omission, while lower acceptability rate is found in the context in which the experiencer is expressed with a full lexical noun preceded by the required preposition *a* in both pre and post-verbal positions. In addition, all parents expressed zero acceptance of *piacere* verb when number agreement between verb. Two parents out of six, expressed acceptance for the use of *piacere* with omission of the required preposition in front of the experiencer as lexical noun while four parents displayed acceptability for the use of *piacere* with reduplication of the experiencer argument.

Comparison between the children and the parents' behavior

The task explored the subjects' judgments of various uses of the *piacere v*erb, with the

goal of identifying what they accepted as a grammatical *piacere* construction, as displayed in

the following table

Table 44. Order of acceptability of *piacere* uses

	Children order of *piacere* acceptability		Parents' order of *piacere* acceptability
I	(Use a) Piacere + experiencer as indirect clitic pronoun	I	(Use a) Piacere + experiencer as indirect clitic pronoun
II	(Use b) Piacere + theme omission	II	(Use b) Piacere + theme omission
III	(Use c) Piacere + experiencer reduplication	III	(Use f) Piacere + experiencer N, preceded by preposition a (to)
IV	(Use d) Piacere + omission of the required a (to) before N-experiencer	IV	(Use c) Piacere + experiencer reduplication
V	(Use e) Piacere + mismatch agreement between V and its theme	V	(Use d) Piacere + omission of the required preposition a before N-experiencer
VI	(Use f) Piacere + experiencer as full N, preceded by preposition a (to)	VI	(Use g) Piacere + alternative placement of N-experiencer, preceded by a (to)
VII	(Use g) Piacere + alternative placement of N-experiencer, preceded by a (to)	VII	(Use e) Piacere + mismatch agreement between and its theme

Results showed that both parents and children fully accepted three specific contexts of

use of *piacere* verb:

    I.   When the experiencer is expressed in the form of indirect clitic pronoun

    II.   When the theme is omitted

    III.   When the experiencer is reduplicated.

The subjects' judgments displayed different degrees of acceptability of *piacere* verb used with

the experiencer argument in form of a full lexical noun, preceeded by the preposition *a* (to) and

when the same experiencer is placed in various positions. The source language (Standard

Italian) lacks constraints for the placement of the noun-experiencer in pre or post verbal

positions. Both parents and children expressed low acceptability for the experiencer's form as a

full lexical noun and as a consequence, they did not accept the post-verbal experiencer position

as grammatical. The placement of experiencer I either pre or post verbal positions, is

constrained by the form of the experiencer as a full lexical noun and not as pronoun noun. The

source language displays as canonical experiencer form that of indirect clitic pronoun and as

non-canonical experiencer form, that of a full lexical noun.

Results also showed that all children and four parents out of six expressed different

degrees of acceptability for the use of *piacere* with experiencer reduplication, which is widely

attested and accepted in various Italian dialects from Northern and Southern regions, but not in

the Standard Italian system. The following example shows the reduplication of the experiencer

argument, which is expressed by the indirect clitic pronoun and by the full lexical noun

preceded by the preposition *a* (to).

Example 8

A	Marco	gli	piace	il gelato
Prep.	N-experiencer	ind.clit-exper	V III p.sg	DP-theme
To	Marco	to him	is pleasing	the ice cream

*To Marco he likes ice cream
Marco likes ice cream

The parents expressed acceptability for the common use of experiencer reduplication as

one of the many forms attested in various forms of regional Italian (Berruto, 1986). Their

acceptability could correspond to the actual use of this *piacere* form in conversation with the

children over time. Therefore, the children's acceptance of experiencer reduplication can be

seen as evidence of the specific traits of the input provided by the parents during the

acquisition process. This also shows that heritage speakers are more sensitive to natural

stimulus, and they that "may react to frequency pattern in natural language" (Miglio & Gries, 2015, pg.13)

Difference between HL (heritage language) and SL (Source language)

According to Polinsky the differences between the heritage language and the native language "cannot be reduced to the effects of online processing constraints or memory limitations" (Polinsky, 2016, pg.11). Therefore, they may exist at a structural level. I identified two types of differences between the heritage grammar and the source language: Preferential differences, at level of language use, and systematic differences, at the level of grammar.

The first type manifests through the individual speaker's choices between two contrastive forms, in specific grammatical domains in which the source language doesn't display any constraints of use for the given element. For example, preferential differences are identified in the production of a full lexical noun as the preferred direct object form in place of the clitic pronoun, which seems to be the first choice of monolingual native speakers of Italian (Hamann & Belletti, 2006). Standard Italian as language of origin doesn't display any obligatory occasions for the use of the clitic pronoun in place of the full lexical noun as direct object. Therefore the use of one of the two forms becomes evidence of the speakers' preferential choices between two refrential forms. Preferential differences were also identified in the placement of the clitic. For example, in the written grammaticality judgment task of clitic placement in restructuring context, heritage speakers favored the pre-verbal clitic position in place of the post-verbal one. Whether this preference is caused by language-internal influences (Chan, 2011) or by cross-linguistic influences (Perez et al., 2011), the pre-verbal clitic position with modal verbs becomes evidence of differences between the two systems at level of

language use, since the syntax and the semantic of the sentence is not affected by presence or absence of clitic climbing in restructuring context. The speaker's preference in terms of clitic position has no consequence at level of syntax and semantics. In addition, the object clitic placement in Standard Italian is only a matter of word order, determined by the speaker's choice. Preferential differences may also be affected by the frequency of pattern in the use of contrastive forms. For example, mother and child of two family nuclei expressed the same acceptability for *piacere* use with experiencer reduplication, specifically attested in the regional variety of Standard Italian, in Central and Northern Italian regions. This could indicate the native tendency of heritage speakers of identifying grammatical structures according to the frequency of use and exposure.

The second type of differences between the two systems is identified at level of grammar and manifests through the speakers' attempt of generalizing specific grammatical domain, in which the source language displays degrees of variability and/or language specific properties. I report here examples of systematic differences in three grammatical domains: Morphological gender assignment, auxiliary selection, and past tense contrast.

The case of gender assignment

In the oral task for gender assignment, heritage speakers relied on the use of masculine gender as default form in place of feminine. The different behavior took place mainly with the specific group of feminine inanimate nouns ending with vowel –*e, -o* and mix ending. The differences identified in the specific domain of morphological gender assignments represent the heritage speakers' attempt at facing gender assignment conflicts inherently present in the source language. In fact, as Lampitelli (2008) states, "Italian nouns are an interesting challenge

194

for morphological theory because of two particular aspects: (1) the vocalic alternation between singular and plural and (2) the presence of clearly different vocalic patterns relying singular to plural (a-e/o-i/e-i). Both phenomena contrast with the general behavior of Romance Languages where (1) plural marker is generally consonantal (/s/) in Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, etc.) and (2) no prediction can be made on the form of final syllable on nouns, in the theoretical perspective of Distributed Morphology" (Lampitelli, 2008, pg. 197). In fact, all Italian nouns not only display vocalic alternation between singular and plural, as opposed to the presence of a more common consonantal plural marker (like in Spanish), but they also display different patterns in the vocalic plural marker formation *o-i, a-e, e-i* (Lampitelli, 2008). Consequently, formal gender assignment rules commonly found across languages don't seem to always apply to Italian nouns.

Some Italian nouns display a mismatch between the gender suggested by the nominal properties of the noun and the gender displayed by the noun regardless the same properties, manifesting a conflict between formal and semantic assignment rules as well as violation of the markedness constraints.

For example, nouns displaying accented vowel in final position tend to be feminine across languages, some Italian nouns like *il caffè m.s* (the coffee) are masculine not feminine. Nouns like *la stazione f.s* (the station) or *la colazione f.s* (the breakfast) are assigned feminine gender according to the morphological rule for which nouns displaying the suffix *–ione* are feminine, but not all inanimate Italian nouns in -*e* are feminine. Inanimate nouns displaying word final -*e* can be either masculine or feminine, like *il fiore* m.s (the flower) or *la carne* f.s (the meat). Violations of the phonological and morphological constraint for which nouns displaying

word final -*a* are feminine while nouns displaying word final -*o* are masculine (Thornton, 2009) are also identified in masculine nouns ending in -*a,* like *il poeta* m.s (the poet), which should be assigned feminine gender according to the noun phonological and morphological properties. Nouns like *poeta m.s* (the poet) denote male individual and are regarded as masculine according to their semantic properties, in contrast with the morphological rule, which suggests the assignment of the opposite gender. Nouns ending in -*o,* like *la mano f.s* (the hand) are regarded as feminine despite the presence of word-final -*o* associated with masculine gender and their phonological properties assign feminine gender as the least marked gender, while semantics would assign masculine as the unmarked form.

Conflicts arise in Standard Italian when the gender suggested by the nominal properties of inanimate nouns is in contrast with the gender displayed by the nouns regardless the same properties. So, how do the heritage speakers behave in the presence of variability of input with respect to gender assignment? The conflicting semantic and formal properties of nouns for gender assignment are solved by native speakers of Italian by either storing the gender of individual noun in the lexicon as a property of a specific noun (Vigliocco, Antonini, & Garrett, 1997), or by relying on one gender form like the masculine, as default.

It seems to me that the heritage speakers of the present study rely on the same native strategies as monolingual native speakers of Italian do, such as relying on masculine form as default, in the presence of nouns displaying contrastive phono-moprhological and semantic properties, such as inanimate feminine nouns ending in vowel –*e,* and -*0,* such as *la bici f.s* (the bike), or *la carne* f.s (the meat).

The case of contrastive past tense use

      Another structural difference is identified in the contrastive use of two complementary

past tense forms, *passato prossimo* and *imperfetto* in the same narrative. In the written

acceptability task, heritage speakers of Italian displayed alternative pattern of use of

tense/aspect morphology not found in the system of their language of origin. Specifically they

displayed a higher number of *passato prossimo* choices over the *imperfetto (*although they

didn't display the same preference in the free speech taks). On the contrary all parents

displayed the use of the two tenses that is usually expected by native speakers of Standard

Italian. I would like to stress "usually", and not necessarily. In fact, there are no specific rules in

Standard Italian that constrain the use of one tense over the other when telling a story.

Speakers are free to use the imperfect aspect expressed by i*mperfetto* form in combination

with other past tense forms, according to how they intend to convey the temporal contour of

their own event or story. In fact, as Bertinetto (1986) states, "among the indicative tenses, the

imperfect [...] is certainly the one that presents the greatest flexibility of meanings and the

widest variety of use" (Bertinetto, 1986, pg. 345). Native speakers of Italian are free to express

past events through a perfective or imperfective temporal value (which is not dependent from

the inherent telicity/atelicity value of the verb) and through different past tense forms. For

example the use of *passato prossimo* (*Io sono andato* = I went) is more common in the

Northern and Central regions of Italy, while the use of *passato remoto* (*Io andai* = I went) is

more common in the South of the country in colloquial registers not only in literature and texts

(Bertinetto, 2010). Standard Italian as source language displays degrees of variability in the use

of various past tense forms and heritage speakers of Italian express the same variability in the same domain.

