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From the Editor

It is a great pleasure to introduce readers to the first issue of this new journal, originating in a project of the Linguistics and Oriental Studies Section (*Sezione di Studi Linguistici e Orientali*) of the Department of Languages, Literatures and Intercultural Studies (LILSI), University of Florence and produced by the Department's Open Access Publishing Workshop (LabOA), directed by Prof. Beatrice Tóttösy. It follows on from the *Quaderni del Dipartimento di Linguistica dell'Università di Firenze* (1990-2012), published under the direction of Prof. Leonardo M. Savoia by the Department of Linguistics, where several of the people involved in the new journal previously worked.

Our journal, issuing from the linguistic and orientalist components of LILSI, reflects their scientific and research interests. It aims to provide a forum for scholarly debate concerning the analysis of the various aspects of language, open to the community of linguists and oriental scholars in Italy and abroad, and highlighting the contributions of younger scholars whose research is being and was supervised by members of the Department. The current issue well exemplifies these general aims and the range of thematic areas that the journal covers. The article by **Prof. Giuliana Giusti** and **Dr. Iulia Zegrean** on the structure of Istro-Romanian (a variety of eastern Romance spoken in the Istrian peninsula in Croatia, also named Vlaški or Žejanski) illustrates the decades-long collaboration between some of the some of the Florence linguists, including myself and Prof. Savoia, and linguists at Venice Ca' Foscari University, recently manifested in a shared interest in minority languages and languages in contact. Another strength of Florence linguistics is phonological research, specifically on varieties of Romance. **Dr. Rosangela Lai**, currently a post-doctoral researcher in Florence, contributes an article on word-initial geminates in Sardinian. She observes that it is uncommon for languages to display phonological contrasts between simplex and geminate obstruents, though Italian does. Sardinian displays an even rarer phonological contrast of this kind in word-initial position, which Lai insightfully analyzes in terms of the CVCV Theory of phonology.

Several of the linguistics contributions illustrate another interest thriving among the scholars who have been or are associated with Florence, namely first and second language acquisition, seen in a theoretical perspective. **Prof. Elisa Di Domenico** (Università per Stranieri di Perugia), who held a temporary

position in Florence at the beginning of her career, writes on the acquisition of English as a second language. She uncovers the very intriguing fact that genitival 's and copular 's being considered one and the same morpheme by her experimental subjects leads one to reconsider their (distinct or common) status theoretically. **Giulia Bellucci** and **Paolo Lorusso**, both students following the Linguistics curriculum of the PhD Program of the Department, write on first language acquisition. Lorusso considers the acquisition of the present perfect in children's Italian, confirming that the *Aktionsart* of verbs is relevant for the productivity of early auxiliaries; more specifically, and quite interestingly, the perfective reading is maximally difficult with unergatives, while it is favoured by the presence of an internal argument (in unaccusatives and transitives). Bellucci provides experimental data concerning both *Faire-Infinitive* causatives in 3 to 6 years olds, showing that by the age of four Italian speaking children accurately comprehend and produce the structure, including *causees* introduced by the *a* preposition. Her novel insight is that one should cease seeing the latter as the ditransitive object of the complex causative verb and start seeing it as more akin to other oblique subjects.

Prof. Benedetta Baldi and **Dr. Ludovico Franco** take us to the domain where language interfaces with discourse and communication. Prof. Baldi (from the sister DILEF Department) is responsible for the Florence unit of a PRIN project concerning delegitimization, on which Dr. Franco (Universidade Nova de Lisboa) collaborates. Their study of the "austere prose" of Palmiro Togliatti focusses on three speeches delivered in the period 1947-1952, bringing to light several different discursive strategies within the (de)legitimization spectrum. **Debora Ciampi**, currently a PhD student in Linguistics at the University of Pisa, addresses film dialogue in English and as dubbed in Italian in two cult teen movies of different decades. This allows her to bring into focus the complex interplay of the two languages, highlighting instances of creativity as well as of dubious rendering in translation. Classical translation studies, also applied to modern audiovisual media, are an important research area of English Language studies within the Department, specifically by Prof. John Denton.

The journal also hosts several contributions in the field of Oriental Studies. The work of **Andrea Scibetta**, currently a PhD student at the Università per Stranieri di Siena, provides a natural bridge with several of the preceding articles, being interested in Chinese students' acquisition of L2 Italian (as is Prof. Valentina Pedone among the members of our Department). The focus of Scibetta however is not on morphosyntactic processes, but rather on the textual and meta-textual competences of his chosen category of learners. His useful contribution to the ongoing theoretical debate consists of a corpus-based cross-sectional study investigating the development of Italian L2 textual skills in Chinese university students. With **Prof. Valerio Luigi Alberizzi** (Waseda University, Tōkyō) we move into the fascinating field of Sino-Japanese

hybridization, as seen in the history of the Japanese written language – a topic which well illustrates the philological research of our Japanese scholars, Prof. Ikuko Sagiya and Prof. Francesca Fraccaro. After reviewing existing literature, Alberizzi outlines the main differences between Japanized written Chinese (*waka kanbun*) and Sino-Japanese hybrid writing (*wakan konkōbun*) and surveys textual evidence showing how an embryonic form of Sino-Japanese hybrid writing existed before the twelfth century. **Dr. Romina Vergari**, currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Strasbourg, also addresses historical evidence pertaining to the Greek Version of the Hebrew Bible. She considers the word שֶׁטַח ‘shadow’ in Biblical Hebrew and its rendering in the Old Greek translation, considering the motivation that may have led the translators to choose the noun σκέπη rather than σκιά. This complex investigation, requiring familiarity with the Hebrew biblical text and Greek literary and non-literary sources is a good example of the kind of work in the lexical semantics of Biblical Hebrew for which our Dept. and especially Prof. Ida Zatelli are noted.

This brief presentation can hardly do justice to the single articles – but it should provide a useful introduction to the range of interests represented by members of the LILSI Dept. and its Linguistics and Oriental Studies section, which we aim to reflect in our journal, with contributions centered on theoretical linguistics and its applied dimension, on discourse and translation studies, and on the philological study of historically attested languages. I take the occasion to thank all the people who have worked for the success of this first issue and look forward to future issues, I hope for many years to come.

M. Rita Manzini

Some Considerations on the 's Morpheme in English: Acquisition and Theory^{*}

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Abstract

This article starts from the discussion of some data concerning the acquisition of English as a second language, which suggest that genitival 's and copular 's are considered one and the same morpheme by the experimental subjects. The 's= *is* Hypothesis is then examined throughout some relevant linguistic literature. The examination of arguments in favour and against it leads to the proposal that 's is indeed one and the same morpheme whose content is (third) person, in turn a quantificational feature which expresses denotation. In the final part of the paper extensions to plural -s and third person singular -s of lexical verbs are sketched.

Keywords: English, L2 Acquisition, Person, Possessive Constructions, 's Morpheme

1. Introduction

The relation between language acquisition and linguistic theory is a very tight one, at least since Chomsky (1965), which characterizes linguistic theory as a theory of language acquisition.

In this article, some second language (henceforth L2) acquisition data have been the input to my inquiry into linguistic theory.

The data in question come from the acquisition of the English 's morpheme by native speakers of Italian (Di Domenico 2013a and 2013b,

^{*} Parts of this research were presented at the Carthography Workshop held at the University of Ghent (June 2014), and in talks given at the Università di Siena (May 2014), Università per Stranieri di Perugia (June 2014), and at the Università di Firenze (April 2015). I thank the audience and two anonymous reviewers for useful comments and suggestions. All errors are of course my own.

forthcoming), in which experimental results suggest that subjects make the hypothesis in (1), which I will call henceforth The \acute{s} = *is* Hypothesis:

- (1) The \acute{s} = *is* Hypothesis
Is and \acute{s} are allomorphs of one and the same morpheme that can be merged DP internally and clause internally

In order to verify whether this hypothesis was either a wrong way to deal with the opacity of the *-s* morpheme in English or revealed a true property of this morpheme, after searching the relevant linguistic literature, I found traces of this hypothesis: den Dikken (1998a and 1998b, 1999), in the frame of a characterization of pre-nominal and post-nominal possessive constructions, assumes indeed an identity between the \acute{s} morpheme in English pre-nominal possessive constructions and the copula. Some additional data (namely L2 elicited productions, presented in Bennati and Di Domenico 2008) will receive an explanation in the light of The \acute{s} = *is* Hypothesis and of the tight relation assumed by den Dikken between pre-nominal and post-nominal possessive constructions.

I will furthermore examine a different hypothesis (Bernstein and Tortora 2005) which argues in favour of a non-identity between \acute{s} and *is*, suggesting that \acute{s} corresponds to the *-s* found in the verbal domain. The analysis of the arguments in favour and against The \acute{s} = *is* Hypothesis found in the literature will lead me to a proposal in which the basic insight of den Dikken's proposal is maintained albeit reformulated. My intermediate conclusions will be in favour of (1) with the additional assumption that the content of \acute{s} , and of the functional projection in which it is merged, is person.

In the final part of the paper I will speculate on the motivations for a person morpheme in \acute{s} Genitive Constructions, proposing that person expresses denotation, a necessary requirement of DPs and sentences. Then I will examine Manzini and Savoia's (2011a) analysis of the Latin/Romansh *-s* morpheme, characterized as expressing denotation as well. Finally I'll apply their characterization of denotation to English, reaching the conclusion that \acute{s} is not only *is* but also *-s*, though with a different content with respect to both den Dikken and Bernstein and Tortora.

In Section 2, I'll briefly review the experimental findings at the base of (1), while in Section 3 I'll review linguistic arguments and counterarguments for (1) found in the literature, concluding with my own analysis. In Section 4, I'll characterize the content of \acute{s} in the light of Manzini and Savoia's (2011a) characterization of denotation, while in Section 5 I'll draw some conclusions.

2. *What's \acute{s} ? A Grammatical Decision Task*

The English *-s* morpheme displays a peculiar morpho-phonological opacity. With graphic and/or phonetic variants, it may indicate the plural of nouns,

the third person singular of the present (simple) tense of lexical verbs as well as, in its contracted form, of *be* and *have*, and the genitive. One interesting question is whether it may be considered one and the same morpheme and, if so, what its underlying specification might be. Can acquisition data help with this question?

Let us start from first language acquisition data, as from seminal work by Brown (1973). In the frame of a characterization of the order of acquisition of 14 grammatical morphemes in three children, Brown (1973) interestingly shows that different kinds/uses of *-s* are acquired in a sequence correlated with MLU (Mean Length of Utterances).¹ In Table 1 (adapted from Brown's 1973 Table 38) the order of acquisition of various kinds of *-s*-related grammatical morphemes is shown (the values in the right column represent the average MLU in Eve, Adam and Sarah):

Table 1. Order of Acquisition of *-s*-Related Grammatical Morphemes (based on Brown 1973)

Plural	3.00
Possessive	6.33
Non contractable copula	6.50
Third person singular	9.66
Non contractable auxiliary	11.66
Contractable copula	12.66
Contractable auxiliary	14.00

These data reveal the interesting fact that the possessive and the (non contractable) copula are acquired at a very similar stage (6.33 and 6.50 respectively).²

A similar, though not identical, order of acquisition has been found by Dulay and Burt (1974) in L2 children with different L1s (Spanish and Chinese): the important difference, with respect to Brown's data, is that the copula is acquired earlier than the possessive.

¹ The Mean Length of Utterances expresses the average number of words in the utterances of a corpus collected in a given experimental session. In L1 acquisition studies this measure is generally considered more reliable and predictive than the age of the experimental subjects in the establishment of stages in the acquisition process.

² NB In comparing his findings with De Villiers and De Villiers (1973), Brown (1973) notes an extremely converging path with one interesting exception: in De Villiers and De Villiers the contractable forms of the copula and auxiliary are acquired earlier than the non contractable forms. Neither Brown nor De Villiers and De Villiers, as Brown acknowledges, can provide a satisfying explanation for this fact.

These data, however, do not help with the question of whether these are different homophonic morphemes or one and the same morpheme with different merging sites.

Some metalinguistic tasks, of course not suitable for very young acquirers, could possibly be more revealing in this respect. L2 acquisition with post-infancy onset can therefore be a convenient situation to study this question.

Di Domenico (2013b) submitted a written grammatical decision task to two different groups (the Pilot Study group and the Second Study group) of native speakers of Italian aged 10-12, beginners or near beginners of L2 English. Given the written nature of the task, two uses of the 's morpheme which are homophonic and homographic, i.e. totally nontransparent, were chosen: the case in which 's is a (contracted) form of BE and the case in which it is a genitive. Subjects were given 5 sentence patterns. In two of them the value of 's is third person singular of BE and in three of them it is genitive. The items contained no violations and were not ambiguous.³

The patterns are reported in Table 2:

Table 2. Experimental Materials

Value of 's	Pattern	Example
1.BE	Common noun + 's + PP	The car's in the garage
2.BE	Proper name + 's + PP	Jodie's in the garden
3.GV	Is + Subj+Poss Simple NP + 's + N	Is this Jack's tracksuit?
4.GV	Is + Subj+Poss Conjoined NP + 's +N	Is this Tom and Jenny's car?
5.GV	Proper name + 's + BE +AP	Rosie's dog is very friendly

Subjects were asked to decide whether the value of 's in each sentence was BE or Genitive.

Results revealed first of all an unexpectedly high number of non-target decisions, which was furthermore almost persistent in the experimental time span: 32.4 % in the first session of the Pilot Study, 27.8% in the second session of the Pilot Study which took place 6 months later. This looks consistent with Xanthos *et al.* (2011) findings concerning first language acquisition, i.e. that the morphological richness of a language is positively related to the speed of morphological acquisition, and so acquisition of opaque morphemes is delayed.

³ 50 subjects participated in each experimental study. They were all beginners or near-beginners of English aged between 10 and 12, attending the first year of Scuola Media. In the Pilot Study, the experimental group included 2 dyslexic subjects, while for 13 of the remaining 48 subjects Italian was a near native L2. In the Second Study, there were 2 dyslexic subjects, while for 10 of the remaining 48 subjects Italian was a near native L2. See Di Domenico (2013a and 2013b, forthcoming) for further details.