In the production of individual sentences, six heritage speakers out of seven preferred the use of imperfect aspect through the form *imperfetto* since "there are no cognitive spatio-temporal limitations on the state of affairs expressed by the imperfect, or at least, […] these limitation are not focused" (Becker & Remberger, 2010, pg. 42). They behaved like native speakers of Standard Italian in the choice of the contrastive tenses, displaying varability in selection and use of one tense over the other. In addition, the choice of *passato prossimo* as default tense form, could be due to the written nature of the text and to the difficulty of interpreting the viewpoint of an event that is not the speaker's own creation.

Speakers in conversation don't utter sentences that are absolutely bound to the past tense used, but they tend to provide reference to a specific point in time that can hold different relations with the event described. Therefore, the subjects during oral performance could control the complex time relations between tenses by choosing the combination of the event's aspectual perspective and tense form, while they cannot do it in the written text. The role of the speaker and his perspective on the temporal properties of the event becomes a crucial element in determining the notion of grammatical aspect, which can be perfective and/or imperfective according to the speaker's combination of viewpoint and of verbal morphology (Comrie, 1976).

Heritage speakers of Italian faced the inherent variability of the language of origin, by relying on native in-built strategies and knowledge of their own language to make the best judgment in terms of tense and aspect.

The case of auxiliary selection

The last domain, in which structural differences were identified, is that of auxiliary selection in the past tense form *passato prossimo*. In the case of the children, results show variability in auxiliary selection along the continuum (Sorace, 2000). The same variability is identified across and within languages displaying selection of the auxiliary.

Heritage speakers of Italian from the study selected *avere a*s opposed to *essere* mainly with unaccusative verbs, specifically with verbs expressing change of state like *morire-to* die. While *essere* (to be) remains the preferred auxiliary-choice in Standard Italian with this type of verbs, the auxiliary *avere* (to have) is not categorically rejected by the same verbs (Sorace, 2000) in other romance languages. In addition, verbs of existence prefer the auxiliary *essere* in Italian, while in French and German they prefer *avere*. The same flexibility is identified in verbs expressing existence, like *essere* (to be).

Sorace (2000) noticed that some verbs, like *tornare* (to return*) or andare,* falling in one end point of the unaccusativity continuum "may have one auxiliary in the standard language but are frequently found with other auxiliary in other non standard uses (Sorace, 2000, pg. 883)", for example, between Canadian and European French, and between Standard Italian and Italian dialects or minority languages. Some verbs may also seem more vulnerable to change in some languages "especially romance languages that have been undergoing a diachronic change leading to the progressive replacement of BE by HAVE*"* (Sorace, 2000). Although gradient variation seems to affect the peripheral verbs more than the core verbs of the continuum, in French the gradient variation of core verbs, like the verbs *andare* (to go) or *tornare* (to return) used by the subjects in the present study, seem to follow the selection of the auxiliary *to have*

as the norm (Legendre, & Sorace, 2003). Therefore, the behavior of the subjects may not be in line with that of native speakers of Standard Italian, but could be shared by native speakers of other languages and/or varieties.

The difference in auxiliary selection between heritage speakers and monolingual speakers may be viewed as evidence of gradient variation in the auxiliary selection of unaccusative verbs. In addition, it could be hypothesized that the heritage grammar differs from the source language (Standard Italian) in the cut off point of unaccusative verbs within the continuum of unaccusavity gradient, since the extent of auxiliary selection variation with intransitive verbs, within languages and across languages and varieties "is a function of the position of a verb in the hierarchy" (Sorace, 2000, pg. 861).

Whether the differences in auxiliary selection displayed by heritage speakers of Italian and by native monolingual speakers of Italian is viewed as evidence of gradient variation or as effect of cross linguistic influences, it seems to me that the heritage speakers' auxiliary selection is a native manifestation of their inbuilt grammar since they display the same variability identified in the source language and identifiable in other languages.

The following section describes the implications of the study and provides a critique on the methodological issues encountered in the present investigation.

Implications of the study

The analysis of the structural properties of the heritage grammar and of how they are acquired by the speakers, may lead us to question what we assume and know about first language acquisition in monolingual settings. The findings from the study posit questions on the role and properties of input and on the outcome of the acquisition process. We assume that

language acquisition in monolingual setting is triggered by sufficient conditions of exposure to input and that the outcome of the acquisition process is the idealized system of rules underlying the functioning of the first language. Language acquisition gradually continues from birth until the native system is considered in place and fully developed by the time children turn six or seven. We also assume that native speakers always acquire their first language. A core grammar structure is always considered acquired at an approximate point in time, when the child's language displays adult-like features in the comprehension and production of the given element, the adult language being the target.

On the other hand, lack of acquisition of the native language may happen if the conditions of language acquisition display some type of deficit from a cognitive, biological or environmental perspective. But according to different scholars, despite the fact that the heritage language is a native language "naturalistic learning by monolinguals and HSs differs […] in at least two respects: amount of input and degree of mastery" (Polinksy, 2016, pg.2). In addition, numerous studies support the notion of the incomplete acquisition of specific areas of the heritage grammar due to a reduced exposure to the native input, as the primary cause of the "divergent" features of the heritage system from the monolingual baseline (Polinksy, 2006; Montrul, 2008, 2010; Cuza et al., 2011; Benmamoun, 2010). The input operating in heritage language acquisition is often described as not rich, not sufficient, not abundant, impoverished, or reduced, as indicated by Montrul (2011) in the following statements: "When the input in bilingual children is not sufficiently rich and abundant during the period of language development, a language runs the risk of not reaching its full potential (p. 240) and "when bilingual children are exposed to less than optimal input conditions […] aspects of grammar

may not reach full development and remain incompletely acquired" (Montrul, 2002, pg. 242).

However, it is not clear how specific properties of the heritage input can be derived on the basis

of productions not in line with the source, while the properties of the input operating in first

language acquisition are simply assumed to be fundamentally adequate and appropriate in

quantity and quality. In this perspective, what happens in the heritage language context in

terms of language acquisition doesn't seem to comply with prior assumptions made for the

acquisition of the native language in monolingual settings. In fact, incomplete acquisition is not

a possible outcome of first language acquisition in monolingual speakers, but we assume that

incomplete acquisition defines the vulnerability of the heritage grammar. We also assume that

monolingual speakers acquire their first language under sufficient amounts of input, but we

don't assume the same with respect to the amount of input necessary for the acquisition of the

heritage language as a native language.

I believe that until the nature of the heritage grammar is identified and its underlying

mechanisms described, the quantity and quality of the input needed to trigger the

development of the heritage language will remain unspecified.

The linguistic identity of the family language as an independent linguistic system also

carries implications in the field of education, perhaps prompting methodological change in

foreign and second language pedagogy, for which the family language is still the "not-so-good"

version of the language varieties (usually standard) from which it derives. This implies the need

to develop a heritage language instruction focused on satisfying the academic needs of the

heritage speakers as a specific student population, and also driven to legitimize the linguistic

identity of their family language.

I also believe that the academic legitimation of minority groups, such as that of heritage speakers, can lead to a positive societal change. In fact, the development of a heritage language instruction based on linguistic evidence may contribute to solidify not only the "scholastic" identity of the heritage speakers, but also their cultural identity and their role in society. It would legitimize their presence in school settings as a group of bilinguals, who are competent speakers of their family language

Extra linguistic factors at play

Although not investigated, it is important to account for the influencing role of extra linguistic factors in the acquisition of the family language. Factors such as the social status of the parents and their level of education, the differences in the parents' and children' linguistic behavior, the parents' intention and motivation in using the heritage language, the children's response, interest and language aptitude could all influence the individual development of the family language, favoring in some cases comprehension over production. The regional provenience and the education level of the parents can influence the language register used in conversation with the children, favoring standard or non-standard forms. For example, an interesting finding from the study was the use of the clitic ci, by child and parent of the same family nucleus, in semi-free speech. This form of clitic can have multiple syntactic roles and it's frequently used in the northern Italian regions of Emilia Romagna and Lombardia. The use of this clitic is viewed as colloquial, often associated with the speakers' lower level of education, and identified in the semi-standard Italian (Bertinetto, 1984), which is a language variety spoken in every Italian region, derived by the influence of regional dialects into the Standard Italian language.

Methodological challenges

This section explores the methodological issues encountered during the present investigation, in relation to the influencing role of the task modality and task design and in relation to the limitation of both types of analysis.

I think that one of the biggest challenges in linguistic experiments is to understand how subjects access their grammatical system. For example, heritage speakers have been aurally exposed to their family language since birth, and they display an indirect or implicit access to the system of their heritage language. Therefore, oral tasks may favor their performance and their implicit knowledge since their modality matches the aural acquisition modality of the heritage language. On the contrary, written tasks may affect their performance, since they often require metalinguistic knowledge and specific vocabulary, that heritage speakers may have not used or heard since they were never explicitly introduced to prescriptive rules. Therefore, the best way to administer grammaticality judgment tasks may be through acceptance or judgment in oral form.

Overall, experimental tasks tend to favor the subjects' metalinguistic awareness and not the implicit knowledge of grammar (Ellis, 2005), influencing the speakers' own perceptions of linguistic correctness. The stimulus used in experimental designs is often designed around the presumed use of a target element since it's crafted to investigate a linguistic structure that may not match the way that element has been acquired. Therefore, the stimulus lacks authenticity in terms of use, and In addition, subjects may focus more on understanding the text and on providing appropriate answers, rather than naturally performing according to their linguistic intuition.

I believe that the best way to investigate the heritage grammar is through a variety of tasks in oral modality and through the separate investigation of comprehension and production of the same structure. In addition the variety of tasks used to gather data should always include samples of naturalistic speech or semi-speech, in which the heritage speakers can engage in any type of conversation with no specific direction or restrictions in their linguistic choices. In fact, only free speech displays the features of the natural and spontaneous use of language. The analysis of the language used in free speech highlights the subjects' behavior in its entirety allowing the researcher to understand the speakers' behavior as a whole.

The other methodological challenge is related to interlanguage analysis and specifically to *"How do we know what learners know*? (Lakshmanan & Selinker, 2001) Paraphrasing the above title, I would say: How do I know what heritage speakers know? The challenge resides in the difficulty of identifying criteria of acquisition to establish If and when a given structure has been acquired or not. One way to overcome this challenge, is trying to identify alternative diagnostics for determining the heritage speakers' competence (Lakshmanan & Selinker, 2001) such as exploring the acquisition of the heritage grammar through an order of acquisition of given elements, since various level of competence in the family language could be identified according to the order, in which, specific elements are acquired by the speakers.

Further studies

The present study represents the first step towards the understanding of the mechanism underlying heritage grammars. The study provided evidence on the fact that the family language can be investigated as an independent linguistic system with its own set of rules because it displays structural differences from the language of origin. Typological studies

can contribute to determine if the heritage system shares similarities with other world languages, according to universal rules or to cross-linguistic influences, or if it is the product of individual conditions of language acquisition, which means a heritage grammar for each heritage speaker. From the acquisition perspective, further investigations are needed in order to identify criteria of acquisition that determine if, how, and when a given element is considered acquired or not by the heritage speaker.

Further studies on the syntactic and semantic properties of the heritage system, can contribute to shed light on new aspects of the theory of grammar. Exploring the rules of the heritage language system within a theoretical linguistic framework may provide additional contributions to understand the intricate and complex human ability of constructing language.

Conclusion

The goal of this dissertation was to explore the behavior of heritage speakers of Italian

living in the United States, in given grammatical structures, from the perspective of language

acquisition. Subjects were six family nuclei, made by seven children and six parents as native

speakers of Standard Italian. The data was gathered by administering eight tasks, between oral

and written modalities, targeting the subjects' production. The data analysis was based on the

notion of interlnguage (Selinker, 1972), used as a methaphor of the heritage grammr. This type

of analysis allowed to investigate the grammar of individuals, as the speaker's own creation.

The following hypotheses were tested in order to show that heritage speakers are

native competent speakers of their family language, and that the heritage grammar can be

investigated as a full independent system with its own set of rules

H1. Heritage speakers rely on native intuition of their family language when employing a re-

structuring process of grammatical aspects of their heritage language

H2. The HL restructuring process takes place in specific domains of grammar that are particular

to the source language and in which the source language displays degree of variability and/or

language specific behaviour.

Results from all tasks showed a predominance of similarities between the heritage

language and the language of origin (Standard Italian), in each target structure. This indicates

that heritage Italian functions predominantly like the Standard Italian system from which it

derives, with respect to the target elements investigated. Results also highlighted the presence

of differences between the two systems, not only in performance but also in language

structure. These differences are respectively identified as preferential differences at level of

language use, and as systematic differences at level of grammar.

The presence of systematic differences between the heritage grammar and the source language contributed to unveil the native behavior of heritage speakers.

They employ the same native strategies used by native monolingual speakers of other languages. For example, they rely on default forms (masculine gender or perfective tense *pass.prossimo*), on patterns of frequency of given form and use (acceptability of regional *piacere* uses) and on their sensitivity to verbs' semantics and unaccusativity gradient.

Heritage speakers don't face contrasts or variability through random behavior, but they are guided by a native linguistic sensitivity, which operates within the structures of their heritage grammar. In fact, systematic differences between the heritage language and the source language manifest in specific domains of grammar particular to the source language and in which the source language displays degree of variability.

Preferential and systematic differences don't reflect the properties of a reduced and simplified linguistic system, in comparison with the structures of the source language, but become evidence of the organizational process of heritage properties. The areas of re-analysis of the heritage grammar correspond to the domains of variability in the source language. This is why I believe that by identifying the domains of contrast and variability in the source language, it is possible to predict the areas of the heritage grammar displaying structural differences.

To conclude, the evidence from the study shows what follows: 1) Heritage speakers are competent speakers of their family language; 2) Native language acquisition takes place also in heritage context; 3) The result of the acquisition process is a full functioning system, which displays properties of natural language. Therefore, the importance of the study resides in the

fundamental notion of the heritage language as a linguistic system of its own, which

restructured the rules of the source language and developed its own properties. In addition, the

process of reanalysis to which the heritage grammar is subject, may not be triggered by the

reduced properties of input, but by the specific nature of the source language and its inherent

degree of variability and of language specific properties.

REFERENCES

Audring, J. (2008). Gender assignment and gender agreement: Evidence from pronominal

gender languages. *Morphology*, *18*(2), 93-116.

d'Alessandro, R. (2007). *Impersonal" si" constructions: Agreement and Interpretation* (Vol. 90).

Walter de Gruyter.

Becker, M. G., & Remberger, E. M. (Eds.). (2010). *Modality and mood in Romance: modal*

interpretation, mood selection, and mood alternation (Vol. 533). Walter de Gruyter.

Belletti, A., & Hamann, C. (2004). On the L2/bilingual acquisition of French by two young

children with different source languages. *Language acquisition and language disorders,*

32, 147-174.

Belletti, A., Bennati, E., & Sorace, A. (2007). Theoretical and developmental issues in the syntax

of subjects: Evidence from near-native Italian. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*,

25(4), 657-689.

Belletti, A., & Guasti, M. T. (2015). *The acquisition of Italian: morphosyntax and its interfaces in*

different modes of acquisition (Vol. 57). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Belletti, A., & Rizzi, L. (1988). Psych-verbs and θ-theory. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*,

6(3), 291-352.

Benmamoun, E., Montrul, S., & Polinsky, M. (2013). Heritage languages and their speakers:

Opportunities and challenges for linguistics. *Theoretical Linguistics*, *39*(3-4), 129-181.

Bertinetto, P. M. (1986). *Tempo, aspetto e azione nel verbo italiano: il sistema dell'indicativo*

(Vol. 4). Presso l'Accademia della Crusca.

Bertinetto, P. M., & Squartini, M. (1996). La distribuzione del Perfetto Semplice e del

Perfetto Composto nelle diverse varietà di italiano. *Romance Philology*, *49*(4), 383-419.

Bertinetto, P. M. (1997). *Il dominio tempo-aspettuale*. Rosenberg e Sellier.

Berruto, G. (1983). L'italiano popolare e la semplificazione linguistica. *Vox romanica*, *42*, 38.

Berruto, G. (1985). Per una caratterizzazione del parlato: l'italiano parlato ha un'altra grammatica? *Gesprochenes Italienisch in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, *252*, 120.

Berruto, G. (1987). *Sociolinguistica dell'italiano contemporaneo* (Vol. 33). Carocci.

Berruto, G. (1989). Main topics and findings in Italian sociolinguistics. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, *1989*(76), 7-30.

Berruto, G. (2012). *Sociolinguistica dell'italiano contemporaneo*. Carocci.

Bianchi, V., & Bocci, G. (2012). Should I stay or should I go? Optional focus movement in Italian *Empirical issues in syntax and semantics*, *9*, 1-18.

Bianchi, G. (2013). Gender in Italian–German bilinguals: A comparison with German L2 learners of Italian. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, *16*(03), 538-557.

Bley-Vroman, R. (1983). The comparative fallacy in interlanguage studies: the case of systematicity. *Language learning*, *33*(1), 1-17.

Blom, E., Polišenská, D., & Weerman, F. (2008). Articles, adjectives and age of onset: The acquisition of Dutch grammatical gender. *Second language research*, *24*(3), 297-331.

Blom, E., & Vasić, N. (2011). The production and processing of determiner–noun agreement in child L2 Dutch. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*, *1*(3), 265-290.

Brunetto, V. (2009). Syntactic diagnostics for referentiality marking in early null objects: evidence from Italian. *Rivista di grammatica generativa*, *34*, p. 35.

Cabo, D. P. Y., & Rothman, J. (2012). The (Il) logical problem of heritage speaker bilingualism

and incomplete acquisition, *Applied Linguistics*, ams037.

Cabo, D.P.Y., Lingwall, A., & Rothman, J. (2012). Applying the interface hypothesis to heritage

speaker acquisition: evidence from Spanish mood. *Cascadilla press.* pp. 437-438

Cabrera, M., & Zubizarreta, M. L. (2003). On the acquisition of Spanish causative structures by

L1 speakers of English. *Proceedings of The 2002 Generative Approaches to Second*

Language Acquisition (GASLA-6): L2 Links, 24-33

Caprin, C., & Guasti, M. T. (2009). The acquisition of morphosyntax in Italian: A cross-

sectional study. *Applied psycholinguistics*, *30*(1), 23-52

Cardinaletti, A., & Starke, M. (1999). The typology of structural deficiency: A case study of the

three classes of pronouns. *Clitics in the languages of Europe, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin*,

145-233.

Cardinaletti, A., & Shlonsky, U. (2004). Clitic positions and restructuring in Italian. *Linguistic*

Inquiry, *35*(4), 519-557

Cerruti, M. (2009). *Strutture dell'italiano regionale: morfosintassi di una varietà diatopica in*

prospettiva sociolinguistica (Vol. 7). Peter Lang.

Chan, L. (2014). PhD thesis. Non-standard Italian Dialect Heritage Speakers' Acquisition of Clitic

Placement in Standard Italian. *CUNY Academic*

*Works.*http://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/24

Chini, M. (1995). *Genere grammaticale e acquisizione: aspetti della morfologia nominale in*

italiano L2 (Vol. 14). Franco Angeli

Chini, M. (1999). Genere grammaticale e acquisizione. Aspetti della morfologia nominale

in italiano L2 (St. Schmid). *VOX ROMANICA, 58*, 257-259.

Chomsky, N. (1975). Reflections on language. *Pantheon, New York*, 212

Chomsky, N. (1988). *Current issues in linguistic theory* (Vol. 38). Walter de Gruyter

Chondrogianni, V., & Marinis, T. (2011). Differential effects of internal and external factors on
the development of vocabulary, tense morphology and morpho-syntax in successive
bilingual children. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*, *1*(3), 318-345

Comrie, B. (1985). *Tense.*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cook, V. (Ed.). (2003). *Effects of the second language on the first* (Vol. 3). Multilingual matters.

Cordin, P. (2009). Gli ausiliari essere e avere nell'italiano regionale trentino. *Italiano, italiani
regionali e dialetti*, 69-98.

Corbett, G. G. (1979). The agreement hierarchy. *Journal of linguistics*, *15*(2), 203-224.

Corbett, G. G. (2003). Agreement: terms and boundaries. In *The Role of Agreement in Natural
Language. Proceedings of the 2001 Texas Linguistic Society Conference, Austin, Texas.*
(pp. 109-122).

Corbett, G. G. (2006). *Agreement* (Vol. 109). Cambridge University Press.

Corvalán, C. S. (1994). *Language Contact and Change: Spanish in Los Angeles*. Oxford University
Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016-4314.

Corvalán, C. S. (2003). Otra mirada a la expresión del sujeto como variable sintáctica. In *Lengua,
variación y contexto: Estudios dedicados a Humberto López Morales* (pp. 849-860). Arco
Libros.

Corvalán, C. S. (2014). *Bilingual language acquisition: Spanish and English in the first six years*.
Cambridge University Press.

Cuza, A., & Frank, J. (2011). Transfer effects at the syntax-semantics interface: The case of

double-que questions in heritage Spanish. *The Heritage Language Journal*, *8*(2), 66-89.

Cuza, A. (2012). Crosslinguistic influence at the syntax proper: Interrogative subject–verb

inversion in heritage Spanish. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 1367006911432619

Cuza, A., & Miller, L. (2015). The protracted acquisition of past tense aspectual values in child

heritage Spanish. *Hispanic Linguistics at the Crossroad: Theoretical Linguistics, Language

Acquisition, and Language Contact*, 211-30.