But what is more interesting is that results clearly revealed that the various patterns were not equally difficult for the subjects. In particular, in the Pilot Study a statistically significant difference for target decisions was found between Pattern 2 (the pattern with less target decision) and Pattern 3 (the pattern with more target decision): $\chi^2=5.4726$ $p=.05$; with Yates correction $\chi^2=4.5228$ $p=.05$.

In the Second Study, a statistically significant difference for target decisions was found between Pattern 5 (the pattern with less target decisions) and Pattern 3 (the pattern with more target decisions): $\chi^2=9.4044$ $p=.05$ (significant also at $p=.01$ and at $p=.005$).

What makes Pattern 2 and Pattern 5 significantly more difficult than Pattern 3?

The answer to this question cannot be found but assuming that subjects make the underlying assumption in (1), here repeated for convenience:

- (1) The 's = *is* Hypothesis
Is and 's are allomorphs of one and the same morpheme that can be merged DP internally and clause internally

In Pattern 2 and Pattern 5, 's is placed at what we may call, following Fodor (1998) a "choice point", i.e. a point in which it can be attached either into the currently parsed DP (and in this case it is interpreted as Genitive), or projecting IP (and in this case it is interpreted as the third person singular of BE in the present tense).

The two possible interpretations follow directly from two distinct parsing principles:⁴

- (2) Late Closure (Frazier and Fodor 1978)
 When possible attach incoming material into the constituent currently being parsed
- (3) Minimal Attachment (Frazier and Fodor 1978)
 Attach incoming material into the phrase marker being constructed using the fewest nodes consistent with the well-formedness rules of the language under analysis

Following (2), 's is interpreted as a genitive, following (3) 's is interpreted as the third person singular of BE in the present tense.

A similar problem does not arise for Pattern 3. With *Is* in the Comp layer, when subjects encounter 's, I° is filled by the copy of the moved *is*, and 's can only be interpreted as a genitive.

⁴ On the universality of these parsing principles, see Fodor (1998).

In assuming (1), subjects do nothing less than try to set the Merge properties of *'s*, i.e. assuming Rizzi's (2011) typology of parameters, they try to set a Merge parameter of this specific element of the functional lexicon. But is this setting so weird or does it bring to light a real property of *'s*?

Interestingly, traces of The *'s = is* Hypothesis can be found in the relevant literature, and the next Section is dedicated to them.

3. On the *'s = is* Hypothesis

3.1 den Dikken (1998a and 1998b, 1999)

According to den Dikken (1998a and 1998b, 1999)⁵, what underlies all possessive constructions is a structure in which the possesum is the subject of a dative small clause whose head takes the possessor as its complement:

- (4) [_{SC} POSSESSUM [_{PP} P_{dat} POSSESSOR]]

In prenominal possessive constructions the (dative/possessor) predicate undergoes movement to an A-specifier position just outside the small clause. The target of this movement (which is a Predicate Inversion process) is a functional projection FP outside the dative small clause. In (5a) and (5b) (adapted from den Dikken 1998a) the base and the derived structure are respectively shown:

- (5) a. [_{DP} D [_{AgrP} Agr [_{FP} Spec [_F F [_{SC} POSSESSUM [_{PP} P_{dat} POSSESSOR]]]]]]
 b. [_{DP} D [_{AgrP} Agr [_{FP} [_{PP} t_k POSSESSOR]_i [_F F + P_k [_{SC} POSSESSUM t_i]]]]]]

The derivation in (5) is assimilated to the one occurring in English Double Object Constructions, as (6b), assumed to be syntactically derived from the prepositional dative constructions (6a) via an instance of Predicate Inversion targeting the dative PP:⁶

- (6) a. Imogen gave the book to Brian
 b. Imogen gave Brian the book

⁵ But see den Dikken (2006 and 2014) for a partially different view.

⁶ On the evidence of the fact that it can trigger Locative Inversion, the dative PP is analyzed as a small – clause predicate:

- (i) a. To Brian was given the book
 b. To Imogen was sent a postcard
 c. To Amnesty International was donated the bulk of his estate

In prenominal possessive constructions (as well as in English Double Object Constructions), the dative preposition has a null allomorph P_* which incorporates into P^0 , making its PP the closest goal for an outside probe. The outside probe, in turn, overtly attracts the PP yielding inversion of subject and predicate.

The author is prompted by the need to account for the dative morphology on Hungarian dative possessor constructions as (7) (where does the dative morphology come from?), at the same time giving a similar, movement derivation (*contra* Szabolcsi 1983 and 1994), of Hungarian nominative possessor constructions as (8):

- (7) Mari-nak a kalap-ja
 Mari-DAT the hat-POSS.3sg

- (8) a Mari kalap-ja
 the MariNOM hat-POSS.3sg

den Dikken also wants to account for some complex anti-agreement facts found in Hungarian possessive constructions, as in (10) and (11):

- (9) a. a nő mond-ja. . .
 the woman say-3sg
 'The woman says. . .'
 b. a nők mond-jak. . .
 the women say-3pl
 'The women say. . .'

- (10) a. a nő kalap-ja
 the woman hat-3sg
 'The woman's hat'
 b. a nők kalap-ja
 the women hat-3sg
 'The women's hat'

- (11) a. a(z) (ö) kalap-ja
 the (he/she) hat-3sg
 'His/her hat'
 b. a(z) (ö) kalap-juk
 the (he/she) hat-3pl
 'Their hat'

In Hungarian possessive constructions (but not in clauses, see 9) we can observe an asymmetry: while with pronominal possessors the agreement relationship between the possessor and the possessum shows up on the possessum (11b), with non-pronominal possessors there is anti-agreement in number

(10).⁷ This parallels, according to den Dikken (1998) the situation found in Welsh VSO clauses described by Rouveret (1991). Rouveret's account for these anti-agreement facts is the following: in VSO clauses the subject does not raise as high as AgrSP, so the necessary spec/head configuration is not met, and agreement is not realized. Agreement with pronouns is realized as follows: since pronouns are not DPs, but NumPs, their head raises to AgrS and agreement is thus realized. From this den Dikken concludes that Hungarian (nominative) possessive constructions are like Welsh VSO clauses. The difference between clauses and possessive constructions in Hungarian is accounted for assuming that Agr in possessive constructions, contrary to Agr in clauses, has no EPP feature, so its AgrP has no spec. Full nominal possessors in Hungarian raise either to Spec,FP (nominative possessors) or directly to spec,DP (dative possessors). In the case of pronominal possessors, Num-to Agr raising results in agreement, the pronoun itself staying in Spec,FP.

In shifting to English, the claim is made that in English the same anti-agreement facts are observed, hence the same underlying derivation is to be assumed for English 3-Genitive ("Saxon Genitive" in den Dikken) constructions.

In English Saxon genitival constructions we observe the same full DPs/pronouns asymmetry in anti-agreement found in Hungarian possessive constructions, with the same difference between possessive constructions and full clauses:

- | | | | |
|---------|-----------------|---------|--------------------------|
| (12) a. | the man's ill | (14) a. | the man's illness |
| b. | the men are ill | b. | the men's illness |
| (13) a. | he's ill | (15) a. | he's (→his) illness |
| b. | they're ill | b. | they're (→their) illness |

While Hungarian does not spell-out F in possessive nominal constructions,

- (16) English overtly signals the presence of the complex F-node by realizing it in the form of the 'genitival marker', now to be viewed as an incarnation of the copula.
(den Dikken 1998a: 103)

The "genitival marker" is a copular element on a par with the copula seen in sentences. The English facts also confirm the idea that possessors end up to the left of the noun phrase that they possess as a result of a syntactic movement operation of the Predicate Inversion type.

⁷ As (11b) shows, however, the pronoun itself is not in the plural form. This anti-agreement fact is accounted for by den Dikken assuming that -k raises to Agr creating the formative -juk thus severing the pronoun of -k-.

- (17) Predicate Inversion is contingent on the presence of FP; and in English we can actually see the presence of FP in the obligatory emergence of a copular element (the 'Saxon genitival marker') in the prenominal possessor construction.
(*Ibidem*: 103)

den Dikken's proposal is thus perfectly in line with the hypothesis that the experimental subjects examined in Di Domenico (2013a, 2013b, and forthcoming) make, namely The 's = *is* Hypothesis.

His analysis of possessive constructions, furthermore, establishes an interesting relation between post-nominal and pre-nominal possessive constructions which can help explaining some L2 elicited production data collected by Bennati and Di Domenico (2008). In the frame of a study meant to elicit English 's Genitive Constructions by native speakers of Italian, Bennati and Di Domenico (2008) collected data as the ones below:⁸

- (18) Q. Which bag does Jane want?
A1. The bag is Mary
A2. Bag Mary Poppins
A3. Is bag a Mary Poppins
- (19) Q. Which flowers does Katrina want?
A. Flowers the Brom
- (20) Q. Where are the belts?
A. The belt is Katrina is on the table; the belt is Brom is on the bed

In these productions we can observe some facts which appear significant in the light of den Dikken's analysis of possessive constructions:

- a. *is* is used in the place of 's (as in 20 and possibly in 18A1 and 18A3)
- b. In all examples the possessor is seen to the right of the possessum, though *of* is not present.⁹

⁸ Bennati and Di Domenico (2008) studied the acquisition of English 's genitive constructions by native speakers of Italian attending Scuola Media (10-14) through an elicitation task with no L1 linguistic material

The main findings of this study suggest that:

a) there is a stage in which possessor movement only is observed

(i) *Mary bag*

b) then 's is inserted, but in many cases the output is

(ii) *The Alison's cat*

c) *of* constructions are attested

(iii) *The bag of Mary*

In Di Domenico and Bennati (2008) productions like (18), (19) and (20) were put under the rubric 'Non target productions' or 'Attempts of *of* Constructions'.

⁹ We will come back to (19) in Section 4 (footnote 20).

As for (18A3), furthermore, we can observe a “base generated” possessive construction à la den Dikken, *a* being the dative preposition in Italian. Finally, den Dikken’s analysis of post-nominal possessive constructions with respect to pre-nominal ones suggests that the widespread use of “*of* Constructions” (see footnote 8) may not just be due to transfer from the subjects’ L1.

den Dikken’s analysis, however, has been questioned by Bernstein and Tortora (2005). Their precise analysis and their elegant arguments led den Dikken (2006) to make one step backwards. The author says indeed:

- (21) Bernstein and Tortora (2005) have confronted this approach to ‘Saxon Genitives’ with some nontrivial questions that should lead one to rethink parts of the original analysis. I will leave the specifics of the analysis of the myriad surface manifestations of possessive constructions for a future occasion.
(den Dikken 2006: 309, fn. 99)

Therefore, I think it is worth examining Bernstein and Tortora’s nontrivial questions.

3.2 Bernstein and Tortora (2005)

The authors suggest that, at least for English, the word-final marker on possessive pronouns should not be assimilated to the word-final possessive marker of full DPs (Bernstein and Tortora 2005: 1225): only the former corresponds to the copula.

The *’s* of *Mary’s* book or of *a book of Mary’s* is not a copula, but rather a (singular) number marker (Kayne 1989 and 1993) akin to that found in the verbal domain (*she eats*). Plural possessive DPs (*the kids’ mother*) are marked with a null plural morpheme as in the verbal domain (*she eats* vs. *they eat* ∅).

Possessive pronouns are morphologically complex, consisting of a nominative pronoun and the endings *-s* or *-r* which correspond to the copular forms *is* and *are*. The agreement between pronoun and copula is triggered in a spec-head configuration in a DP-internal agreement projection, FP.

Pronouns are NumPs. The copula is the head of an FP projection. The NumP pronoun moves from the complement position to the spec position of the FP and then up to the spec of DP, as shown in (22):

- (22) The internal structure of possessive pronouns
 [DP D [FP F [NumP
 -s/-r they/he
 ↑ ↑ |

The *’s* of *Mary’s* book or of *a book of Mary’s* occupies an Agr head (as for Kayne 1993), whose spec is occupied by the full DP possessor (*Mary*), as shown in (23). The complement of this Agr head is, for Bernstein and Tortora

(2005), an FP projection whose spec may be occupied by possessive pronouns (i.e. by the entire structure in 20):¹⁰

- (23) [DP D [AgrP Agr [FP [F [QP/NP
(of) Mary 's their/his friends

The authors argue in favour of a distinction between Full DPs and pronominal possessives on the basis of two main arguments: First because there is a tighter relation between the *s* of *his* and the *s* of *Mary's*, second on the basis of coordination facts (as shown in 24 and 25 below, taken from Bernstein and Tortora 2005: 1230) that suggest that the syntax of full DPs and pronominal possessives must be distinguished:

- (24) a. Jack and Jill's house
b. *we and their house (cf. our and their house)
(25) ?* my and Jack's house (cf. * Jack's and my house)

The authors however mention that colloquial English has a strategy to allow coordination of a pronoun and a DP, as in (26):

- (26) me and Jack's house

For some reason, the authors acknowledge, "a 'default' accusative may be used as a strategy for coordination of pronouns and DPs" (Bernstein and Tortora 2005: 1230).

Furthermore, Bernstein and Tortora (2005) argue that den Dikken's analysis crucially relies on the exclusive consideration of irregular plurals (*the children; the women; or the men* as in 12b above). In regular plurals, as is well known, 's cannot appear, as (27) shows:

¹⁰ A problem is however the characterization of partitive genitives that involve a possessive pronoun, such as:

(i) A friend of theirs

According to Bernstein and Tortora (2005) in this case the pronoun raises to the spec of the Agr projection picking up the 's sitting in its head. See Bernstein and Tortora (2005: 1233-1235) for three proposals on the trigger of this movement. A further problem raised by (i) is that if 's is a singular number marker (as claimed by Bernstein and Tortora, following Kayne 1989 and 1993), then it should not follow a plural pronoun. At the end of their paper (Bernstein and Tortora 2005: 1240) the authors propose that the 's of *theirs* should not be interpreted as a singular agreement marker but rather as default agreement. In 4.3 I will propose a different account for the -s in possessive forms like *theirs, yours*, which appear in partitive genitives and other predicative environments.