Dahl, O. (2000). Animacy and the notion of semantic gender. *Trends in linguistics studies and

monographs*, *124*, 99-116.

De Prada Pérez, A., & Cabo, D. P.Y., (2011). Invariable gusta in the Spanish of Heritage Speakers

in the US. In *Proceedings of the 11th Generative Approaches to Second Language

Acquisition Conference* (pp. 110-120).

De Prada Pérez, A., & Cabo, D. P. Y., (2012). Interface heritage speech across proficiencies:

unaccusativity, focus, and subject position in Spanish. In *Selected Proceedings of the 14th

Hispanic Linguistics Symposium* (pp. 308-318). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings

Project.

De Houwer, A. (2009). *Bilingual first language acquisition*. Multilingual Matters.

Eckman, F., & Iverson, G. K. (2013). The role of native language phonology in the production of

L2 contrasts. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *35*(01), 67-92.

Ellis, R. (2005). Principles of instructed language learning. *System*, *33*(2), 209-224

Filiaci, F. (2011). PhD thesis. Anaphoric preferences of null and overt subjects in Italian and

Spanish: A cross-linguistic comparison http://hdl.handle.net/1842/6510

Guasti, M. T. (1993). Verb syntax in Italian child grammar: Finite and nonfinite verbs. *Language acquisition*, *3*(1), 1-40

Granfeldt, J. (2000). The acquisition of the determiner phrase in bilingual and second language French. *Bilingualism: Language And Cognition, 3*(3), 263-280

Hamann, C., & Belletti, A. (2008). Developmental patterns in the acquisition of complement clitic pronouns: Comparing different acquisition modes with an emphasis on French. *Rivista di Grammatica Generativa*, 31, 39–78

Hyams, N., & Safir, K. (1991). Evidence, analogy and passive knowledge: comments on Lakshmanan. *Point counterpoint: Universal Grammar in the second language. Amsterdam: John Benjamins*, 411-18.

Jarvis, S., & Pavlenko, A. (2008). *Crosslinguistic influence in language and cognition*. Routledge. Jakobson, R. (1968). *Child language, aphasia and phonological universals* (Vol. 72). Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.

Keating, G. D., Van Patten, B., & Jegerski, J. (2011). Who was walking on the beach?. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *33*(02), 193-221.

Kupisch, T. (2012). Generic subjects in the Italian of early German-Italian bilinguals and German learners of Italian as a second language. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*.

Kupisch, T. (2013). A new term for a better distinction? A view from the higher end of the proficiency scale. *Theoretical Linguistics*, *39*(3-4), 203-214.

Kupisch, T. (2014). Adjective placement in simultaneous bilinguals (German–Italian) and the concept of cross-linguistic overcorrection. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, *17*(01), 222-233.

Kupisch, T., Barton, D., Hailer, K., Kostogryz, E., Lein, T., Stangen, I., & Van de Weijer, J. (2014). Foreign accent in adult simultaneous bilinguals. *Heritage Language Journal*, *11*(2), 123-150

Kupisch, T., & Rothman, J. (2016). Terminology matters! Why difference is not incompleteness and how early child bilinguals are heritage speakers. To appear in *International Journal of Bilingualism*, SI on heritage speakers and early bilinguals edited by A. Hulk and S. Aalberse.

Laleko, O., & Polinsky, M. (2013). Marking topic or marking case: A comparative investigation of heritage Japanese and heritage Korean

Lakshmanan, U., & Selinker, L. (2001). Analyzing interlanguage: how do we know what learners know? *Second Language Research*, *17*(4), 393-420.

Lampitelli, N. (2010). Nounness, gender, class and syntactic structures in Italian nouns. *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 2008. Selected papers from 'Going Romance'Groningen 2008*, 195-214.

Leonini, C., & Belletti, A. (2004). Adult L2 Acquisition of Italian Clitic Pronouns and Subject Inversion in VS Structures. *LOT Occasional Series*, *3*, 293-304.

Li, P., & Shirai, Y. (2000). *The acquisition of lexical and grammatical aspect* (Vol. 16). Walter de Gruyter.

Lorusso, P. (2007). The acquisition of aspect in L1 Italian. In *Proceedings of the 2nd Conference of GALANA* (pp. 253-264).

Mira, M. I. M. (2009). Spanish heritage speakers in the Southwest Factors contributing to the

maintenance of the subjunctive in concessive clauses. *Spanish in context*, *6*(1), 105-126.

Miglio, V. G., & Gries, S. T., (2020). Heritage speakers' Spanish in California: How

Unbalanced bilingualism affects reverse constructions of the Gustare-type. Proceedings

of the 10th Annual Hawaii International.

Miller, L., & Cuza, A. (2013). On the status of tense and aspect morphology in child heritage

Spanish: An analysis of accuracy levels. In *Proceedings of the 12th Generative*

Approaches to Second Language Acquisition Conference (pp. 117-129). Somerville, MA:

Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

Monachesi, P. (1999). A lexical approach to Italian cliticization - *CSLI Lecture Notes, 84. Stanford,*

CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information. Distributed for CSLI Publications

by Cambridge University Press, 1999. (xv + 247 pp.).

Montrul, S. (1999). Causative errors with unaccusative verbs in L2 Spanish. *Second language*

research, *15*(2), 191-219.

Montrul, S., & Slabakova, R. (2001). Is native-like competence possible in L2 acquisition. In

BUCLD 25: Proceedings of the 25th Annual Boston University Conference on Language

Development (pp. 522-33).

Montrul, S. A. (2008). *Incomplete acquisition in bilingualism: Re-examining the age factor* (Vol.

39). John Benjamins Publishing.

Montrul, S., Foote, R., & Perpiñán, S. (2008). Gender agreement in adult second language

learners and Spanish heritage speakers: The effects of age and context of acquisition.

Language Learning, *58*(3), 503-553.

Montrul, S. (2011). Morphological errors in Spanish second language learners and heritage

speakers. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *33*(02), 163-192.

Montrul, S., Davidson, J., De La Fuente, I., & Foote, R. (2014). Early language experience

facilitates the processing of gender agreement in Spanish heritage speakers.

Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, *17*(01), 118-138.

Montrul, S. (2015). *The Acquisition of Heritage Languages*. Cambridge University Press.

Odlin, T. (2005). Crosslinguistic influence and conceptual transfer: What are the concepts?

Annual review of applied linguistics, *25*, 3-25.

De Prada Pérez, A., & y Cabo, D. P. (2011). Invariable gusta in the Spanish of Heritage Speakers

in the US. In *Proceedings of the 11th Generative Approaches to Second Language

Acquisition Conference* (pp. 110-120).

Rothman, J. (2009). Understanding the nature and outcomes of early bilingualism: Romance

languages as heritage languages. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, *13*(2), 155-163.

Paradis, J., & Navarro, S. (2003). Subject realization and crosslinguistic interference in the

bilingual acquisition of Spanish and English: What is the role of the input?. *Journal of

child language*, *30*(2), 371-393.

Pérez-Leroux, A. T., Pirvulescu, M., & Roberge, Y. (2009). Bilingualism as a window into the

language faculty: The acquisition of objects in French-speaking children in bilingual and

of monolingual contexts. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, *12*(1), 97-112

Pérez-Leroux, A. T., Cuza, A., & Thomas, D. (2011). Clitic placement in Spanish–English bilingual

children. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, *14*(2), 221-232

Polinsky, M. (2006). Incomplete acquisition: American Russian. *Journal of Slavic linguistics*, 191-

262.

Polinsky, M., & Kagan, O. (2007). Heritage languages: In the 'wild'and in the classroom.

Language and Linguistics Compass, 1(5), 368-395

Polinsky, M. (2008). Relative clauses in heritage Russian: Fossilization or divergent grammar. In

Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics (Vol. 16, pp. 333-358)

Polinsky, M. (2011). Reanalysis in adult heritage language. Studies in Second Language

Acquisition, 33(02), 305-328

Pucci, S. L. (2003). Implications for Heritage Language Development. Mi lengua: Spanish as a

heritage language in the United States, research and practice, 269.

Rizzi, L. (1982). Issues in Italian syntax (Vol. 11). Walter de Gruyter

Rothman, J. (2009). Pragmatic deficits with syntactic consequences? L2 pronominal subjects

and the syntax–pragmatics interface. Journal of Pragmatics, 41(5), 951-973

Sabatini, F. (1985). L'italiano dell'uso medio: una realtà tra le varietà linguistiche italiane.

Gesprochenes italienisch in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 154-184.

Santoro, M. (2012). Morphological Variability in Interlanguage Grammars: New Evidence From

the Acquisition of Gender and Number in Italian Determiner Phrases and Direct Object

Pronouns. The Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 15(1), 167

Schaufeli, A. (1993). Turkish language development in the Netherlands. Immigrant languages in

Europe, 120-147

Schaeffer, J. C. (2000). The acquisition of direct object scrambling and clitic placement: Syntax

and pragmatics (Vol. 22). John Benjamins Publishing.

Scontras, G., Fuchs, Z., & Polinsky, M. (2015). Heritage language and linguistic theory. Frontiers

in psychology, 6.

Schmitz, K., & Müller, N. (2008). Strong and clitic pronouns in monolingual and bilingual

   acquisition of French and Italian. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, *11*(1), 19-41.

Selinker, L., Interlanguage, IRAL; International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language

   Teaching, 10:3 (1972), 209

Serratrice, L., Sorace, A., & Paoli, S. (2004). Crosslinguistic influence at the syntax–pragmatics

   interface: Subjects and objects in English–Italian bilingual and monolingual acquisition.

   Bilingualism: Language and cognition, *7*(03), 183-205.

Silva-Corvalán, C. (2014). *Bilingual language acquisition: Spanish and English in the first six

   years*. Cambridge University Press.

Slabakova, R., & Ivanov, I. (2011). A more careful look at the syntax–discourse interface. *Lingua*,

   121 (4), 637-651.

Slobin, D.I. (1985). Crosslinguistic Evidence for the Language-Making Capacity. In D.I. Slobin

   (Ed.) *The Crosslinguistic Study of Language Acquisition.*Vol. 2: Theoretical issues (pp.

   1157–1249). Hillsdale: Erlbaum.

Sorace, A. (2000). Gradients in auxiliary selection with intransitive verbs. *Language*, 859-890.

Sorace, A. (2004). Native language attrition and developmental instability at the syntax

   discourse interface: Data, interpretations and methods. *Bilingualism: Language and

   Cognition*, *7*(02), 143-145.

Sorace, A., Serratrice, L., Filiaci, F., & Baldo, M. (2009). Discourse conditions on subject pronoun

   realization: Testing the linguistic intuitions of older bilingual children. *Lingua*, *119*(3),

   460-477.

Sorace, A. (2011). Pinning down the concept of "interface" in bilingualism. *Linguistic

Approaches to bilingualism, *1*(1), 1-33.

Thornton, A. M. (2009). Constraining gender assignment rules. *Language Sciences*, *31*(1), 14-32.

Unsworth, S. (2013). Assessing the role of current and cumulative exposure in simultaneous

bilingual acquisition: The case of Dutch gender. *Bilingualism: Language and cognition*,

16(1), 86-110.

Unsworth, S., Argyri, F., Cornips, L., Hulk, A., Sorace, A., & Tsimpli, I. (2014). The role of age of

onset and input in early child bilingualism in Greek and Dutch. *Applied Psycholinguistics*,

35(4), 765-805

Valdés, G., & Figueroa, R.A., (1994). *Bilingualism and Testing: A Special Case of Bias*. Norwood,

N.J: Ablex, Print.

Valdés, G., & Figueroa, R. A. (1994). *Bilingualism and testing: A special case of bias*. Ablex

Publishing.

Valdés, G. (1999). Heritage language students: Profiles and possibilities. Identrifiers', 37.

Van Hout, A. (2008). Acquiring perfectivity and telicity in Dutch, Italian and Polish. *Lingua*,

118(11), 1740-1765.

Varlokosta, S., Belletti, A., Costa, J., Friedmann, N., Gavarró, A., Grohmann, K. K., ... & Argemí

N. (2016). A cross-linguistic study of the acquisition of clitic and pronoun production.

Language acquisition, *23*(1), 1-26.

Vendler, G. (1957). Verbs and Times. The Philosophical Review, LXVI, 143–160.

Vigliocco, G., Antonini, T., & Garrett, M. F. (1997). Grammatical gender is on the tip of Italian

tongues. *Psychological science*, *8*(4), 314-317.

Zucchi, S. (2009). Along the time line. *Natural Language Semantics*, *17*(2), 99-139.

Zyzik, E. (2014). Causative verbs in the grammar of Spanish heritage speakers. *Linguistic*

Approaches to Bilingualism, *4*(1), 1-33.

APPENDICES

This section contains two appendices. Appendix A displays the full stimulus of each task administred in the study, and Appendix B displays the two questionnaires used with both groups of subjects.

APPENDIX A

STIMULUS TASK 1

Oral Picture Description Task on Gender Assignment

Feminine nouns.

List of feminine nouns for a total of 22, of which 12 are regular nouns of animate object (8 singular and 4 plural), 6 are regular nouns ending in –e (4 singular and 2 plural), and 6 are mix ending noun (4 singular and 2 plural)

Figlia (f.s. animate)	stazione (f.s.inanimate)
Scuola (f.s. inanimate)	auto (f.s.inanimate)
Tartaruga (f.s.animate)	carne (f.s inanimate)
Mele (f.s. inanimate)	città (f.pl inanimate)
Balena (f.s. animate)	colazione (f.s. inanimate)
Lettera (f.s.inanimate)	luci (f.pl.inanimate)
Erba (f.s. inanimate)	università (f.pl inanimate)
Mamma (f.s. animate)	bici (f.s inanimate)
Maestre (f.pl.animate)	canzoni (f.pl.inanimate)
Statue (f.pl. inanimate)	moto (f.s inanimate)
Bambine (f.pl.animate)	televisione (f.s.inanimate)
Casa (f.s. inanimate)	foto (f.s.inanimate)

Masculine nouns
List of masculine nouns for a total of 25, of which 6 nouns are ending in –e (4 singular and 2 plural), 6 are nouns with mix ending (4 singular and 2 plural), 12 are regular nouns (8 singular and 4 plural)

Mare (m.s-inanimate)	camion(m.pl.inanimate)
Libri (m.pl.inanimate)	gatto (m.s animate)
Fiore (m.s.inanimate)	polpo (m.s.animate)
Album (m.s.inanimate)	anello (m.s.inanimate)
Pinguino (m.s.animate)	letto (m.s.inanimate)
Bicchiere (m.pl.inanimate)	yougurt (m.s.inanimate)

Ristorante (m.s.inanimate)   film (m.pl.inanimate)
Tavoli (m.pl.inanimate)   student (m.pl.animate)
Cani (m.pl. animate)   panda (m.s.animate)
Genitori (m.pl.animate)   piatto (m.s.inanimate)
Pesce (f.s. animate)   problema (m.s.mix)
Figlio (m.s.animate)   cappello (m.s.inan.)

Fillers
List of distractors for a total of 16, in the form of infinite verbs, of proper name of famous
individual, of famous location and of known city

*Vaticano – scrivere –Roma- amalfi- Papa (m.s) -Dante Alighieri –Andrea Bocelli- JOvanotti-
piazza S. Marco-torre di Pisa- correre- fare matematica – studiare -Ferrari –l'Ultima Cena –
Prada*

STIMULUS TASK 2
Written Forced-Choice (FC) Judgment Task for Auxiliary selection

Direction

The following table shows different sentences in Italian. The phrases in the left column describe

events in the present. The same events are than described in the past in the right column.

Read the phrases in each column and than pick one of the 4 options provided among the

sentences in the past, in the right column, by asking your self if you would use that option or

not. If the answer is "**yes I would use it**", than you should mark that option.

Example

Phrase in the present	Same phrase in the past
Io scrivo una lettera	1. Scrivevo una lettera X 2. Sono scritto una lettera 3. Scritto visto una lettera

Frase al presente	Stessa frase al passato: 4 opzioni
1. Io mangio la pizza	1. Ho mangiato la pizza 2. Sono mangiato la pizza 3. Mangiato la pizza 4. Visto mangiato la pizza

2. Loro portano un regalo a Luca	1. Loro portato un regalo a Luca 2. Loro hanno portato un regalo a Luca 3. Loro ragalato portato un regalo a Luca 4. Loro sono guardati un regalo a Luca
3. Anna scrive una lettera	1. Anna è scritta una lettera 2. Anna scritto una lettera 3. Anna ha scritto una lettera 4. Anna scritto visto una lettera
4. A Chicago nevica	1. A Chicago è nevicato 2. A Chicago ha nevicato 3. A Chicago nevicato 4. A Chicago visto nevicato
5. A Milano piove	1. A Milano è piovuto 2. A Milano ha piovuto 3. A Milano piovuta 4. A Milano piovere dato
6. Tu ascolti il rock	1. Tu sei ascoltato il rock 2. Tu sono ascolto il rock 3. Tu ascoltato il rock 4. Tu hai ascoltato il rock
7. Carlo nuota bene	1. Carlo è nuotato bene 2. Carlo nuotato bene 3. Carlo ha nuotato bene 4. Carlo nuotare fare bene
8. Noi corriamo nel parco	1. Noi sono correre nel parco 2. Noi abbiamo corso nel parcoX 3. Noi siamo corsi nel parcoX 4. Noi corso nel parco
9. Tu e carlo andate a scuola	1. Tu e Carlo andati a scuola 2. Tu e Carlo siete andati a scuola 3. Tu e Carlo avete andato a scuola 4. Tu e Carlo andare entrare a scuola
10. A Roma grandina ghiaccio	1. A Roma è grandinato ghiaccio 2. A Roma ha grandinato ghiaccio 3. A Roma grandinato ghiaccio 4. A Roma grandinare ghiaccio
11. Noi torniamo alle 4	1. Noi siamo tornati alle 4 2. Noi abbiamo tornato alle 4 3. Noi tornato alle 4 4. Noi tornare entrare alle 4
12. La bambina nasce in ospedale	1. La bambina ha nato in ospedale 2. La bambina nata in ospedale 3. La bambina è nata in ospedale 4. La bamabina nasciuta nascere in ospedale
13. Lei vede l'amico	1. Lei ha visto l'amico 2. Lei è vista l'amico 3. Lei visto l'amici

	4. Lei vedere ridere l'amico
14. Il negozio chiude alle 3:00	1. Il negozio ha chiuso alle 3 2. Il negozio chiuso 3. Il negozio è chiuso alle 3 4. Il negozio chiudato alle 3
15. Le donne ridono tanto	1. Le donne sono rise tanto 2. Le donne riso tanto 3. Le donne hanno riso tanto 4. Le donne ridere tanto
16. I bambini entrano a scuola	1. I bambini entrare andati a scuola 2. I bambini sono entrati a scuola 3. I bambini entrati a scuola 4. I bambini hanno entrato a scuola
17. Gli student leggono il libro	1. Gli studenti hanno letto il libro 2. Gli studenti letto il libro 3. Gli studenti sono letti il libro 4. Gli studenti letto visto il libro
18. Il pesce rosso muore	1. Il pesce rosso è morto 2. Il pesce rosso ha morto 3. Il pesce rosso morto 4. Il pesce rosso morire morto
19. Anna parte per Milano	1. Anna partita 2. Anna è partita 3. Anna ha partito 4. Anna partita andata
20. Io preparo una torta	1. Io ho preparato una torta 2. Io sono preparata una torta 3. Io sono preparo una torta 4. Io prepararto una torta
21. La conferenza è interessante	1. La conferenza ha stata interessante 2. La conferenza stata piaciuta interessante 3. La conferenza stata interessante 4. La conferenza è stata interessante
22. Voi telefonate alla nonna	1. Voi siete telefonati alla nonna 2. Voi avete telefonato alla nonna 3. Voi telefonato alla nonna 4. Voi telefonare parlato alla nonna
23. Voi guardate la partita di cacio?	1. Voi guardato la partita di calcio? 2. Voi avete guardato la partita di calcio? 3. Voi guarda giocato la partita di calico? 4. Voi siete guardati la partita di calcio?
24. Gli americani lavorano molto	1. Gli Americani hanno lavorato molto 2. Gli Americani lavorato molto 3. Gli Americani pagato lavorato molto 4. Gli Americani sono lavorato molto

STIMULUS TASK 3

Oral Elicitation Task of Clitic Object Pronouns

Coppia 1
D.   L'orso e' andato in collina a raccogliere I funghi. L'orso dove **ha messo** I funghi?
R.   _____ _____
Coppia 2
D.   Questa e' la bambina, che si chiama Masha. Com'**è** la bambina secondo te?
R.   _____
Coppia 3
D.   La bimba giocava e correva ma ad un certo punto, dove **ha lanciato** la palla?
R.   _____
Coppia 4
D.   Qui l'orso è tutto bagnato. Secondo te perchè l'orso **è bagnato**?
R.   _____
Coppia 5
D.   Qui l'orso è entrato nel fiume ma Masha non sta guardando l'orso. Infatto Masha ha incontrato un amico ranocchio. Dove i**ncontra** il ranocchio?
R.   _____
Coppia 6
D.   Qui sembra aver Masha **guardato i**l ranocchio, perche`?
R.   _____
Coppia 7
D.   Masha sembra preoccupata. Secondo te, chi ha preso la palla, l'orso o il ranocchio?
R.   _____
Coppia 8
D.   Il ranocchio aiuta Masha. Dove **e` andato** a prendere la palla?
R.   _____
Coppia 9
D.   L'orso e Masha se ne vanno via. Il ranocchio bagnato **segue** Masha e l'orso? Dove?
R.   _____
Coppia 10
D.   Qui Masha e` in casa e il ranocchio **batte** la porta. Con cosa batte la porta?
R.   _____
Coppia 11
D.   Allora Masha non molto contenta, ha parlato col ranocchio e **ha invitato** il ranocchio? Dove?
R.   _____
Coppia 12
D.   Secondo te cosa **ha detto** Masha al ranocchio?
R.   _____