- (27) a. * the kids's mother

The authors argue that this is in favour of their treatment of 's as the equivalent of the -s found in the verbal domain, which appears in the singular form only, while in the plural a 'Ø' morpheme is found:

- (28) a. she knows
b. they know Ø

The same 'Ø - -s' alternation found in the verbal domain is repeated in the nominal domain with full DP possessors:

- (29) a. the boy's mother
b. the kids' Ø mother

The absence of 's after regular plural possessors, they argue, cannot be due to phonological or morphological reasons.¹¹ Bernstein and Tortora (2005) found indeed that for many speakers (30b) is worse than (30a):

- (30) a. the kid from New York's mother
b. ?* the kids from New York's mother

In (30b) the plural marker is separated from the possessive marker by other material, so the fact that it is felt deviant cannot be explained on phonological or morphological grounds, but is instead consistent with a characterization of 's as a singular number marker.

But the fact that irregular plurals can be marked with 's, as shown in (31) below remains a problem for Bernstein and Tortora's (2005) analysis:

- (31) the children's

As the authors acknowledge:

- (32) Of course the question still remains as to why 's is compatible with irregular plurals.
(Bernstein and Tortora 2005: 1236, fn. 35)

¹¹ As already noted by Zwicky (1987), there are cases where a double s is permissible:

(i) Terence's mother

Zwicky (1987) proposes therefore the constraint in (ii):

(ii) A double s is permissible if the first [s] does not correspond to a morpheme

Aronoff and Fuhthop (2002) propose instead a "monosuffix constraint" that bars more than one inflectional suffix in English.

3.3 *My Analysis*

I do agree with Bernstein and Tortora's (2005) observation that the word-final marker on possessive pronouns should not be assimilated to the word-final possessive marker of full DPs, departing from den Dikken (1998a). The very same observation, however, leads to the conclusion that 's cannot be assimilated to the verbal marker -s either. Like *is*, and unlike -s, we can consider 's an independent functional formative, an f-morph, in Borer's (2005) terminology. Borer (2005) distinguishes f-morphs (free, independent functional morphemes, such as *the*, *will*) from (phonologically abstract) head features (e.g. <pst> for past tense), the latter requiring head movement, the former blocking it. In a footnote, she adds a third category, bound f-morphs (to which possibly, in my opinion, -s belongs) characterized as follows:

- (33) It is extremely plausible that f-morphs come in two varieties (morphologically bound and morphologically free, following traditional morphological terminology) and that the absence of (head-, my note) movement is the property of the latter.

(Borer 2005: 32, fn. 3)

Within this typology of morphemes, we can consider 's a clear f-morph. That it is independent, is confirmed by the fact that it follows so called "Group Genitives":

- (34) Peter and John's book

Furthermore, it triggers Possessor Movement (as *is* may trigger Predicate Inversion) i.e. XP movement, and not head movement. These facts lead to the conclusion that 's can be assimilated to *is* but not to the verbal marker -s.

These same facts also lead us to the conclusion that 's is not the same thing as the suffixal element in possessive pronouns, which, as underlined by Bernstein and Tortora (2005), has a singular (-s) and a plural (-re) form. But from this point on, my story goes differently from the one given by Bernstein and Tortora (2005).

Let's start from the consideration that in inflectional languages (such as English), as is well known, there is not a one-to-one relation between inflectional morphemes and phi-features: namely a single inflectional morpheme is the spell-out of a conglomerate of features. Thus, the third person singular copula *is* is specified for, at least, two features: number and person.

A copula is included both in English possessive pronouns (in the forms -s/-r, marked for person and number, singular and plural respectively) and in possessive full DPs (in the unique form 's unmarked for number, but marked for person, namely third).

Crucially, in possessive full DPs, and not in possessive pronouns, the copula is inserted derivationally. Possessive pronouns are taken from the lexicon as they are, i.e. with an incorporated copula.¹² This is my way to account for the “tighter” relation in pronouns between *-s* and the base noted by Bernstein and Tortora (2005). The (lexically incorporated) copula in personal pronouns is specified for person as well as for number (and it consequently comes in two distinct forms), the (derivationally inserted) copula in full DPs is specified for person only. What triggers possessor movement with pronominal possessors is an F^0 with a null spell-out. This is in turn related to the fact that pronouns are (intrinsically) marked for person (Benveniste 1966; Bianchi 2006).

One important consequence of the view that the content of *ẓ* is third person, is that there is no anti-agreement with full DPs. Here I depart again from den Dikken, and I am aware that this undermines one of his original arguments in favour of his treatment of possessive constructions and of the idea that *ẓ* is a copula. This argument, however, was not the only one (see 3.1 above).

Anti-agreement postulations, in my opinion, are problematic in general, because what we really observe is a number non-agreement (which can be accounted for assuming that number is not specified) but a person agreement is maintained.

If I am on the right track, that fact that we have:

(35) your, their

but not:

(36) *the children'r

is predicted and The *ẓ* = *is* Hypothesis can be maintained.¹³

As for the examples in (27) and (28) (i.e. the fact that a possessive pronoun cannot be coordinated with a DP within a possessive DP) I argue that this impossibility is due to the fact that a double specification of the same element (a person feature in my analysis) is present. The fact that a non-possessive pronoun is instead compatible (as 29 shows) supports this conclusion.

Finally, a problem for my analysis remains (30b), since one is forced to agree with Bernstein and Tortora (2005) in assuming that the reason for its deviance cannot be purely phonological or morphological. I will come back to this issue in 4.3 noting for the moment that although the reason cannot be phonological or morphological, this does not necessarily mean that the reason is incompatibility between a plural and a singular marker (as predicted by their

¹² We intend these considerations in synchronic terms only.

¹³ On (35) and (36) see Bernstein and Tortora (2005: 1226).

analysis of 's as a singular number marker). As we have seen (see footnote 10 above), there is no such an incompatibility in cases like (37):

- (37) A friend of theirs

4. Denotation and the -s Morpheme

4.1 On why 's = is and a Person Feature in 's Genitive Constructions

In the previous Section we have provided arguments in favour of The 's = is Hypothesis, further arguing that the content of 's is a (third) person feature. Pursuing this view, an initial consideration suggests that the content of *is* is (third) person, too. This causes no problems, a person feature being part of subject-verb agreement as generally accepted. Why, then, a person feature in 's Genitive constructions?

Speculating on Benveniste's Generalization (38), Di Domenico (1994 and 1997) assumes the principle in (39):

- (38) Le verbe est, avec le pronom, la seule espèce de mots qui soit soumise à la catégorie de la personne.

(Benveniste 1966: 225)

- (39) The Denotation Principle

Every lexically expressed argument (be it a noun phrase or a sentence) must be denoted. The expression of denotation is the person feature.

(Di Domenico 1994: 5; 1997: 145)

A person feature is always expressed in pronominal DPs and in tensed sentences.¹⁴

In non-pronominal DPs, the determiner (or raising to D for proper names, as in Longobardi 1994) performs this role: making the nominal expression argumental (Longobardi 1994) or referential (Rizzi 1986: 543: "An NP is referential only if it has the specification of person (and number)") or, in Higginbotham's (1983 and 1985) terms, discharging its theta role.

The proposal entailed in (39) is that the person feature (correlated to the T feature, Guéron and Hoekstra 1992) in subject-verb agreement discharges the Eventive variable (in terms of Higginbotham 1983) of the sentence.¹⁵

¹⁴ As noted by Guéron and Hoekstra (1992) this specification, together with the tense specification, is missing in small clauses. Small clauses are however embedded in tensed clauses (Di Domenico 1994). A small clause, as we have seen in 3.1, is also embedded in possessive constructions (den Dikken 1998a, 1998b, 1999, and 2006).

¹⁵ A tensed verb contains a person specification which is one and only one for each event described in the sentence. The event plus its arguments constitutes the predicative

If so, I'd like to argue that the person/denotation feature in English 's Genitive Constructions is expressed by 's=*is*, which, coherently, is in complementary distribution with the determiner, in 's Genitive Constructions the possessum (i.e. the head noun) being determinerless.

4.2 *The Latin and Romansh -s Ending as Denotation*

Manzini and Savoia (2011a) analyze the Latin *-s* ending (in traditional terms, a case ending) as expressing denotation.¹⁶ Their basic assumption is that the same structures and categories underlie both syntax and morphology. At the syntactic level, predicative elements (nouns and verbs) project argumental positions. At the morphological level, the lexical base expresses predicative content while the inflectional elements that combine with it fix the denotation of its arguments. The inflection of the verb is the verb-internal realization of the EPP argument of the sentence. The nominal class inflection assigned to an N position corresponds to the internal argument of the noun. In Romance, this is not sufficient (at least in the singular form of count nouns) and must be supported by syntactic level operators associated with the D position (i.e. determiners, as for Higginbotham 1985). In a case marking language like Latin, the case layer is specialized for the satisfaction of argument roles specified by the superordinate predicate.¹⁷

The authors assume that the Latin *-s* ending (traditionally indicating case) is associated with denotational operator properties, sharing with Chomsky (2008) and Pesetsky and Torrego (2007) the idea that case cannot be a primitive feature of grammar.

They observe that *-s* appears in different environments. Just limiting our attention to the (non- neuter) III class, *-s* occurs in the nominative singular, in the genitive singular, and in the nominative and accusative plural, as shown in (40) taken from Manzini and Savoia (2011a: 154):

- (40) a. Canis currit
 dog.SG.NOM runs
 'The dog runs'

kernel of the sentence. Interestingly, as noted by Di Domenico (1997), Chomsky (1995) interprets the extensional clause of the Extended Projection Principle (EPP), i.e. the one that states that every sentence must have a subject, as checking of a D feature.

¹⁶ See also Manzini and Savoia (2010 and 2011b).

¹⁷ In languages without case functional categories such as Q, D etc. perform the same role, i.e. concur to the satisfaction of superordinate predicates.

- b. *canis cauda*
dog.SG.GEN tail
'The dog's tail'
- c. *Canes* *currunt/ video*
dogs.PL.NOM/ACC run/ I see
'The dogs run / I see the dogs'

The fact that *-s* shows up as a plural (as in 40c), leads the authors to postulate that the content of *-s* can be identified with Q, plurality being a quantificational property. This seems in contradiction with the occurrence of *-s* as a singular (40a and 40b). This apparent contradiction is solved as follows. Q elements have scope properties (Pesetsky 1985): the plural reading of a Q element like *-s* corresponds to a noun internal scope of quantification; the singular reading of *-s* corresponds to a scope wider than the noun.

As for the genitive (as 40b), Manzini and Savoia argue that it roughly corresponds to a quantificational inclusion relation: the scope of *-s* as a so-called genitive specification is the entire noun phrase: "the genitive argument is interpreted as 'including' the referent of the head noun" (Manzini and Savoia 2011a: 156).

In the singular nominative (as 40a), the scope of *-s* is sentential: agreement with the finite verb characterizes the nominative context, and the author's proposal is that quantificational specifications are required to satisfy this syntactic context, involving the EPP argument. *-s* as a Q morphology is specialized for the satisfaction of the syntactic EPP (= D) environment. In the last part of their paper, Manzini and Savoia (2011a) analyze the Romansh *-s* in the variety of Vella (Lumnesia Valley, Grisons).

Interestingly, in this variety, *-s* (that appears to be a nominative ending for the masculine singular) characterizes masculine singular adjectives and participles in predicative contexts, but not in attributive contexts:¹⁸

- (41) a. *kwai om ai kwərt-s*
that man is short- M.SG
'That man is short'
- b. *in om kwərt*
a man short
'A short man'

(adapted from Manzini and Savoia 2011a: 159-160)

¹⁸ The *-s* inflection also realizes the plural both for nouns and adjectives in the masculine and in the feminine in this variety.

In contexts like (41a), *-s* is interpreted as supplying the quantificational/definite closure for the argument slot that the adjectival base is associated with. As Manzini and Savoia argue:

- (42) Embedding in a noun phrase puts predicative bases in the scope of the D (definite) or Q (quantificational) closure provided by the determiners and quantifiers of the noun phrase. In predicative contexts, however, such a closure is not provided at the syntactic level; the *-s* therefore supplies it at the morphological level.
(Manzini and Savoia 2011a: 161¹⁹)

4.3 *Back to English*

Let's now go back to the main topic of this paper, i.e. The *'s = is* Hypothesis formulated for English. At the end of Section 3, I have characterized the content of *'s = is* as person. At the beginning of the present Section, I have further argued (following Di Domenico 1994 and 1997) that person expresses indeed denotation, thus accounting for the presence of a DP internal as well of a sentence internal person feature. If we understand denotation as a quantificational property with different scopes, along the lines of Manzini and Savoia (2011a), we can characterize the “arch-morpheme” *'s = is* as follows:

- “genitival” *'s* expresses a Q feature with noun phrase scope
- sentential *is* expresses a Q feature with sentential scope

However, we can go even one-step forward. The same analysis (*modulo* a different characterization in terms of the morphological differentiation postulated by Borer 2005, see 3.3) can be applied indeed to the *-s* of the verbal domain, understood as expressing a Q feature having, like for *is*, a sentential scope.

In addition, along the same lines, the *-s* indicating plural on nouns, can be characterized as expressing a Q feature with a scope internal to the noun.

This has the further advantage of explaining why plurals in English can be bare, if, as assumed by Manzini and Savoia (2011a), determiners in languages without case markers perform the same role of saturating the noun's argument.²⁰

¹⁹ The same distribution is observed by Manzini and Savoia (2011a) for morphemes with a different phonetic matrix, such as (–) *le* in the Urbino variety, which includes the Romance definiteness morpheme *l* and coincides with the definite determiner and with the object clitic: adjectives and participles in predicative (but not in attributive) contexts are marked with *–le*.

²⁰ The L2 production in (19), here repeated for convenience, is also relevant in this respect:
(i) Flowers the Brom
Here we see a determiner used in the place of *'s* (plus the absence of possessor movement).

Finally, the *-s* that appears in possessive forms like for instance *yours* in (43a), can be analyzed as the *-s* in predicative adjectives in the Romansh variety of Vella:

- (43) a. That book is yours.
b. Your book.

The *-s* in (43a) (a predicative context) provides the Q closure for the argument slot that the (adjectival) possessive base is associated with. Along similar lines, we can analyze the *-s* of partitive genitives like (37), here repeated for convenience in (44a):

- (44) a. A friend of theirs.
b. Their friend.