Coppia 13
D.   Masha e il ranocchio adesso sono in casa. Come **guarda il** ranocchio Masha?
R.   _____
Coppia 14
R.   Come **si sente** il ranocchio secondo te?
D.   _____
Coppia 15
D.   Il ranocchio è in cucina e ha afferrato il cucchiaio. Secondo te, perchè **ha afferrato** il cucchiaio il ranocchio?
R.   _____
Coppia 16
D.   Il ranocchio ha mangiato soddisfatto funghi e pane. Il ranocchio dove **ha mangiato** funghi e pane?
R   _____
Coppia 17
D.   Qui Masha sta cucinando la zuppa. Per chi **ha preparato** la zuppa?
R.   _____
Coppia 18
D   Qui Masha sta mescolando il minestrone. Masha con che cosa **ha mescolato** la minestra?
R.   _____
Coppia 19
D.   Qui l'orso ha provato ad alzarsi. Perchè Masha **ha fermato** l'orso con la mano?
R.   _____
Coppia 20
D.   Cosa ha detto Masha all'orso?
R.   _____
Coppia 21
D.   Qui il ranocchio piange e l'orso ha rimproverato Masha. Perchè l'orso **ha rimproverato** Masha?
R.   _____
Coppia 22
D.   Qui il ranocchio e' colpito da una scodella Chi **ha colpito** il ranocchio secondo te?
R.   _____
Coppia 23.
D.   Qui come sembra Masha?
R.   _____
Coppia 24
D.   Masha ha accarazzzato il ranocchio. Dove **tiene** il ranocchio?
R.   _____
Coppia 25
D.   Il ranocchio e` diventato un bel bambino. Il bambino **ha abbracciato** Masha, perchè?
R.   _____
Coppia 26

D.   L'orso e Masha hanno guardato il bambino. Come **hanno guardato** il bambino Masha e l'orso?

R.   _____

Coppia 27

D.   Perche` il bambino **era** un ranocchio?

R.   _____

Coppia 28

D.   L'orso qui perchè **ha abbracciato** I bimbi?

R.   _____

Coppia 29

D.   Alla fine per festeggiare l'orso **ha preso** il miele. A chi da` il miele?

R.   _____

Coppia 30

D.   Masha e il bambino-ranocchio mangiano il miele. Dove **mettono i**l miele?

R.   _____

STIMULUS TASK 4
Written Yes/No Acceptability Judgment on the placement of clitic object pronoun

Directions

Read the following Italian sentences and for each of them check one of the two options: I would say it / I would not say it. Take the time you need to read them and to complete the task. Remember that there is no right or wrong answer. In fact, the task aims to investigate the natural use of Italian language in bilingual speakers like you, therefore you should rely solely on your pure intuition of Italian.

Sentences	I would say it	I would not say it
1. Lascio I libri sul tavolo. Carlo può prenderli dopo		
2. I ragazzi sono simpatiche		
3. Ho comprato I libri nuovi. Carlo li può leggere		
4. Il telefono si è rotto. La mamma lo deve cambiare		
5. La televisione non fa bene. Non guardarla!		
6. Troppi dolci fanno ingrassare. Non li mangiarli!		
7. Gli spaghetti non sono cotti		
8. La colazione è abbondante. La non possiamo avanzarla!		
9. Il gelato è in cucina. Siamo a dieta. Non lo mangiamo!		
10. Questo è un segreto. Non dirlo a nessuno!		
11. I problemi sono grave		
12. Le sigarette fanno male. Non fumiamole!		
13. La lingua italiana è musicale		

14. La situazione è molto grave. Giorgio cerca di risolverla		
15. Le nuove studentesse sono arrivate oggi. L'insegnante le può trovare in classe		
16. Le amiche sono gelosi		
17. La radio è troppo alta. Puoi abbassarla?		
18. Il biglietto del treno costa molto. Lo vuoi comprare online?		
19. Il libro di storia è difficilissimo		
20. Il film è bellissimo. Lo devi assolutamente guardare		
21. Il papa` ha lasciato la macchina in garage. Se vuoi, puoi usarla		
22. La casa è antico		
23. Il tuo regalo è sul tavolo. Lo puoi aprire		
24. Maria è a casa sola. Possiamo invitarla?'		
25. E' uscito il nuovo libro di S. King. Devo assolutamente leggerlo		
26. Il pavimento è sporco. Puoi pulire quando vuoi		
27. Le scarpe sono corte. Le voglio restituirle al negozio		
28. Gli uccellini sono sul tetto. Riuscite li a vedere?		
29. Questo film è noioso. Lo non guardare!		
30. La macchina non parte. Maria deve la vendere		
31. I panini al prosciutto non sono freschi. Li non offrire agli ospiti		
32. Anna e Carla non dicono mai la verità. Non ascoltarle!		
33. La professoressa sta leggendo il quiz. Non la interrompere		
34. I professori sono entusiasta		
35. La borsa è sul tavolo. La Non dimenticare		
36. La macchina è rotta. Anna deve cambiare		
37. Questo esercizio non è molto difficile. Luigi cerca di risolvere		
38. La mamma ha fatto gli gnocchi. Anna può li mangiare		
39. Il compito è finito. Il tutor lo deve controllarlo		
40. Paola è andata a scuola. Puoi la vedere in ufficio		
41. La mia amica è timida		
42. Il nonno sta dormendo. Non lo dobbiamo disturbarlo		
43. Ho scritto tutte le lettere. Vuoi le spedire?		
44. Mario è un ragazzo italiano		
45. Il negozio è aperta la mattina		
46. La televisione è noiosa. non guardare!		
47. Marco è appena arrivato alla stazione. Lo vado a prenderlo		
48. Ti ho comprato un vestito da sera. Lo Vuoi provarlo?		
49. La nonna sta dormendeo. La non disturbare		
50. I dottori sono antipatico		
51. Le mele sono tagliate. Ma non usare per la torta !		
52. Quella ragazza è Silvia. Vuoi la conoscere?		
53. I soldi sono arrivati. Devi li contare.		
54. I bambini ridono in classe. Li non sgridare!		
55. Anna arriva da Londra lunedi. Vado a trovare domani		
56. Il cane è arrabbiato		

57. La tavola è apparecchiata. Non roviniamo! 58. Il viaggio è stato lungo e noioso. Voglio lo dimenticare. 59. I piatti sono sul lavandino. Qualcuno deve lavare tutti 60. Ho cucinato la pasta al pesto. Maria la può mangiarla dopo. 61. I cani sono affamati. Li non toccare! 62. Gli studenti sono molto simpatico (gender incorrect) 63. Le macchine sono veloci 64. La camera dell'albergo è appena fatta 65. Il vaso è appena incollato. Lo non tocchiamo! 66. Ho comprato tre libri di Stephen King. Li posso leggerli in estate		

STIMULUS TASK 5

Oral Sentence Building Picture Task in Past Tense

List of Verbs on flashcards

Mangiare (to eat) guardere (to watch) scrivere (to write) nevicare (to snow) piovere (to rain) ascoltare (to listen) nuotare (to swim) correre (to run) entrare (to enter) grandinare (to hail) tornare (to come back) portare (to bring) nascere (to be born) vedere (to see) chiudere (to close) telefonare (to phone) preparare (to prepare) morire (to die) essere (to be) ridere (to laugh) lavorare (to work) partire (to leave) leggere (to read) andare (to go).

List of pictures as subjects on flashcards

A smiling child- a lady on the phone – three or more students reading – the rain- the snow –a stressed girl – a grandmother baking- a dead gold fish (dead) – a baby girl- a guy running- a woman swimming- little girls watching a movie-a library- a movie theatre

STIMULUS TASK 6

**Binary Written Acceptability Judgment Task (*passato prossimo* and *imperfetto)*

Directions: In the following paragraph you have different pairs of verbs in the past tense. For

each pair, choose the verb that you would use (you can circle the verb or check the verb). You

can read the paragraph as many times as you want or need.

Alle 10.00 di mattina **siamo arrivati/arrivavamo** all'aereoporto, **abbiamo aspettato/aspettavamo** per quasi un'ora I nostri bagagli, poi **siamo usciti/uscivamo** e **abbiamo preso/prendevamo** un taxi. Il tassista purtroppo **è / sarà** antipatico e arrogante. La città **è stata brutta/era** brutta. **C'è stato**/ **c'era** tantissimo traffico e **ha fatto/ faceva** un caldo terrible. **Ci siamo fermati/ci fermavamo** davanti ad un abergo, indecisi se entrare ma poi **ci siamo decisi/decidevamo** di noleggiare una macchina e di proseguire per un'altra città. La strada **è/sarà** silenzinosa ma non **si vede/si vedrà** molto perchè la macchina **è/sarà** davvero sporca. Verso le 15. 00 **abbiamo fatto/facevamo** una pausa, e poi **siamo ripartiti/ripartivamo** verso nord alle quattro del pomeriggio. **Abbiamo guidato/guidavamo** per altre tre ore e la strada **è sembrata/sembrava deserta**. **Siamo arrivati/arrivavamo** in un piccolo paesino. Il mio compagno di viaggio **ha detto/diceva**: "*Qui e' molto piu' bello*'!" **Cosi abbiamo lasciato/lasciavamo** la macchina e **siamo andati /andavamo** a vedere. Il paesino **è stato/era** molto tranquillo, **ci sono stati/ c'erano** fiori, negozietti che **hanno venduto/vendevano** frutta fresca e spezie e anche caffè. Che meraviglia il caffè che tutti **amano/ameranno**. La gente è uscita/usciva ad ogni ora del giorno, e infatti grandi e bambini **hanno camminato/camminavano** per la piazza e I marciapiedi, mentre **hanno parlato/parlavano** e **hanno riso/ridevano**. Nonostante il gran numero di persone, nel paese **ci sono state /c'erano** solo due pensioni. **Siamo andati/andavamo** a vederne una. I soldi mancano /macheranno sempre. La pensione **è stata / era** molto carina, semplice, ma pulita. **Abbiamo deciso/decidevamo** di restare li' per qualche giorno anche perchè siamo **stati/eravamo** stanchi di viaggiare.

STIMULUS TASK 7

Written Yes/No Acceptability Judgment on different uses of the verb *piacere*

Direction

Read out loud the following phrases and for each of them choose either Si or NO, where Si/YES

means "Yes, I would say that" and NO/NO, means "No, I would not say that". (Per ogni frase hai

due possibilità di scelta. Leggi la frase ad alta voce e indica "Si, lo userei" o "No, non lo userei")

1.	A me mi piace il cioccolato	SI	NO
2.	A Marco piace la pizza al prosciutto	SI	NO
3.	Le canzoni italiane piacciono molto a me!	SI	NO
4.	Alla maestra non piacciono I nuovi pennarelli	SI	NO
5.	Ti piacciono I biscotti italiani?	SI	NO
6.	Ci piacciono le commedie italiane	SI	NO
7.	A Lia le piace cantare	SI	NO
8.	A noi Italiani ci piace parlare fra amici	SI	NO
9.	Mi piace andare in Italia	SI	NO
10.	Vi piace l'Italia?	SI	NO
11.	La politica non ci piace	SI	NO
12.	Mi piace tantissimo	SI	NO
13.	Secondo me, non gli piace!	SI	NO
14.	Il clima piovoso non piace a voi	SI	NO
15.	Il mare mi piacciono molto	SI	NO
16.	A Maria e Anna piacciono correre fuori	SI	NO
17.	La cucina francese non piace a lei	SI	NO
18.	A noi piacciono I funghi porcini	SI	NO
19.	Leonardo piace fumare	SI	NO
20.	Vi piacciono poco il castello medievale	SI	NO
21.	Gli Italiano piacciono il caffe`forte	SI	NO
22.	Ai bambini gli piace sempre il gelato	SI	NO
23.	Gli spaghetti al dente non gli piace.	SI	NO
24.	Anna piace la torta di mele	SI	NO
25.	Sono sicura! La mamma piace il nostro regalo!	SI	NO

STIMULUS TASK 8

Semi-Free Speech Task as re-story telling

The researcher reviews with each subject the main characters of the story *Cappuccetto Rosso*

(Little Red Riding Hood):

- Cappuccetto Rosso   Red Riding Hood
- La nonna   Grandmother
- La mamma   Girls' mother
- Il lupo   The wolf
- Il cacciatore   The Hunter

Appendix B includes two questionnaires used to investigate what the subjects think and know about Italian language and culture in heritage context. Each questionnaire will take about 20-30 minutes. Questionnaire A is administered to the children and Questionnaire B is administered to the parents of the same family nucleus.

Questionnaire A

Subjects' Name   _____

Family nucleus   _____

Directions

The following questionnaire is used to investigate your opinion about your Italian language, for example how much Italian you think you know, how much Italian you speak it in a day or week and how you feel about it. The questionnaire will take about 20-30 minutes. There are some open questions but they don't require long answers. You can answer in English. Be honest and specific in what you say.

Subject information

The questionnaire also requires personal information, which won't be disclosed in the research. There won't any specific reference to names or to other personal information that will directly link to the subjects.

Your Age	_____
Your Gender	Female Male
Your Birth place	_____
Your Profession	(Indicate if you are a student and if you do any part time job)
Level of your Education	High school College degree Master PhD Other (indicate which one)
Languages you speak	Italian English Other (indicate which one)
Your Nationality	Italian American Dual citizenship Other (indicate)
Language of your education	Did you attend schools in: Italian English Both Italian and English Another language (indicate which one) _____
Your schools' country	Where did you attend your regular school? Indicate the country or the countries where you went to school._____
Education in your heritage language	Did you ever attend school in Italy? Yes/No If yes, for how long? _____ Did you ever attend school in Italian language? Yes/No If yes, for how long? _____
The country of origin of your parents	Mother is from _____Father is from _____
Is Italian your parents' First language?	Mother's first language is Italian Yes/No Father's first language is Italian Yes/No Both parents' first language is Italian is Yes/No
What is your parents' first language?	Mother's first language is _____ Father's first language is _____ Both parents' first language is _____
Language (-es) spoken in your family	Italian English French Spanish Other
Do you speak Italian now (at the time of the task)?	Yes/ No

Answer the following questions about your Italian culture

1.   Do you consider yourself as being of Italian culture? Yes/no. Why?

……

2.   Do you think that for being considered Italian you need to be fluent in it? Yes/No. Why?

……

3.   Rank "how much" your being of Italian culture defines your daily life, in a scale from 0 to

10. Zero being "*I am only American in what I speak, eat, dress and behave*" to ten being " *I can*

become Italian if I want, from the way I dress, I eat, I speak, interact with people"

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Answer the following questions about the languages you speak

1.   What do you consider to be your first language? Italian or English? Why?

……

2.   From what you remember, were you exposed to Italian language since birth? Yes/no.

3.   Do you remember any particular words or expression said at a very early age in Italian?

……

4.   Do you consider yourself a bilingual speaker? (A bilingual speaker is a somebody who

knows more than one language at high level of proficiency) yes/no. Why?

……

5.   What or who is the main source of input of your Italian?

       Mother / father/ sibling / grandparents/ TV/ radio /music/films/ teacher/classmates

6.   Rank the previous source of input from the most frequent to less frequent interaction

1._____2. _____3. _____4._____5._____6_____ 7.

_____ 8. _____ 9. _____ 10. _____

7.   Do you speak Italian outside your family?   Yes/no

8.   Do you have any group or place that allow you to speak Italian outside family? Yes/no, If

yes, indicate which one …………………………………………………………………………………………………….

9.   In what context do you use English and Italian? Check the appropriate box in the table

below

	Home	School	Work	Between siblings	Family member in US	Family member in Italy	Mom	Dad	Specific speakers other than parents
English									
Italian									

Answer the following questions about your Italian.

a)   From a very generic point of you, rank the knowledge of your Italian as opposed to the

one of English, on a scale from 0 to10. Zero meaning "*I don't understand a word and don't*

speak a word of Italian" and ten being "*I can express everything I want, when I want it, with*

whom and in any kind of circumstances".

Italian
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
English
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

b)   From a more specific point of view, rank your knowledge of Italian in its linguistic

components on a scale from 0 to 10:

---

1. Speaking: 0 being "*I don't speak* a word" and 10 being "*I can say anything I want*"
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

2. Listening: 0 being "*I don't understand* a word people tell me" and 10 being "*I can understand anybody Italian who speaks to me*"
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

3. Reading: 0 being " I can read basic single words" and 10 being "I can read an entire book in Italian"
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

4. Writing: 0 being " I can write few single words" and 10 being "I can write a diary, a job application and letters"
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

---

c) Do you think that you understand Italian more easily than how you speak it? Yes/no

d) Do you think that knowing a language means to know how to write it and read it? Yes/No.

e) How much Italian do you speak in a day? Think in terms of hours spent in speaking Italian

during approximately 16 hours of your daily routines.

| Less than an hour   1 hour   2 hours   3 hours   4 hours   half a day   all day long |

---

f) How much Italian do you speak in a week?

A day   2 days   3 days   4 days   5 days   6 days   7 days   just the weekend

g) Do you have any specific context, holiday or situation in which you only use Italian? Which

one?………

f) Tell me the very first associations that come to your mind about Italian language and Italian

culture.………

Questionnaire B

Parent's name   _____

Family Nucleus   _____

The following questionnaire serves the purpose to investigate your perception as parent and as a native speaker of Standard Italian, on the amount of Italian language used in your life abroad and in the life of your children. Specifically, the questionnaire is meant to understand what you think of your role of input provider. The questionnaire will take about 20-30 minutes. There are some open questions, but they don't require long answers. Please write your answers in Italian. Try to be honest and specific in what you say.

Personal information

The questionnaire requires some personal information, which will only be used to determine the characteristics of the group of mothers as subject of the present investigation. There won't be any specific reference to names or to other information that will directly link to the subjects

Your Age	Between 30 / 40 years old	Between 40/50	Between 50//60
	More than 60 years old		

Your Gender	Female Male
Your current Profession	Indicate what you have been doing since your children were born
Level of your Education	High school College degree Master PhD
Languages you speak	Italian English Other
Your Nationality	Italian American Dual citizenship Other
Your country of origin	Indicate where you are from _____
If Italian, in what region did you grow up?	Indicate the region in which you were born _____ Indicate the region or regions in which you lived _____
If Italian, what is the dialect spoken in your hometown?	Indicate your dialect _____ Did you speak it? Yes/No _____ If yes, do you still speak it ? Yes/No _____ If no, do you understand it? Yes/No _____
Your first language	Indicate the first language you speak _____
Your linguistic status	Did you grow up monolingually, meaning only speaking Italian in your family until the age of 18? Yes/ No If no specify other languages spoken in your family _____
Indicate when, where and why you learned English.	-When. Indicate your age at the time of first learning_____ - Where. Indicate the setting in which you learned it: College classes/ independent language classes / study abroad /moving abroad /other _____ - Why (indicate the reasons for your learning such as pleasure, work, relationship, other.) _____

Answer the following questions about your role as input provider

a)   Did you speak Italian to your children during their childhood?

      a. Yes, all the time

      b. Yes, but I often switched to English

      c. No, I spoke English

b) Do you feel you provided enough Italian to your children during their childhood, for them to being able to speak it? Yes / No. Why?

_____

c) Did you expect your children to answer you in Italian?

    a. Yes, I only wanted to hear Italian from them

    b. Yes, but I also accepted English many times

    c. No, it was enough for me that they understood me

d) Do you feel you have encouraged your children to speak Italian?

    a. Yes, I did everything I could

    b. Yes, but I could have done more

    c. No, I did not do enough

e) Do you think you should have always corrected your children's mistakes? Yes/No

f) Did you encourage your children to find opportunities of speaking Italian outside your home environment? Yes/No

If yes, what are the opportunities? _____

g) Do you think that the way your children speak Italian reflects the amount of time (over the years) that you spent talking to them in Italian?_____

h) If you have more than one child, do you think you spoke the same amount of Italian to all the children you have? Explain the differences

    a. I spoke the same amount of Italian for all of them

    b. I spoke more Italian with the elder children/son/daughter

    c. I spoke more Italian with the youngest children/son/daughter

Explain your reasons _____

Answer the following questions on the status of your children' Italian

a)   Do you think Italian is your children's first language? Yes/No

b)   What was your child's first word? (Indicate for each child their actual age)

Child 1   (Age _____)   _____

Child 2   (Age _____)   _____

Child 3   (Age _____)   _____

c)   Do you think your children know in equal amount both languages used in their life?

Yes/No.   If No, what language do you think it's predominant? _____

d)   Do you feel your children' Italian is like yours or not? Yes/ No

e)   Does it bother you that your children' Italian may not be like yours?

        a. Yes

        b. No

        c. I am not sure

f)   How does your children' Italian differ from yours? Check the part of language indicated

below and if you can, write down an example for each part.

Pronunciation   _____

Lexicon   _____

Sentences   _____

Word order   _____

Other (indicate what)   _____

All of the above   _____

b)   Can you provide a few examples of how your children speak in Italian (even from when they were little?……

c)   Do you think your children learned expressions or vocabulary that are specific from your hometown? Yes/No. If yes, can you provide examples? For example the use of the word "lapis (pencil)" in Toscana.……

d)   How important is for you that your children gain knowledge of writing and reading in Italian? Rank your opinion on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means "*I absolutely think it's irrelevant since they know how to speak*" and 10 is "*I think that we don't really know a language if we don't know how to write and read in it*".