As in the Vella variety described by Manzini and Savoia (2011a), *-s* appears only in predicative contexts (like 43a and 44a).²¹ In (43b) and (44b), the possessive form is embedded in a noun phrase containing the necessary Q closure, and in these environments a double *-s* (as appearing in predicative contexts) is not possible, as we have seen in (27) and (30b) here repeated for convenience:

- (27) * the kids's mother

- (30.b) ?* the kids from New York's mother

For these cases, in 3.3 I agreed with Bernstein and Tortora (2005), that a phonological as well as a morphological account are insufficient to rule out a double *-s*: the reason, however, is not a feature mismatch as they propose, but is to be found in the fact that these examples contain a double DP- internal denotation and therefore are ungrammatical, exactly as in (25), which is, as we noted, worse than (26):

- (25) ?* my and Jack's house (cf. * Jack's and my house)

- (26) me and Jack's house

Alternatively, this production can be seen as having a determiner in the place of *of*. See den Dikken (2006) for the idea that *of* is a nominal copula.

²¹ A post-nominal possessive construction as (44a) is indeed a predicative context as we have seen in 3.1 (see in particular the structures in (4) and (5a).

If this line of reasoning is correct, then, it is possible to say that in English there is one and only one arch-morpheme *-s* (with its variants *is* and *'s* and the phonetic variants described by Pinker and Prince 1988) with different merge possibilities, whose specification is denotation, which is in turn a Q feature with different scopes:

- noun phrase scope (in *'s* Genitive Constructions and possessive pronouns in attributive contexts)
- sentential scope (as *is*, the verbal ending *-s*, or the *-s* in possessive pronouns in predicative contexts)
- noun internal scope (the plural of nouns)

This morpheme can in some specific cases (i.e. the copula paradigm, instantiated also in pronouns, or the verbal domain) alternate with other morphemes (such as *am* or *are*, or a \emptyset morpheme in the verbal paradigm).

Variation may also depend on whether it is realized as a free or bound *f*-morph (or as a head morpheme) lexically or derivationally inserted.²²

However, this entails no changes in its intrinsic value, which remains one and the same (even when it may alternate with a so-called “plural” form) and is not, as originally claimed by Kayne (1989) singular number, but rather denotation.

Whether the English *-s* (with its variants *is* and *'s*) has the same origin of the Latin “case” morpheme *-s*, or not, I am not able to tell (though it is perhaps an inquiry worth pursuing), but I assume it can be given an analysis along the same lines traced by Manzini and Savoia (2011a) for the latter.

This furthermore strengthens the idea that what is expressed as “nominative case” in case-marking languages can be expressed by subject verb agreement in non-case-marking languages.

5. Conclusion

In this article I started from some English L2 data which suggest that the kids that were examined made what I have called The *'s*= *is* Hypothesis. I then found that this hypothesis has also been made by a linguist (namely den Dikken) but has been argued against by other linguists (namely Bernstein and Tortora), who claimed that *'s* is not the copula *is*, but is rather equivalent to the *-s* found in the verbal domain, i.e. a singular number morpheme (as in Kayne 1989).

²² For pronouns I have argued in favour of a lexical insertion. As for the verbal domain, it is notoriously puzzling how the *-s* is picked up by the verb, English verbs not moving, and various proposals have been formulated. I will not choose among them nor attempt a new proposal here.

In Section 3.3 I developed some arguments in defence of The *ʼs*= *is* Hypothesis, which led me to the proposal that the content of *ʼs* is person and not person + number plus anti-agreement (as claimed by den Dikken). In Section 4 I explained the occurrence of a person feature in *ʼs* Genitive Constructions arguing that person expresses denotation, a necessary requirement of both DPs and sentences.

I then relied on Manzini and Savoia (2011a) (who analyze the Latin/Romansh “case” ending *-s*) who argue that denotation entails in turn a Q feature which can take a noun internal scope (marking “plurality”) a DP scope (marking “genitive”) or a sentential scope (marking “nominative”). I then applied this idea to the English *-s* /*ʼs*/ *is* morpheme which perfectly fits into it.

The conclusions are thus that The *ʼs*= *is* Hypothesis not only is maintained, but even extended: *ʼs* is *is* and *-s*, understood as variants of one and the same arch-morpheme, whose value is a Q feature, with different merge possibilities. The data from acquisition testify to the search of the merging possibilities of this morpheme by both L1 and L2 acquirers.²³

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²³ As an anonymous reviewer interestingly suggests, Table 1. seems to indicate that the acquisition progression follows the merge possibilities from the innermost domain to the outermost domain: plural (N- internal), genitive (DP internal), third sg (sentence level).

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Word-Initial Gemimates in Sardinian*

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Abstract

It is reported to be uncommon for a language to display phonological contrasts between simplex and geminate obstruents: Italian and Japanese are among the few that do (Tsujimura 2007; Davis 2011). It is even less common for languages to display a phonological contrast of this kind in word-initial position. In this contribution, Sardinian is shown to be one such language. Word-initial gemimates are identified through a range of diagnostics and are given an analysis in terms of the CVCV Theory (Lowenstamm 1996; Scheer 2004).

Keywords: Sardinian, Strict CV Theory, Phonology, Word-Initial Gemimates

1. Introduction

Southern Sardinian displays a great number of word-initial consonantal sequences with different phonological identities. Most of them are consonant clusters of the kind stop-plus-liquid and sC clusters (Lai 2013a and 2014). Others, even though they surface as consonant sequences (i.e. sr, tsr, tʃr, mr, and lr), can in fact be shown to be complex segments (Lai 2013b, forthcoming).

In addition, I will argue that Sardinian also tolerates word-initial gemimates. The purpose of this work is, first, to identify the word-initial gemimates with the tools offered by the CVCV theory (Lowenstamm 1996; Scheer 2004 and following works) and, second, to show how these gemimates interact with the whole of the Sardinian phonological system.¹

* Many thanks are due to two anonymous reviewers for very helpful comments. I am also indebted to Laura Bafle, Elisabetta Carpitelli and Lucia Molinu for their detailed comments and precious suggestions. Any mistakes or misinterpretation are entirely my own.

¹ As far as I know, the only examples reported in the literature of languages with length contrasts in word-initial position are the following: Cypriot Greek, Pattani Malay (Austronesian language), Tashlhiyt Berber and Thurgovian (Swiss German). See Ridouane and Hallé (2008) and references cited therein. Cases of word-initial gemimates are discussed and analysed in Topintzi (2010).

2. Theoretical Framework: the CVCV Approach

The analysis will be developed within the CVCV theoretical approach (Lowenstamm 1996; Scheer 2004). This framework assumes that syllabic structure can be reduced to strict sequences of onsets and nuclei. This implies that segments analysed as coda consonants in more traditional frameworks are now seen as onsets of empty nuclei. Similarly, consonant clusters are interpreted as a sequence of two consonants that enclose an empty vocalic position. The same holds of geminates. In (1) below you find the CVCV representations of final codas, internal codas, geminates and sC clusters:

(1) CVCV representations of codas and consonant clusters

a. final codas					b. internal codas				c. geminates				d. sC clusters			
C	V	C	V	...	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V
									↙	↘						
t	a	s	Ø	#	m	Ø	p	a	t	a			s	Ø	p	a

(adapted from Scheer 2004: Section 9)

A strict CV representation permits to maintain the traditional structural information, but seen in a different light. All different syllable structures such as long vowels, geminates, sC clusters and even branching onsets are thus represented as a strict sequence of onsets and nuclei.

2.1 Government and Licensing

In CVCV, two lateral relations (i.e. government and licensing) express all syllable-related processes (Scheer 2004: 3ff). Government and licensing have opposite effects. The former has a negative effect, while the latter supports its target (Scheer 2004: 134ff, 160ff). They both apply from right to left. Government accounts for the distribution of the empty vocalic positions.

2.2 Coda Mirror Theory

Government and licensing have been instrumental in developing an innovative analysis of strengthening and weakening: the so-called Coda Mirror Theory. This theoretical proposal was first introduced in Ségéral and Scheer (1999; 2001) and further developed in Scheer (2004: 117ff), Ségéral and Scheer (2008a; 2008b), and Scheer and Ziková (2010). The basic claim of this theory is that strengthening and weakening can be interpreted in the light of positional effects: the lateral relations of government and licensing explain the processes that affect segments.

2.3 Empty Category Principle

To explain better the mechanism underlying the distribution of empty nuclei, CVCV adopts the Empty Category Principle. This principle was first elaborated in Kaye, Lowenstamm, and Vergnaud (1990). The Empty Category Principle states that a nucleus may be left empty if and only if it is properly governed. The governor must always be a filled nucleus; thus, sequences of two empty vocalic positions cannot exist for government reasons. The alternation must be between a full vocalic position and an empty one. In this work, I will adopt a revised version of the Empty Category Principle by Scheer (2004: 14): “an empty nucleus may remain unexpressed if it is a) properly governed or b) word-final”. Thus, in CVCV, an empty vocalic position is justified only if one of the two conditions is satisfied.

3. External Sandhi and Word-Initial Clusters in Sardinian

Sardinian has a number of phonological processes in external sandhi that can shed light on the nature of word-initial segments in Sardinian. Lenition is one of the most extensively covered in the literature.² Sardinian lenition affects voiceless obstruents and voiced ones when in intervocalic position.³ Voiceless obstruents became voiced as exemplified in (2) below:

(2) Voiceless obstruents in external sandhi

a.	pala	sa 'βala	'the shoulder'
b.	taula	sa 'ðaula	'the plank (of wood)'
c.	kani	su 'ɣani	'the dog'
d.	ɣiða	sa 'dʒiða	'the week'

Voiced obstruents fall as shown in (3):

(3) Voiced obstruents in external sandhi

a.	buka	sa 'uka	'the mouth'
b.	domu	sa 'omu	'the house'
c.	gaŋga	sa 'aŋga	'the throat'
d.	dʒenneru	su 'enneru	'the son in law'

(data are from Lai 2009 and 2011)

In post-consonantal position, lenition does not apply and thus the same obstruents are not affected, e.g. [is palas] 'the shoulders', [is taulas] 'the planks (of wood)', [is kanis] 'the dogs', etc.

² See Wagner (1941, 1959, and 1960-64), Viridis (1978), Contini (1987).

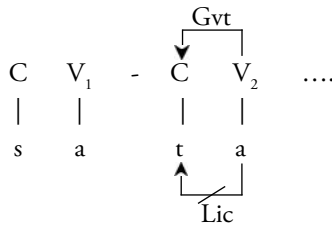
³ The data presented in this paper are from Tertenia Sardinian (Campidanese Sardinian dialect from the Ogliastra area). Data are my own.

Sardinian lenition applies systematically only in external sandhi, while word-internal lenition is no longer productive. In the past, lenition was an active process even in internal sandhi: it systematically affected every intervocalic obstruent and obstruents in intervocalic stop plus liquid clusters.⁴ In other words, lenition applied systematically both within words and at word boundaries.⁵

In CVCV theory, intervocalic consonants are represented as follows:

(4) Intervocalic Consonant

governed and unlicensed



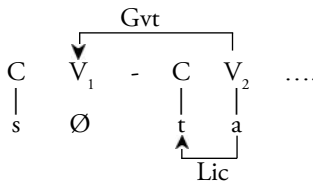
(adapted from Scheer Ziková 2010)

Intervocalic consonants are governed by the following vowel since the vowel that precedes (represented as V₁ in 4), being a filled nucleus, escapes government. Thus, intervocalic consonants appear governed but unlicensed (Scheer and Ziková 2010).

As already said, word-initial obstruents when preceded by a final consonant do not experience lenition. The CVCV theory represents these obstruents as follows:

(5) Post-coda consonant

ungoverned but licensed



(adapted from Scheer 2004: 140)

⁴ See Lai (2013a and 2014). On this point, see also Section 3.1 in this paper.

⁵ Sardinian dialects differ from one another with respect to lenition. Synchronically, Logudorese and Campidanese Sardinian display intervocalic lenition, but only at word-boundaries (Wagner 1941: 117ff). In fact, in internal sandhi, lenition is a process that does not apply anymore. In Central Sardinian, lenition is not observed even at word-boundaries (Wagner 1941: 119). Contini (1987: 479, note 19) remarks that some exceptions have been found in some Central Sardinian areas (Baronia and Barbagia regions). See also Wagner (1959 and 1960-64), Viridis (1978), Contini (1987), a.o.

In this case, the word-initial consonant *t*- occurs after the empty nucleus of a final consonant (represented as V_1 in 5). Note that the word-initial consonant in (5) (i.e. *t*-) is a strong consonant: this results from the fact that it escapes government thanks to the presence of the empty nucleus that requires to be governed (see Sections 1.1 and 1.2).

3.1 Word-Initial Clusters

Sardinian displays different types of word-initial clusters. Broadly, word-initial clusters are either stop plus liquid clusters or sC clusters.⁶ The former clusters are peculiar because in many languages (Sardinian among them) the obstruent of the cluster behaves in many respects like a simplex obstruent. For example, in Sardinian, the obstruent in a stop-plus-liquid is affected by lenition like any intervocalic obstruent. Compare the behaviour of the items listed below. (6) lists items with word-initial stop-plus-liquid clusters, while in (7) one finds items with word-initial simplex obstruents. Both experience lenition when in intervocalic position:

(6) Lenition in stop plus liquid clusters

a.	prassa	'court'	sa 'βrassa	'the court'
b.	trassa	'plot'	sa 'ðrassa	'the plot'
c.	krastula	'tile'	sa 'ɣrastula	'the tile'
d.	fradi	'brother'	su 'vradi	'the brother'

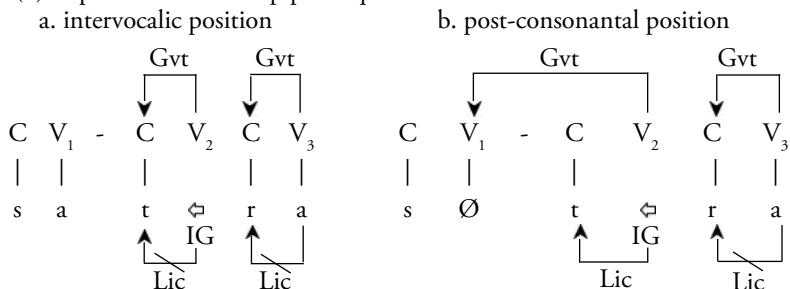
(7) Lenition in simplex obstruents

a.	paddʒi	'peace'	sa 'βaddʒi	'the peace'
b.	taula	'plank (of wood)'	sa 'ðaula	'the plank (of wood)'
c.	kaffa	'box'	sa 'ɣaffa	'the box'
d.	famini	'hunger'	su 'vamini	'the hunger'

To explain the common behaviour of the stop in a stop-plus-liquid and a simplex stop, Brun-Trigaud and Scheer (2010) resort to the notion of Infrasegmental Government (IG). They represent stop-plus-liquid clusters as in (8) below:

⁶ For all ends and purposes, /f/ patterns with stops in /f/ plus liquid clusters (cf. Lehmann 2010). Throughout this paper, "stop plus liquid" will have to be understood as shorthand for "stop or /f/ plus liquid".

(8) Representation of stop plus liquid cluster

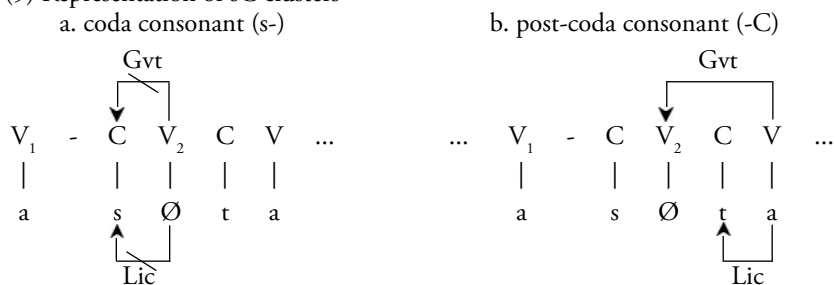


(adapted from Brun-Trigaud and Scheer 2010)

As one can see from (8), the two members of the cluster are related by Infrasegmental Government (IG). Infrasegmental Government is a lateral relation within a consonant cluster that is responsible for the cohesion between the liquid and the stop.⁷ Note that the representation of stop-plus-liquid clusters theorised in Brun-Trigaud and Scheer (2010) assumes that the stop of the cluster has the same phonological status of a simplex consonant. In fact, they experience the same lateral relations both in intervocalic and post-consonantal position (Compare 4 and 5 with 8).

Word-initial clusters in Sardinian can also be sC clusters. The two members of an sC cluster, unlike stop-plus-liquid clusters, act as independent consonants. This means that no relation holds among them. The CVCV theory represents their syllabic structure as follows:

(9) Representation of sC clusters



⁷ See Scheer (2004: 37, 162) and Brun-Trigaud and Scheer (2010: 17). This relation does not have any segmental effect, negative or positive, on its target, unlike Government and Licensing (cf. Scheer 2004: 162).

In (9), /s/ from an sC cluster is represented as a coda consonant (see Kaye 1992). In CVCV /s/ is re-interpreted as the onset of an empty vocalic position. /s/ in (9a) is neither governed nor licensed. The obstruent of an sC cluster is in a strong position (ungoverned and licensed), because of the empty nucleus that precedes it, (see 9b).

Besides stop-plus-liquid and sC clusters, one further type of word-initial cluster must be added to the phonological inventory of Sardinian. As we will see in the next Sections, Sardinian displays a small group of consonants whose behaviour is not as expected of simplex consonants. The tools offered by the CVCV theory together with the knowledge of Sardinian phonology will be of help in defining the real structural identity of these consonants.

4. Vowel-Zero Alternation in Sardinian

In Sardinian, when a heterosyllabic cluster (e.g. sC clusters, geminates) is preceded by a consonant-final word, a vowel appears before the cluster, e.g. /in skɔla/ → [ini skɔla] ‘at school’. By contrast, if the same cluster is preceded by a word ending in a vowel, the epenthetic vowel does not surface, e.g. /sa skɔla/ → [sa skɔla] ‘the school’.

In other words, the epenthetic vowel appears only if there is no other vowel to its left, otherwise the alternation site is still empty. This behaviour shows that Sardinian, like other languages,⁸ displays the so-called “vowel-zero alternation” between full and empty vocalic positions.

Kaye *et al.* (1990) account for this kind of alternations by resorting to the Empty Category Principle (see Section 2.3). As already seen, in a string of syllables an empty nucleus can only alternate with a full nuclear position (i.e. with an expressed vowel). Thus, a sequence of two empty nuclei is illicit.

The reason for such behaviour, as stated by the Empty Category Principle, is that a sequence of two empty nuclei is banned for government reasons (see Section 2.3). As one can see below, in the CVCV theory, empty nuclear positions are found in the following contexts: after a coda, within a geminate, and after /s/ in an sC cluster. Empty positions are boldfaced.

(10) Empty nuclear positions in CVCV theory

final codas					internal codas				geminates				sC clusters			
C	V	C	V	...	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V
p	a	s	Ø	#	m	Ø	p	a	p	Ø	p	a	s	Ø	p	a

(adapted from Scheer 2004: Section 9)

⁸ See Scheer (2004).

In Sardinian if one of the clusters in (10) is preceded by a consonant-final word, an epenthetic vowel surfaces to avoid a sequence of two empty nuclear positions. Some examples are provided below.⁹ Data are from Tertenia Sardinian.

- (11) Word-initial heterosyllabic clusters preceded by a final consonant
- a. /sɔi in skɔla/ → [sɔi ini skɔla] 'I am at school'
 - b. /ses sbentiada/ → [sezi rbentiada] 'you are absent-minded'
 - c. /dʒai nd ddu at de kɔsa/ → [dʒai ndi ddu að e ɣɔza] 'there is definitely a lot of stuff'

As mentioned, epenthesis surfaces only if the word-initial cluster that follows a consonant-final word is a heterosyllabic cluster. Word-initial clusters of the type stop-plus-liquid do not admit epenthesis.¹⁰ Analogously, in the case of words that begin with a simplex consonant, no epenthesis occurs. Compare the examples in (11) above with those in (12) and (13) below:

- (12) Word-initial simplex consonants preceded by a final consonant
- a. /sɔi in domu/ → [sɔi in domu] 'I am at home'
 - b. /ses torrada/ → [ses torrada] 'You are back'
 - c. /dʒai nd at tentu de kɔsa/ → [dʒai nd at tentu e ɣɔza] 'She/He definitely got a lot of stuff'
- (13) Word-initial stop-plus-liquid clusters preceded by a final consonant
- a. /sɔi in prassa/ → [sɔi in prassa] 'I am in the court'
 - b. /ses trassada/ → [ses trassada] 'You look like a mess'
 - c. /is krɔbus/ → [is krɔbus] 'The crows'

Data in (12) and (13) list word-initial simplex consonants and stop-plus-liquid clusters, respectively. In both cases, epenthesis does not occur. By contrast, sC clusters trigger the epenthesis: in (11) a vowel surfaces in the final empty nucleus of the preceding consonant-final word.

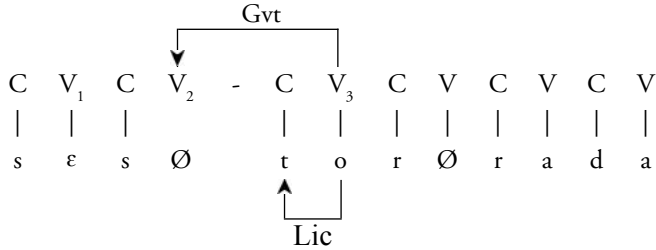
This is the case for a reason. Recall from the previous Sections that an alternation site can only be empty if it is governed by an expressed vocalic position, which follows it. This means that a sequence of two empty nuclei is ill-formed and requires to be repaired.

⁹ In the above-mentioned sentences several other processes appear. Note that voiceless stops become voiced fricatives (e.g. /de kɔsa/ → [de ɣɔza]) and voiced stops delete (e.g. /at de kɔsa/ → [að e ɣɔza]. /s/ before voiced stops becomes [r] (e.g. /ses sbentiada/ → [sezi rbentiada]).

¹⁰ For details on the peculiar behaviour of stop-plus-liquid as well as for their structural properties see Brun-Trigaud and Scheer (2010). A few notes on stop-plus-liquid clusters are also presented in Section 2 (this paper). Stop-plus-liquids in Sardinian are discussed in Lai (2013a, 2013b, 2014), Scheer (2014).

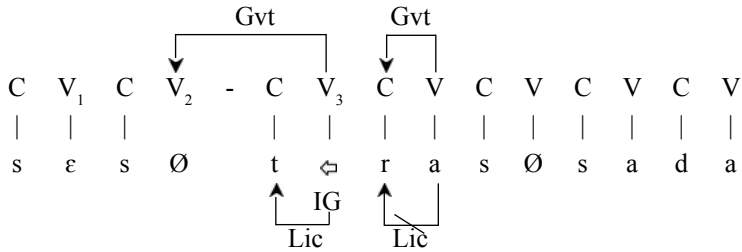
By contrast, if one looks at the representation of simplex consonants and stop-plus-liquid clusters in (14) and (15) below, it is clear that when preceded by a word-final consonant, they do not show a sequence of two empty nuclei:¹¹

(14) Simplex consonant preceded by a final coda



/ses torrada/ → [ses torrada] ‘You are back’

(15) Stop-plus liquid preceded by a final coda

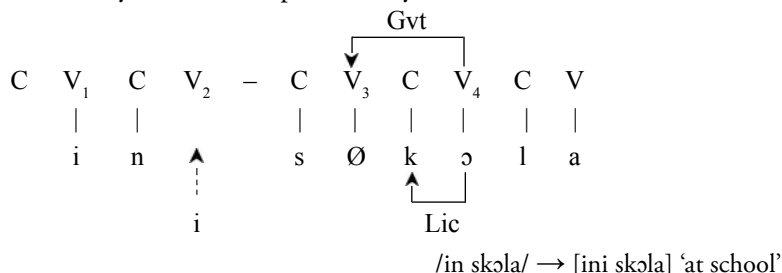


/ses trassada/ → [ses trassada] ‘You look like a mess’

The resultant sequences in (14) and (15) are perfectly licit: every nucleus is governed. By contrast, in (16) heterosyllabic clusters (which enclose an empty vocalic position) are preceded by another empty position, i.e. the empty nucleus of the final consonant. This creates an ill-formed structural configuration, because of the two nuclei in sequence (V₂ and V₃ in 16). Only the empty nucleus within the heterosyllabic cluster can be governed. Government cannot reach the empty nucleus of the consonant-final word that precedes (V₂ in 16).

¹¹ As argued for in Section 3.1, Infrasegmental Government silences the empty nucleus within the stop-plus-liquid cluster. Therefore, the only nucleus to be governed is the final empty nucleus of the word-final consonant, i.e. V₂ in (15). For further details on stop-plus-liquid in CVCV see Lowenstamm (2003), Ségéral and Scheer (2005), Brun-Trigaud and Scheer (2010), Lai (2013a and 2014), Scheer (2014).

(16) Heterosyllabic cluster preceded by a final coda



To attain the correct structural conformation and thus avoid the sequence of two empty nuclei, an epenthetic vowel surfaces in the empty position that cannot be governed: the vocalic slot of the final coda (V₂ in 16 above). By contrast, in (14) and (15), there is only one empty nucleus to be governed and thus epenthesis does not occur.

The vowel-zero alternation in Sardinian is an invaluable tool to establishing the structural identity of word-initial segments and it is thus decisive in distinguishing between a simplex consonant and a heterosyllabic cluster in word-initial position.

5. Sardinian Geminates

As already mentioned, Sardinian displays a small group of consonants who behave in a peculiar way. Their behaviour does not conform to those of simplex consonants and there are several reasons to believe that in fact we are faced with word-initial geminates. The consonants that in my view can have a geminate identity word-initially are the following: r, ʃ, ʈ, d and s.¹²

The issue of geminates in Sardinian is controversial and, their existence word-internally has often been called into question.¹³ The trouble is that in

¹² As far as I know, Bolognesi (1998) was the first to suggest that Sardinian displays word-initial palatals with a geminate identity. His analysis (in Optimality Theory) and data can be found in Bolognesi (1998). Bolognesi's data refer to another Sardinian dialect: Sestu Sardinian. The data here are from Tertenia Sardinian. While both dialects belong to the Campidanese group, they differ in nontrivial ways. As we will see in Section 7, the list of word-initial geminates can be extended to other segments (at least for Tertenia Sardinian). Note that in Romance languages word-initial geminates are rare and debated. One example is Faetar (Franco-Provençal language). I thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing this language to my attention.

¹³ For further discussion on Sardinian geminates, see Wagner (1941: §428), Contini (1987: 55, note 12, 59ff, 101ff), Lörinczi (1996), Bolognesi (1998: 158ff, 411), Molinu (2015). Ladd and Scobbie (2004) report that durational differences can be detected word-internally with experimental phonetic analysis. A recent work on the phonetics of

Sardinian, word-internal obstruents do not have a short counterpart as happens in Italian or Japanese.¹⁴ In fact, these languages display minimal pairs of this kind listed in (17) and (18). Japanese data are from Tsujimura (2007).

(17) Italian

a. papa	pappa
‘Pope’	‘pap’
b. bruto	brutto
‘brute’	‘ugly’
c. bako	bakko
‘silkworm’	‘Bacchus’

(18) Japanese

a. saka	sakka
‘hill’	‘author’
b. kata	katta
‘shoulder’	‘won’

Unlike those languages, Sardinian does not have length contrasts in obstruents.¹⁵ Speakers do not perceive any difference between simple and geminate obstruents. An obstruent is usually pronounced long but alternative short realisations (for the same segment in the same context) are also acceptable.¹⁶ Therefore, a given speaker may produce variable results for the same stop. For example, a word such as *maccu* ‘fool’ (from Latin *MACCU(M)*) can be pronounced either [makku] and [maku]. In the lack of the kind of opposition mentioned for Italian and Japanese, the difference between long and short consonantal duration is phonologically meaningless.

This point is worth emphasising because in the past, many scholars have analysed the phonology of Sardinian through the lens of their own (Italian) phonological system, thus overstating the phonological import of consonantal duration. This is especially true if the scholar was a native speaker of Italian for whom the kind of alternation reported in (17) has a phonological meaning. Thus in Sardinian it is crucial to distinguish between the underlying representation of a segment and its surface realization.

voiceless stops in Campidanese Sardinian states that “Voiceless stops do not show length as a distinctive feature but present a significant lengthening which could be triggered by prosodic conditions” (De Iacovo and Romano, forthcoming).