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

e)   How would you rate your children' languages, English and Italian? On scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means: "*I don't understand a word and don't speak a word of Italian*" and 10 is: "*I can express everything I want, when I want it, with whom and in any kind of circumstances*".

Italian										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
English										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1

f) More specifically, rank your children's knowledge of Italian and English in each linguistic component on a scale from 0 to 10**:**

ITALIAN

1. Speaking: 0 being "*I don't speak* a word" and 10 being "*I can say anything I want*"

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

2. Listening: 0 being "*I don't understand* a word people tell me" and 10 being "*I can understand anybody Italian who speaks to me*"

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

3. Reading: 0 being " I can read basic single words" and 10 being "I can read an entire book in Italian"

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

4. Writing: 0 being " I can write few single words" and 10 being "I can write a diary, a job application and letters"

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

ENGLISH

Speaking: 0 being "*I don't speak* a word" and 10 being "*I can say anything I want*"

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

2. Listening: 0 being "*I don't understand* a word people tell me" and 10 being "*I can understand anybody who speaks English to me*"

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

3. Reading: 0 being " I can read basic single words" and 10 being "I can read books, magazines, anything in English"

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

4. Writing: 0 being " I can write few single words" and 10 being "I can write a diary, a job application, letters, poems etc."

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

CURRICULUM VITAE

Maria Teresa Bonfatti Sabbioni

Education

PhD	Linguistics, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (UWM). Dissertation: *Italian as Heritage Language spoken in the US*. Primary research focus: second language acquisition, bilingualism, heritage language studies and teaching methodology of a foreign language.
MA	Linguistics - Northeastern Illinois University (2012) Primary field: discourse analysis, sociolinguistics and ethnography of language.
MA	Teaching and promoting Italian language and culture- University of Ca' Foscari- Venice, Italy (2007)
	Primary field: Literature in a language class, Italian for specific purpose, Italian in intercultural perspective.
Diploma	Archivistica -Institute of Paleography, (2003) State Archive of Parma, Italy Primary field: Archivist Sciences and Diplomatic. Thesis: *A research into the Archive of the Modern Art Gallery* in Piacenza"- (L'Archivio della Galleria di Arte Moderna di Piacenza)
Laurea	Storia dell'Arte Medievale-Università degli studi di Pavia, Italy. (2001) (Evaluation by WES World Education Service as Master Degree). Primary field: Latin Language and Literature, History of art:

Certificate

06/2015	Online class of Jewish Paleography, Jewish Archive in Florence.
7/2013	SLI Summer Linguistic Institute, 2013, Ann Arbor, MI, awarded by UWM. Classes: Forensic Linguistics, Gestural documentation and Tools for Language documentation
9/2011 to 12/2012	Introduction to Paleography, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL
12/2007	Certificate of Completion: *Teaching Techniques through games for adult language learners* (Didattica ludica agli adulti), sponsored by the Italian Cultural center in Chicago and Ca' Foscari of Venice, Italy
06/2006	Certificate of Completion: Italian 397, *Special Topics in Italian Teaching with Technology and Media.* – De Paul University, Chicago, IL

Award/Grants

2014/2015 UWM   Chancellor's Award Grant from the Department of Linguistics

2013 UWM   Grant from the Department of Linguistics, UWM for the Linguistic Summer Institute (LSI), Ann Arbor, MI (housing and tuition)

2009/2011 NEIU   Merit tuition grants From the Department of Linguistics, Northeastern Illinois University (Fall 2009 and Summer 2010)

Languages

Italian   Native speaker

English   Near native (Speaking, Listening, Writing, Reading)

Latin   Very good (Classic & Medieval)

Teaching Experience

9/2012 to present   Diversity of Human Language (Ling.100) and Power of words (Ling. 210) TA and lecturer, in classroom and online, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

5/2017 to 8/2017   Italian lecturer for online summer courses, Marquette University, Wisconsin, through the platform D2L

9/2013 & 9/2014   Part Time Italian lecturer at Harold Washington, CCC

3/2012 to 5/2013   Instructor for the school at the Italian Cultural Center, *ItalCultura* and Curriculum developer for the bilingual children course Italian/English sponsored by *ItalideaMidwest.* (500 Michigan Avenue, Chicago IL)

3/2010 to present   Online Instructor, Graduate School ITALS (Teaching and Promoting Italian as a second language), University of Cà Foscari, Venice. Subjects of teaching: *Introduction to Linguisti*cs and *Introduction to Sociolinguistics*

9/2007 -12/12   Part time Italian lecturer at Oakton Community College, Skokie, Illinois, and advisor for the Italian club *Avanti tutta*!

4/2012-6/2012   Substitute teacher of Italian at Main South High School, Park Ridge, Illinois

9/ 2007 - 8/2011   Full-time Visiting Lecturer for the French and Italian Department, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL (Including Summer Classes for the School of Continuing Education)

9/2008 – 6/2009   AP Italian teacher for independent study students at North Shore High School, 310 Green Road Bay, Winnetka, IL

3/2006 - 6/2007   Part time Italian Lecturer at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

9/2005 - 3/2006	Full time Visiting professor of Italian and Latin at Ohio University, Athens, OH
5/2005 - 6/2005	Italian Instructor, Italian School of Language- Italian Consulate– Chicago, IL. Full immersion classes to adult employers at PSC company-Joliet-Chicago-IL
5/2004 – 6/2005	Exchange teacher of Italian for children, Language Stars School - Chicago, IL
7/2003 – 9/2003	Curriculum Facilitator for Concordia Language Villages, Lago del Bosco – Italian Camp, Bemidji, Minnesota - Developed the curriculum focused on daily lessons as well as activities related to Italian culture, history and society.

Other Experiences

3/2012-7/2012	Costumer service representative, forum moderator, translator, for the videogame company Sleepy Giant, Chicago, IL
6/2008 – to present	Translation of subtitles for the movies *Highlights*, and *Taco Mary* written and directed by Mary Novak, for the Salento International film festival.
	Translation of historical research paper for the Department of History, Northwestern University. Other translations jobs include *birth certificate documents, legal documents, private letters, school transcripts*
5/2009 – 8/2009	Coaching for the Italian language in the play *Light in the Piazza*, directed by Joe Leonardi, at the Marriott Theatre, Lincolnshire Drive, Lincolnshire, IL 60069
1/2008 – 1/2009	Researcher for the Art History Department at Northwestern University – Evanston- Illinois.
2003 – 2004	State Archive in Piacenza – Italy. Responsible for reordering and selecting XVI-XVIII century manuscripts, in particular, the ones related to one of the eldest families of the *Ducato di Piacenza*, (i.e. the medieval citadel of Piacenza.)

Presentations

5-6 December 2013, XII annual World Wide forum Education and Culture, Rome center of the University of Washington. Italian Folk Linguistics: Regional Variation, Perceptions, and Attitudes, Presenters: Sandra Liliana Pucci, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Biagio Aulino, University of Toronto, Mississauga Campus, Maria Teresa Bonfatti Sabbioni, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

30 May-2 June, 2013 Annual conference AATI (American Association of Teachers of Italian), in Strasbourg, France: L'influenza dell'inglese come L1 nell'ordine di acquisizione del passato prossimo e impefetto in Italiano come L2. (The influence of English in the order of acquisition of Italian past tense in second language learners)

7-9 May, 2011   International Center for Intercultural Exchange in Siena, Italy as part of Best Practices in Intercultural Competence Development: Intercultural activities in Italian language classes.

16 April, 2010   Eighteen Annual Student research and creative activities Symposium, Northeastern Illinois University, Italian BS: Berlusconi Silvio on Discourse Analysis. Metaphors used by the (ex) Italian Prime Minister (Sponsored by Professor Judy Kaplan)

7-11 April 2010 Cinema Symposium, Indiana University, Bloomington, In. Il Cinema in versione interculturale, sponsored by AATI

7-10 May 2009 Annual Conference AAIS (American Association of Italian Studies), ST. John's University, Manhattan Campus, 101 Murray street, New York city. Italian through You Tube, with Daniela Pozzi-Pavan

21-23 November 2008   Annual International ACTFL (American Association of Modern Languages). Orlando, FL,. "Italian through YouTube" with Daniela Pozzi-Pavan

April 2007/ April 2008 Annual event *Culture week,* organized by the Modern Languages Department at Oakton Community College, Skokie, IL: Italy and USA: an intercultural perspective through You Tube videos / A brief history of Mafia, followed by Italian movies (in Italian with English subtitles)

Published research

Pedagogical topics

Le Favole di Roberto Piumini insegnano a parlare italiano (*The fables from R. Piumini teaches how to speak Italian*). Bonfatti Sabbioni, M., T., De Bernardi, B. (2017). *Italica Wratislaviensia*, 8(1), 47–64. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.15804/IW.2017.08.03

Un approccio linguistico all'insegnamento dell'Italiano come lingua seconda, *(A Linguistic approach to the teaching of Italian as second language), ITALICA, Journal of Italian language and literature studies,* Volume 90, Number 1 (2013), Pp. 95-116

Booklet of language exercises based on Italian movies, as part of the Collection *Quaderni di Cinema*, by Guerra Edizioni- *La famiglia*, (E.Scola) ISBN: 978-88-557-0261-4, No. of pages 32, Language level: intermediate/advanced (B1/C1 European portfolio). http://www .guerraedizioni.com/cerca.cfm?autore=Bonfatti%20Sabbioni,Maria%20Teresa

Il cinema in Versione interculturale nella classe di Italiano (*Cinema in intercultural perspective in Italian language class*), ITALICA, Journal of Italian language and literature studies. Volume 86, Number 1, Spring 09. Pg. 105-122.

Attività di intercultura nella classe di lingua (*Intercultural activities in a language class)* In SELM (Scuola e Lingue Moderne), ELI, 4-5, XVL 2007, pp. 58-61 Journal of Modern Language teaching theories and practice

Historical topics

Dati di archivio (*A r c h i v a l d a t a*) in Bollettino Storico Piacentino, pp. 119-121 Tipleco, Piacenza, January – June 2005, anno C, fascicolo 1). Historical research about an archeological site in Piacenza-Italy

Medioevo (National History magazine) - 2003 La Memoria in Rete ("Memory online"). Article on

historical documents and interests (i.e. transcriptions of Medieval manuscripts), also available online at http://www1.popolis.it/abbazia/fonti.asp Medioevo (National history magazine) – 2001. Una Pieve nel Bosco ("The tiny church in the woods") Article on a newly found archeological site, which dates back to the VII century.

Children's book

Vocali Italiane, Italian Vowels: A Picture Book about the Vowels of the Italian Alphabet - Italian Edition with English Translation, Long Bridge Publishing, 2014, ISBN-13: 978- 1938712166

Associations

AATI   American association teachers of Italian

LSA   Linguistics Society of America

AAAL   American Association of Applied Linguistics