¹⁴ On Italian geminates, see Chierchia (1986); Burzio (1989); Loporcaro (1996); Wiltshire and Maranzana (1998); Davis (1999 and 2011), a.o. For Japanese geminates, see Tsujimura (2007); Kobozono *et al.* (2009); Davis (2011); Kawahara (2007, forthcoming). Word-initial geminates are also reported for Salentino (Romano 2003a and 2003b).

¹⁵ In Sardinian, consonant length is not distinctive within words (cf. Viridis 1978; Contini 1987; Jones 1988). Distinctive consonant length is restricted only to certain consonants, namely /r/ - /rr/, /n/ - /nn/, /l/ - /ll/ (see Viridis 1978: 90).

¹⁶ The lack of phonological length contrast for obstruents also reflects on the variety of Italian spoken in Sardinia. As written by Contini (1987: 59), “Les Sardes en général ne distinguent pas, en parlant italien, entre les géminées et les non géminées”. For further details and references, see Loi Corvetto (1983); Contini (1987); Lörcinzi (1996); Schirru (2000), a.o.

Let us look at the issue from an historical perspective. In the evolution from Latin to Sardinian, simple voiceless stops became voiced fricatives, while Latin geminate voiceless stops are still voiceless stops and are usually pronounced long. This can suggest that Sardinian retains the Latin geminates, whose counterparts are the voiced fricatives. If this was certainly true at the time when lenition took place, (i.e. in internal sandhi, a diachronic lenition affected only simplex voiceless stops leaving unaffected the geminates), nowadays no tool can be exploited to prove the underlying identity of these internal segments. The fact that in internal sandhi native speakers lack any intuitions on the matter and phonological processes are no longer active, means that one is not in the position to definitively argue for a geminate or a simplex identity.

As for word-initial segments, the situation is completely different. In external sandhi a great number of phonological processes are still in place and can be of help in understanding the underlying structure of segments (see Sections 3 and 4).

6. *Word-Initial Geminates in Sardinian*

In the previous Section, I have emphasised that, unfortunately, native intuitions cannot be of help in determining the nature of a segment. One must thus resort to other tools. In Sardinian, if one pays attention to a small group of segments in external sandhi, their behaviour appears unusual. I am thinking of the following segments: s, ʃ, ʒ, d and r.

In fact, it happens that in a given position the same segment results in a different output depending on the lexical item involved. Consider the different behaviour of the voiceless alveolar fricative in intervocalic position:

(19) Voiceless alveolar fricative in intervocalic position

a. Items affected by lenition

[sonu]	[su zonu]	'the sound'
[sərri]	[sa zərri]	'the sister'
[sɛdɖa]	[sa zɛdɖa]	'the saddle'

b. Items that resist lenition

[suyu]	[su suyu]	'the neck'
[sia]	[sa sia]	'the aunt'
[sukuritu]	[su sukuritu]	'the hiccup'

As one can see, /s/ surfaces in intervocalic positions with two different outputs. In (19a), /s/ undergoes lenition while in (19b) it appears insensitive to lenition.

The words with word-initial /s/ that resist lenition are uncommon. The expected behaviour is that in intervocalic position the voiceless alveolar fricative should surface as voiced.

The same situation can be observed with the voiceless palato-alveolar affricate. Some words respond to lenition, while others do not:

(20) Voiceless palato-alveolar affricate in intervocalic position

a. Items affected by lenition

[ʃiða]	[sa dʒiða]	‘the week’
[ʃɛna]	[sa dʒɛna]	‘the dinner’
[ʃɛrβɛdɖu]	[su dʒɛrβɛdɖu]	‘the brain’

b. Items that resist lenition

[ʃɛntezimu]	[su ʃɛntezimu]	‘the cent’
[ʃɛntɾu]	[su ʃɛntɾu]	‘the centre’
[ʃɛllulari]	[su ʃɛllulari]	‘the mobile phone’

Note that even for the voiceless palato-alveolar affricate the common output in intervocalic position is the lenis one, in which the voiceless affricate surfaces as voiced.

The underlying criterion for the observed distribution is easy to identify, at least for the affricate.¹⁷ As noted by Bolognesi (1998), the distinction across the two lexical groups results from the fact that items in (20a) are from the native lexicon while those in (20b) are late loanwords from Italian. Initial palato-alveolar affricates in recent loanwords are analysed differently from initial segments in words inherited from Latin directly.¹⁸ Here it is important to note that in isolation the segments surface in the same way. Anyway, as we will see, other contexts suggest that we might not be dealing with the same segment.

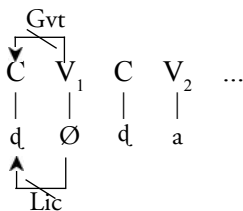
6.1 Sardinian Word-Initial Geminates and the Vowel-Zero Alternation

In order to argue that Sardinian displays word-initial geminates one needs a valuable diagnostic to identify the nature of the syllabic structure of the segments in question.

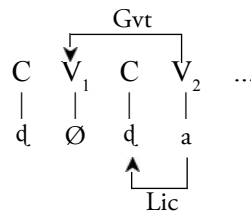
In CVCV, geminates occupy two consonantal slots, which enclose an empty vocalic position. They are represented as depicted below:

(21) Representation of geminates

a. 1st half of a geminate



b. 2nd half of a geminate



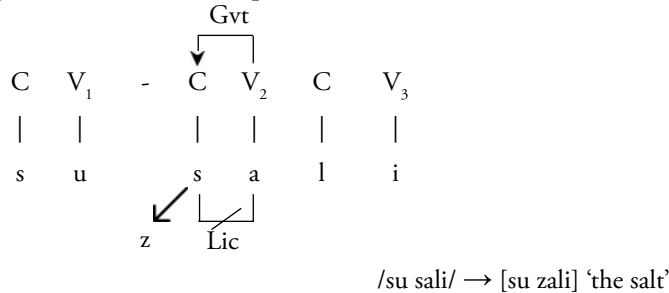
¹⁷ For the other segments, see Section 8.

¹⁸ For further discussion, see Section 8.

The first half of a geminate appears neither governed nor licensed while the second half is ungoverned and licensed. Note that the lateral relations experienced by the two half of a geminate coincide with those of the two members of coda-onset clusters and sC clusters. Geminate can thus be considered heterosyllabic clusters for all hands and purposes. Note also that like in other heterosyllabic clusters, no relation holds between the two members of the geminate unlike what happens in stop-plus-liquid clusters.¹⁹

In this Section, lenition gave us a clue that the segments in question may not be simplex segments. In fact, data in (19) and (20) reveal a divide between two classes of the same segment. In (19a) and (20a), the segments go through lenition while in (19b) and (20b) the segments appear unaffected even though the conditions for lenition seem to be met. The items that respond to lenition are represented in CVCV as follow:

(22) Simplex /s/ in intervocalic position



The case exemplified in (22) is exactly what is expected from an intervocalic consonant in Sardinian. Due to its intervocalic position, the consonant in question experiences the negative influence of government, thus surfacing as [z], its lenited counterpart. As already said in Section 3, this is true of every simplex obstruent in intervocalic position. Thus, the items that underwent lenition in (19a) and (20a) represent the regular output of a Sardinian obstruent in (weak) intervocalic position.²⁰

By contrast, the segments that resisted lenition, namely (19b) and (20b) do not conform to the behaviour expected from a simplex intervocalic obstruent. For instance, let us look at the alveolar fricative. In (19b), lenition cannot affect what seems to be the same segment as in (19a). Compare e.g. /su/ [sali] → [su zali], *[su sali] ‘the salt’ with /su/ [sipiri] → [su sipiri], *[su zipiri] ‘the rosemary’.

¹⁹ Recall from Section 3.1 that branching onsets are related by Infrasegmental Government, thus their structural situation differ with respect to heterosyllabic clusters.

²⁰ See Section 2.2, this paper.

A way to explain this contrasting behaviour is to speculate that the mentioned segments are not affected by lenition because of a structural conformation that makes lenition impossible. Only simplex obstruents in a governed condition can be targeted by lenition.²¹ This leads us to hypothesise that we are looking not at a simple obstruent in weak position but at a cluster, namely a geminate.²²

However, lenition is not the only tool that Sardinian has for determining the identity of a segment. Further evidence comes from another diagnostic: the vowel-zero alternation.

As said above, Sardinian displays various phonological processes in external sandhi. The most useful for our purposes is the alternation between zero and an epenthetic vowel in the empty vocalic slot of a word-final consonant. Recall that the insertion of the epenthetic vowel is possible only when a heterosyllabic cluster follows a word-final consonant. Simplex consonants do not trigger epenthesis.

To argue beyond doubt for the existence of initial geminates, one needs to look more in depth at the behaviour of the same segments when preceded by a word-final consonant and then compare the observed outputs with those of their lenited counterpart.

For the sake of simplicity, I will focus again on the voiceless palato-alveolar affricate and the voiceless alveolar fricative. The third column in (23) and (24) reports our segments in post-consonantal position:

(23) Voiceless alveolar fricative in post-consonantal position

a. Items affected by lenition

after a vowel	word-initial	after a consonant	
[su zonu]	[sonu]	/is/ [sɔnus]	‘the sounds’
		[is sɔnus]	
[sa zɔrri]	[sɔrri]	/is/ [sɔrris]	‘the sisters’
		[is sɔrris]	
[sa zɛdɖa]	[sɛdɖa]	/is/ [sɛdɖas]	‘the saddles’
		[is sɛdɖas]	

b. Items that resist lenition

after a vowel	word-initial	after a consonant	
[su suɣu]	[suɣu]	/is/ [suɣus]	‘the necks’
		[izi suɣus]	
[sa sia]	[sia]	/is/ [sias]	‘the aunts’
		[izi sias]	
[su sukuritu]	[sukuritu]	/is/ [sukuritus]	‘the hiccups’
		[izi sukuritus]	

²¹ See Brun-Trigaud and Scheer (2010).

²² Sardinian underlying geminates share many properties with the underlying geminates analysed in Ségéral and Scheer (2001b). Analogously to our Sardinian facts, phonetics did not offer any clue to identify what had to be classified as underlying geminates (cf. Ségéral and Scheer 2001b).

(24) Voiceless palato-alveolar affricate in post-consonantal position

a. Items affected by lenition

after a vowel	word-initial	after a consonant	
[sa dʒið̥a]	[ʃið̥a]	/duas/ [ʃið̥as] [duaʃ ʃið̥as]	‘two weeks’
[sa dʒena]	[ʃena]	/is/ [ʃenas] [iʃ ʃenas]	‘the dinners’
[su dʒerʃed̥d̥u]	[ʃerʃed̥d̥u]	/is/ [ʃerʃed̥d̥us] [iʃ ʃerʃed̥d̥us]	‘the brains’
[sa dʒiʃud̥d̥a]	[ʃiʃud̥d̥a]	/duas/ [ʃiʃud̥d̥as] [duaʃ ʃiʃud̥d̥as]	‘two onions’
[su dʒivard̥ʒu]	[ʃivard̥ʒu]	/is/ [ʃivard̥ʒus] [iʃ ʃivard̥ʒus]	‘kind of bread’
[sa dʒerezia]	[ʃerezia]	/duas/ [ʃerezias] [duaʃ ʃerezias]	‘two cherries’

b. Items that resist lenition

after a vowel	word-initial	after a consonant	
[su ʃentezim̥u]	[ʃentezim̥u]	/is/ [ʃentezimus] [izi ʃentezimus]	‘the cents’
[su ʃentru]	[ʃentru]	/is/ [ʃentrus] [izi ʃentrus]	‘the centres’
[su ʃellulari]	[ʃellulari]	/is/ [ʃellularis] [izi ʃellularis]	‘the mobile phones’
[sa ʃabata]	[ʃabata]	/is/ [ʃabatas] [izi ʃabatas]	‘the slippers’
[su ʃinema]	[ʃinema]	/is/ [ʃinemas] [izi ʃinemas]	‘the cinemas’
[sa ʃambella]	[ʃambella]	/is/ [ʃambellas] [izi ʃambellas]	‘the donuts’

As one can see, only words whose initial segments resist lenition require the epenthesis.²³ In the other examples, the vowel does not surface: on the contrary, it would be ungrammatical if it appeared (e.g. /is/ [sɛd̥d̥as] → [is sɛd̥d̥as], *[izi zɛd̥d̥as], *[izi sɛd̥d̥as]). Inversely, when preceded by a word-final consonant, the items that resist lenition require epenthesis: outputs like *[is sias] in place of [izi sias] are ungrammatical.²⁴

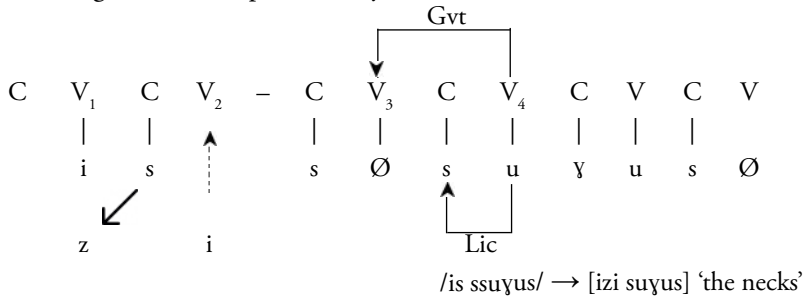
²³ Note that in the (24a), third column, the palato-alveolar affricate when preceded by /s/ becomes a palato-alveolar fricative. A thorough discussion of the matter is beyond the purpose of this work.

²⁴ It is also worth noticing that the epenthetic vowel that fills the final coda of the article (i.e. /is/ → [izi] ‘the’) makes it the case that the initial segment appears in intervocalic position. Thus, it seems to create the context for lenition. However, lenition does not apply.

The insertion of the epenthesis is further evidence for the fact that we are faced with word-initial geminates. Positing an underlying geminate identity for these initial segments is the only way to account for both a) the lack of lenition and b) the surface of the epenthetic vowel in the alternation site of the word-final consonant.

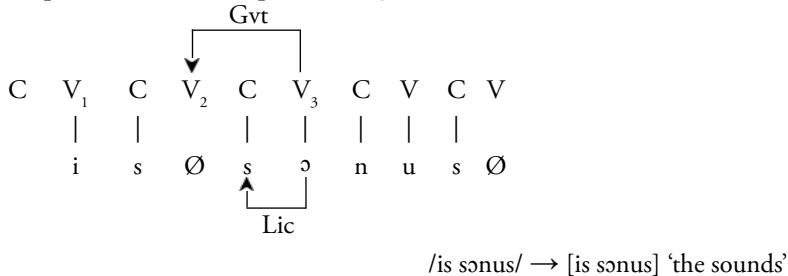
Sardinian initial geminates translated in a CVCV representation appear as follow:²⁵

(25) Initial geminate /ss/ preceded by a final coda



If one compares the representation of an initial geminate in (25) with that of an initial simplex segment in (26), the structural reasons for their different behaviour are clear.

(26) Simplex consonant /s/ preceded by a final coda



Recall from Section 4 that when a final coda precedes a heterosyllabic cluster, an epenthetic vowel surfaces in the empty vocalic slot of the final coda (e.g. /sɔi inØ skɔla/ → [sɔi ini skɔla], 'I am at school'). This epenthetic

This is expected, since geminates never undergo lenition. In fact, the right form is [izi sias] 'the aunts' while a lenited output such as *[izi zias] is ungrammatical.

²⁵ For in-depth theoretical discussion on geminates, refer to Ségéral and Scheer (2001b).

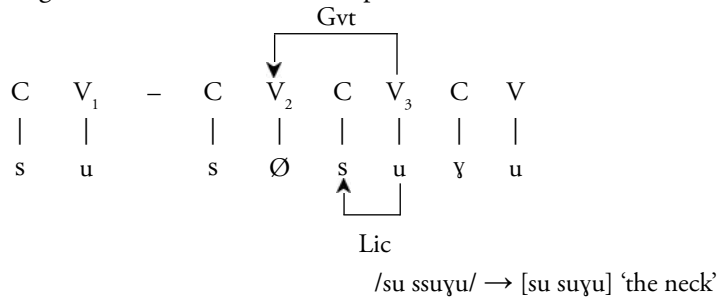
vowel obligatory occurs if and only if a heterosyllabic cluster follows the final coda.

This is precisely what happens in (25) above. In (25) the word-initial [s] is an underlying geminate (i.e. /ss/). Therefore, its structural configuration is that of heterosyllabic clusters. Consequently, when the geminate is preceded by a word-final consonant the resulting sequence of two empty nuclei is ill-formed and is resolved by epenthesis in the empty vocalic position that is not governed, i.e. V_2 in (25).

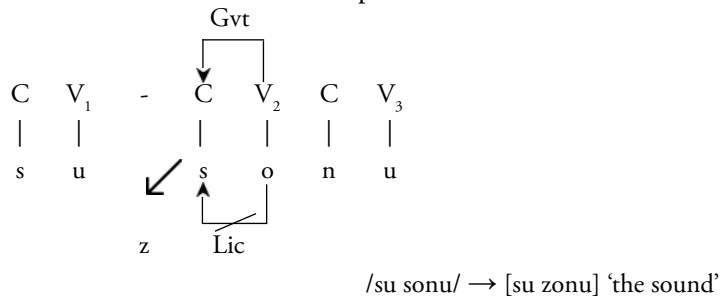
By contrast, simple consonants never trigger epenthesis (e.g. /sɔi in domu/ → [sɔi in domu], *[sɔi ini domu], 'I am at home'). In fact, the fricative [s] in (26) is a simplex segment, so even if it is preceded by a final coda, there is only one empty nucleus to be governed, i.e. V_2 in (26).

Compare also the representation of a word-initial geminate in intervocalic position with a simplex consonant in an analogous context:

(27) Initial geminate /ss/ in intervocalic position



(28) Simplex consonant /s/ in intervocalic position



The intervocalic simplex consonant in (28) is preceded and followed by filled nuclei. Thus, the negative effects of government directly apply to /s/, which appear in its lenited counterpart [z]. By contrast, in (27) government is required to govern the empty nucleus within the geminate.

7. Word-Initial Geminates: *f*, *r* and *q*

(29) presents the relevant data for the other obstruents for which I posit underlying geminate identity, namely: 1. voiceless palato-alveolar fricative, 2. alveolar trill, and 3. voiced retroflex stop. Data are from Tertenia Sardinian. It must be borne in mind, though, that Sardinian dialects may differ with respect to the phonological identity of the segments listed.

(29) The underlying identity of *f*, *r* and *q*

		(a) word-initial position	(b) intervocalic position	(c) post-consonantal position
1. voiceless palato-alveolar fricative				
<i>scimbulu</i>	'fringe (of a scarf)'	ʃimbulu	su ʃimbulu	/is/ [ʃimbulus] [izi ʃimbulus]
<i>scimpra</i>	'a moron (fem.)'	ʃimpra	sa ʃimpra	/is/ [ʃimpras] [izi ʃimpras]
<i>scenti</i>	'apprentice'	ʃienti	su ʃienti	/is/ [ʃientis] [izi ʃientis]
2. alveolar trill				
<i>ricetta</i>	'recipe'	riʃʃeta	sa riʃʃeta	/is/ [riʃʃetas] izi riʃʃetas
<i>regola</i>	'rule'	reyola	sa reyola	/is/ [reyolas] izi reyolas
<i>ristoranti</i>	'restaurant'	ristoranti	su ristoranti	/is/ [ristorantis] izi ristorantis
3. voiced retroflex stop				
<i>ddu</i>	CLIT.3.SG.M 'it'	q̣q̣u	/pɔ/ [q̣q̣u] <i>Fui</i> [pɔ q̣q̣u] <i>lassai</i> ²⁶	/nd/ [q̣q̣u] <i>Giai</i> [ndi q̣q̣u] <i>at de bentu</i> ²⁷
<i>dda</i>	CLIT.3.SG.F 'it'	q̣q̣a	/ka/ [q̣q̣a] <i>Soi intrada</i> [ka q̣q̣a] <i>appu</i> 'itta' ²⁸	/nɲ/ [q̣q̣a] <i>Si</i> [nɲi q̣q̣a] <i>papat</i> ²⁹

As for the other segments listed in the previous Section, the syllabic status of *f*, *q* and *r* can be read off its environment. In (29), all segments are presented in different contexts. Data in (29a) list the surface forms of the items at hand in isolation, unaffected by phonological processes. (29b) lists the same segments

²⁶ *Fui po ddu lassai*. /fui pɔ q̣q̣u lassai/ → [fui pɔ q̣q̣u lassai], 'I was about to leave it'.

²⁷ *Giai nd ddu at de bentu*. /ɟai nd q̣q̣u at de bentu/ → [ɟai ndi q̣q̣u aði e βentu], 'It's definitely windy'.

²⁸ *Soi intrada ka dd'appu itta*. /sɔi intrada ka q̣q̣a appu bitta/ → [sɔi intrada ka q̣q̣ appu itta], 'I came in because I saw her'.

²⁹ *Si nci dda papat*. /si nɲ q̣q̣a papat/ → [si nɲi q̣q̣a βapaða] 'he/she eats it'.

in intervocalic position while in (29c) the items are shown in post-consonantal position to see if the structural condition for the vowel-zero alternation is met.

If one looks at (29) as a whole, it is evident that the behaviour of the relevant segments does not conform to the behaviour expected from simplex consonants. Every segment displays an epenthetic vowel to its left when preceded by a word-final consonant.

Therefore, data suggest that also for the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative, the alveolar trill and the voiced retroflex stop, one can assume an underlying word-initial geminate.

8. *Further Observations and Some Provisos*

In the previous Sections, I have emphasised that our geminates do not form a uniform group. Only two of them contrast with their simplex counterpart, namely the voiceless palato-alveolar affricate and the voiceless alveolar fricative. Examples are the following:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (30) Voiceless palato-alveolar affricate | |
| a. simplex | b. geminate |
| /sa tʃiða/ → [sa tʃiða] | /su tʃinəma/ → [su tʃinəma] |
| /is tʃiðas/ → [iʃ tʃiðas] | /is tʃinəmas/ → [izi tʃinəmas] |
| (31) Voiceless alveolar fricative | |
| a. simplex | b. geminate |
| /sa sərri/ → [sa zərri] | /su ssuyu/ → [su suyu] |
| /is sərri/ → [is sərri] | /is ssuyus/ → [izi ssuyus] |

Like in the Sestu Sardinian discussed in Bolognesi (1998), in our dialect voiceless palato-alveolar affricates can be divided in two groups based on the lexicon: words with the initial geminate /tʃ/ are loanwords, while simplex /tʃ/ are the regular evolution of Latin C+i, e.

In fact, Sardinian displays a lexical stratification, with separate treatments of native vocabulary and foreign vocabulary (cf. Ito and Mester 1999). This means that seemingly identical segments undergo different phonological rules according to the lexical stratum to which they belong.

The voiceless alveolar fricative, like the voiceless palato-alveolar affricate, occurs as a simplex segment and as a geminate. Simplex /s/ can be from loanwords as well as the outcome of Latin S. Its geminate counterpart includes words of unknown etymology (e.g. /ssipiri/ 'rosmary', cf. Wagner 1960-64), the evolution of Latin T+j and some recent loanwords from Italian that started with ts (e.g. Italian /tsukkero/³⁰ → [tsukkero] 'sugar', Tertenia Sardinian /ssukuru/ * [sukuru] 'sugar').

³⁰ Italian has the following initial geminates: p tʃ ts dʒ ʎ (Chierchia 1986).

In the previous Section, we also dealt with the following initial geminates: voiceless palato-alveolar fricative, alveolar trill, and voiced retroflex stop.

The voiceless palato-alveolar fricative /ʃʃ/ does not have a simplex counterpart. It can be both from loanwords and native lexicon.

The alveolar trill in word-initial position can only be geminate and from loanwords. It is important to note that in our dialect as well as in all Campidanese Sardinian dialects, word-initial alveolar trills are banned. Every Latin word with an initial rhotic was reanalysed with the insertion of a word-initial vowel, and the subsequent rhotic appears geminated, e.g. Latin ROTA became /orrɔða/ in our dialect. This was a diachronic process. A similar process is also available synchronically. A word-initial alveolar trill from a loanword is reanalysed as geminate and in the circumstances analysed in Sections 6 and 7 an epenthetic vowel surfaces.³¹

The voiced retroflex stop is the last word-initial geminate listed (see 29.3). The voiced retroflex stop is the result of Latin LL. It is common word-internally but not word-initially. The only examples that I could find were the following clitics: dɔa-s, dɔu-s.³²

9. Conclusion

In this overview of Sardinian geminates, several points have been discussed. First, we focused on how in the case of Sardinian geminates appearances can be deceptive, both word-internally and word-initially. However, word-initially, one can resort to a different tool. In the case of Sardinian, the structural identity of an initial segment can be detected by taking into account its environment. In fact, Sardinian still has a number of phonological processes in external sandhi that can suggest which kind of segment we are dealing with. Therefore, by looking at these phonological processes through the lens of CVCV theory, one can identify the structural representation of word-initial segments and clusters.

Apparently, Sardinian tolerates initial geminates and these geminates behave precisely like heterosyllabic clusters. Sardinian geminates are not realised long in initial position. However, by looking at their environment, it is clear that Sardinian manifests a phonological contrast between simplex and geminate obstruents in word-initial position, at least for the voiceless palato-alveolar affricate and the voiceless alveolar fricative. Even though both surface as simplex consonants, their phonological identity differs: namely, some are simplex segments while others are underlying geminates.

³¹ Synchronically, the epenthetic vowel is [i].

³² On Sardinian clitics, see Jones (1993), Manzini and Savoia (2005), a.o.

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Auxiliaries and Verb Classes in Child Italian: A Syntactic Analysis of the Development of Aspect

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Abstract:

In this paper we will analyse the production and interpretation of the forms of the present perfect (*passato prossimo*) in children's Italian. Young children use past or perfective forms mainly to refer to telic predicates and present or imperfective forms mainly to refer to atelic predicates: the *Aspect First Hypothesis* (Antonucci and Miller 1976). We will focus on the distribution of auxiliaries in the first forms of the present perfect. First, since in Italian there are two auxiliaries, *be* for unaccusatives and *have* for transitives, we will show that *be* is mastered earlier than *have*: children properly assign *be* to unaccusatives which are inherently telic predicates and *have* to transitives and unergatives which are atelic. Second, we will test the validity of the *Aspect First Hypothesis* by presenting the results of two experimental tasks: the production and the comprehension of the perfective forms of *have* with telic and atelic predicates. The results will show that the *aktionsart* of verbs is relevant to account for the production of early auxiliaries till the age of 5. Furthermore, the perfective reading is not interpreted properly with atelic unergatives till later stages (7 years). We propose that telicity is not matched with the perfective morphology, but the presence of an overt direct object, that measures out the event denoted by the verb, triggers the production of the present perfect in child Italian. The syntax of verb classes influences the early aspectual interpretation.

Keywords: Acquisition, Aktionsart, Auxiliaries, Telicity, Verb Classes

1. Introduction

Different authors have investigated the appearance of auxiliaries in child Italian (Pizzuto and Caselli 1992; Snyder, Hyams, and Crisma 1995; Antelmi

1997; Nelli 1998; Caprin and Guasti 2009). Most of them have found that when children start to use the auxiliary forms, they almost never substitute *be* and *have* (Pizzuto and Caselli 1992; Snyder, Hyams, and Crisma 1995; Antelmi 1997; Nelli 1998). Other studies show that the use of *be* as an auxiliary emerges later than the use of *be* as a copula (Antelmi 1997; Nelli 1998; Caprin and Guasti 2009) and this happens because auxiliary forms are used in compound past tenses that emerge later than the present tense or, in the terms of Caprin and Guasti (2009), children are able to check in the earliest stage just the features of a single verb, as for copulas, and not of two verbs, as for the biclausal auxiliary constructions.

Auxiliaries are mainly found in the forms of the present perfect tense: in Italian, the *passato prossimo* perfective past tense. Several studies have focused on the first productions of perfective past tenses. Antinucci and Miller (1976), in a longitudinal study of 7 Italian children (aged between 1;6 and 2;5), found that children do not produce forms of *passato prossimo* with unergatives but that they only use such tenses with change of state verbs such as *diventare* 'become'. This led them to claim that children in the early stages are cognitively not ready to entertain abstract, temporal relations. At this point of their development they lack an abstract conception of time that would allow them to construct the relation "event x precedes event y" for any two events. Instead, they claim that children can use the form of *passato prossimo* in order to refer to the resulting characteristic of some predication, for example the end state of a verb relating to a change of state. Children are able to observe states in the present that have the characteristic of being linked to a preceding event of which they are the result (only telic representations). This led Antinucci and Miller to formulate the so-called *Aspect First Hypothesis* (AFH), whereby children present a cognitive deficit which is the underlying cause of why tense inflection cannot mark temporal relations. Children use the past form in order to refer to aspectual characteristics of the verb and not to the temporal ones: that is, children use the perfective morphology of *passato prossimo* in order to refer to *telicity*.

Research on the acquisition of tense in the past thirty years has shown that young children (under the age of 26) use their tense and aspect forms in the restricted pattern of the *Aspect First Hypothesis*: past or perfective forms are used mainly with telic predicates while present or imperfective forms are used primarily with atelic predicates. Different analysis of production data confirms the pattern in a number of languages, including English (Bloom, Lifter, and Hafitz 1980; Shirai and Andersen 1995), French (Bronckart and Sinclair 1973), Hebrew (Berman 1983), Italian (Antinucci and Miller 1976; Van Hout and Hollebrandse 2011), and Turkish (Aksu-Koç 1988), among others. However, research on the comprehension of tense morphology has cast some doubt on the *Aspect First Hypothesis*, in particular on the role of the lexical aspect in the interpretation of tense morphology. Children seem not to

have any problem with the production and comprehension of past tenses. For example Beherens (1993) found in early German productions clear instances of the child's ability to refer to past events before the onset of linguistic tense marking, suggesting that children have a basic temporal orientation of the past long before its morphological tense marking. Smith and Weist (1987) in their studies on Polish acquisition found that children are able to refer to the past properly and in earlier stages. Children aged between 1 year and 2 years were able to refer to events happening two weeks before the second experimental session by using past tense forms without referring to particular aspectual notions of the class of verbs.

In this paper we investigate the validity of the *Aspect First Hypothesis* in child Italian by analysing a corpus of spontaneous production of 4 Italian children aged between 18 and 36 months and by testing Italian-speaking children's production and comprehension of perfective aspectual entailment. The basic goals of our study are: 1) to explore longitudinally the role that lexical aspect (verb classes) plays in children's early production and comprehension of auxiliaries with the present perfect; 2) since Italian is an auxiliary-split language, to survey the syntactic and the aspectual features of early verb classes that determine both the selection and the distribution of auxiliaries in the earliest stage of acquisition; 3) to identify the stages of acquisition that lead to the adult-like production and comprehension of the perfective aspect. In Section 2 we review the theoretical background on aspect and auxiliary selection in Italian. Section 3 is devoted to the data from the corpus of spontaneous speech: namely, we will show the pattern of distribution of first auxiliaries. In Sections 4 and 5 we present respectively a production and a comprehension task of perfective forms with telic and atelic predicates. The data will confirm that the telicity of verbs influences the aspectual reading that children assign to the perfective forms of the present perfect. In Section 6 we will resume the findings of the present work and we will outline the data in contrast with *Aspect First Hypothesis*. We will propose a model of child grammar in which the lexical parameterization encoded in the auxiliary split is acquired early on: the syntactic features of verb classes influences at an early stage auxiliary distribution with transitives and unaccusatives. The non-adult like behaviours are restricted to some predicate selected by the *have* auxiliaries: the verbal predicates whose lexical aspect can not be retrieved directly by the presence of an overt direct object, that is, to unergatives.

2. Background on Aspect in Italian

When we talk about aspect we distinguish between two basic notions of aspect: *lexical aspect* and *grammatical aspect*. *Lexical aspect* (or *Aktionsart*) deals with the temporal contour of a situation that is independent of time; it

describes whether an eventuality is stative or dynamic, punctual or durative, telic or atelic. We will be dealing mainly with telicity as the principal feature of the lexical aspect. Verbs, depending on their internal structures, may have different lexical aspectual interpretation and, since Italian is an auxiliary split language, involve the selection of different auxiliaries.

On the other hand *Grammatical aspect* (or viewpoint aspect) operates on top of lexical aspect. The use of grammatical aspect implies that a speaker chooses a certain perspective to report on an event. This aspect “[...] focuses on the temporal perspective of the event” (Rosen 1999: 3) and it is usually determined by tense morphology. Tense inflections locate the described eventuality at a time that can be before, overlapping or after speech time (Arosio 2011).¹ We will be dealing mainly with the perfective grammatical aspect encoded in the present perfect (*passato prossimo*) in Italian. The perfective feature interacts with the lexical feature and gives a reading of finished action for both types of predicates: telic or atelic. We will analyse both as lexical and grammatical aspect are encoded in Italian.

2.1 Lexical Aspect

Lexical aspect is a property of a verb and it is derived in languages like Italian by two elements at work in the VP:

- 1) The semantic properties resulting from the structural configuration of the VP and of the morpho-syntactic elements in the VP.
- 2) The features attributed to each lexical root that enter into the syntactic derivation, independently from the structural configurations.

A predicate has telic interpretation when the event that it denotes reaches its point of culmination; in other words, when it entails the completion of an event as in *build the house*, *write a letter*. A telic predicate has a natural endpoint, while a predicate is atelic when the event that it denotes does not reach its culmination or does not encode any natural endpoint. Telicity is coded both structurally and lexically in Italian. Italian encodes the (a)telicity in the verb phrase through the presence of a definite or indefinite object as in (1).

¹ Arosio's (2011) in his review of Romance tense system defines aspect as concerning a temporal relation between the time at which the eventuality described by the VP holds and the time introduced by tense (Klein 1994).

- (1) a. Il cavallo ha mangiato pane per ore/#in un'ora (uncountable/mass)
 The horse has eaten bread for hours/#in an hour
 'The horse has eaten bread for hours/#in an hour'
- b. Il cavallo ha mangiato la mela #per ore/in un'ora (countable)
 The horse has eaten the apple #for hours/in an hour
 'The horse ate #for hours/in an hour'

Lexical aspect can also be determined directly by the lexical root of the verb. Each verbal root may include its own lexical features like [\pm stative], [\pm durative], [\pm telic]. For example in (2) and (3) below, we have two Unergative verbs that are compositionally atelic, since no direct object is involved in the event they denote. Nevertheless while *dormire* 'sleep' in (2) is non stative, durative and atelic, a verb such as *partorire* 'give birth to' (3) is non stative and non durative but telic.

- (2) Maria ha dormito per ore/*in un'ora.
 Maria has slept for hours/ *in one hour.
 'Maria has slept for hours/ *in one hour'
- (3) Maria ha partorito *per ore/in un'ora.
 Maria has given birth*for hours / in one hour.
 'Maria has given birth (to a baby) *for hours/ in one hour'

Both examples do not have an explicit endpoint in object position that determines telicity. The contrast is given by the fact that *partorire* in (3) is telic because of the presence in its lexical root of the world *parto* that means *birth* in Italian and is a *bounded* root in the terms of Harley (2005).² Both lexical specification on the lexical root of the verb and an overt definite object may determine telicity in Italian. Nevertheless, in the present work we will deal mainly with the telicity derived compositionally by the presence of an internal object because it is the main mechanism at work in the attribution of

² Harley (2005) distinguishes between two types of roots. The first one is the *bounded* root that denotes things that are delimited and determines telic reading: for example verbs of births such as *foal*, *calve* are derived by the incorporation of NPs like *foal* and *calf* that measure-out the event of birth due to their finite spatial extent. The second type of roots is the *unbounded* root that denotes things that are not delimited and determine atelic reading. Incorporating an *unbounded* root produces an activity due to the inherently infinite extent of the event or thing named by the root: for example *dance*, *drool* and *sleep* refer to NPs that are not delimited. For a discussion about boundedness vs unboundedness in nouns, verbs and events see Harley (2005).

lexical aspect.³ In the following Sections we will check whether the presence of an internal object has a role in the acquisition of verbs: that is, whether verbs select an internal argument, as transitives and unaccusatives in (4), and verbs that do not, as unergatives in (5) are found with the same pattern of distribution of auxiliaries in child Italian.

- (4) Verbs with Internal Argument
- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| $[_{vp} DP \nu [_{vp} DP \textit{Internal Argument} [_{vp} V XP]]]$ | Transitives |
| $[_{vp} \text{---} \nu [_{vp} DP \textit{Internal Argument} [_{vp} V XP]]]$ | Unaccusatives |
- (5) Verbs with no Internal Argument
- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| $[_{vp} DP \nu [_V V N]]$ | Unergatives |
|---------------------------|-------------|

Our goal is to investigate how and when children relate the “compositional” telicity to the grammatical aspect encoded in the present perfect. In Italian the structural configuration of VPs, and their *aktionsart*, also implies the selection of different auxiliaries involved in the formation of the present perfect.

2.1.1 Verb Classes and Auxiliary Selection

Languages vary on the basis of the auxiliary that verbs select in the formation of compound tenses. There are languages that do not show a split in the selection of auxiliaries. Some languages like English, Spanish, some varieties of Catalan, Swedish and a number of Italo-Romance dialects select just *have* while others select only *be* such as Scottish Gaelic (Adger 1996), Welsh (Roberts 2005), modern Terracinese (an Italo-Romance dialect discussed by Tuttle 1986), several Slavic languages (e.g. see Pancheva 2003 on Bulgarian) and Shetland English (Melchers 1992).⁴

Other languages differ on the type of properties that determine the split in auxiliaries: on the one hand there are clause-level properties, on the other hand there are predicate-level properties. In the clause-level set there are the languages that split their auxiliaries on the basis of the person and number of the subjects, or on tense and mood such as many Italian and Germanic dialects (Manzini and Savoia 2005 and 2011; McFadden and Alexiadou 2006).⁵

³ Telicity is specified by the lexical root of the verb only in few delimited cases. For a discussion see Lorusso (2014).

⁴ Interestingly enough, many of the languages in this group do not actually have a lexical verb corresponding to *have*. Possession is expressed by *be* combined with oblique marking on the possessor. For a discussion of this typology of languages see McFadden *et al.* (2006).

⁵ Kayne (1993), for example, attempts to handle both splits based on argument structure and those based on person and number. Recall that, for him, the difference between

In the predicate-level set there are the languages that have formed the basis for much of the discussion about auxiliary selection in literature, namely Dutch, French, German, Italian and several other Romance and Germanic varieties. The factors involved are: the argument structural status of the main predicates and consequently the aspectual structure or *Aktionsart* of the denoted eventuality. In Italian, the argument structure and its lexical aspect have been invoked to be responsible for the auxiliary selection since the formulation of the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978). The central premise of the Unaccusative Hypothesis is that intransitive verbs fall into two classes depending on the locus of generation of their single argument: unergatives and transitives project an external argument while unaccusatives an internal argument. The motivation for this idea comes from the behaviour of intransitive verbs on a series of syntactic tests which distinguish transitive subjects from objects: for example the *ne* Italian partitive clitic that is possible only with internal arguments. Crucially, in languages like Italian, the distribution of auxiliaries across intransitives seems to coincide with the split determined by the syntactic tests like *ne*-cliticization. Perlmutter, thus, suggested that the syntactic representation distinguishes unergatives/transitives from unaccusatives in terms of the underlying grammatical roles borne by their subjects. Consequently he proposed rules for the auxiliary selection that refer to the underlying grammatical roles. Burzio (1986) accordingly argues that the selection of the auxiliary in Italian is an Unaccusative diagnostic:⁶ Unaccusatives select the auxiliary *essere* 'to be' while unergatives and transitives select *avere* 'to have'.

Focusing on the structure and the interpretation of the present perfect, it is derived by an auxiliary verb in the present combined with an embedded perfect participle. Following the conception of English auxiliaries of Chomsky (1995), for which the present perfect is not monoclausal and it consists of a verb associated with an auxiliary functional projection, various authors (Kayne 1993; Manzini and Savoia 2007 and 2011) assume that the matrix auxiliary and the embedded verbs are two separate sentential units. These biclausal structures have monoclausal properties, such as the fact that the perfective properties of

have and *be* reduces to whether or not a preposition incorporates into *be*. One circumstance under which incorporation will fail is if the structure simply lacks the P in the first place. He proposes that this is possible in unaccusatives, but not in unergatives or transitives, hence the familiar auxiliary split based on predicate-level proper Boies. Alternatively, incorporation can be made unnecessary even if the P is present, if the subject can escape the prepositional structure in some other way. Simplifying greatly, this possibility is related to participial agreement with the subject, and thus can be sensitive to the subject's person and number. This leads to the attested person- and number-based splits. Manzini and Savoia (2005 and 2011), D'Alessandro (2012), Arregi and Nevins (2012) implement and reformulate the proposal of Kayne in explaining the person and number split languages.

⁶ For a discussion on the Unaccusative Diagnostics at work in Italian and in other languages see Burzio (1986), Grimshaw (1987) and Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995).

the embedded verb are attributed to the complex biclausal predicate. In this perspective they conclude that *have* and *be* are the same verbs that appear in different constructions. On the one hand, the *be* auxiliary shares some property with the copulas (Moro 1997) since it selects a predication as its complement and no external argument. The subject of the embedded predicate becomes the subject of the entire complex predicate, as for example with unaccusative structures where the internal argument becomes the sentential subject. On the other hand, *have* is a possession verb and a transitive predicate. When it is used as an auxiliary it still preserves a modal/deontic reading and it selects a full sentence with an external argument: namely, transitive predicates. Nevertheless while Kayne (1993) defines *have* as an applicative of *be*, derived through the incorporation of a preposition, Manzini and Savoia (2007 and 2011) assume that *have* and *be* are two independent lexical entries.

Regarding this research needs, when children learn a language they assign to the lexical entry of the auxiliary *be* unaccusative and defective predicates, while to the auxiliary *have* transitive predicates. Whether the two auxiliaries are derived by the same form through incorporation is not relevant in our regard, we are interested in the different predicates that each auxiliary selects. When children start to use auxiliaries they have already learnt the argument structure of the embedded verb and its *aktionsart* (4-5).

In a perspective of lexical parameterization: “values of a parameter are associated not with a particular grammar but with particular lexical items” (Manzini and Wexler 1987: 424) by children. They have fixed the parameter for which *have* selects transitive and unergative predicates and *be* unaccusatives. Unaccusative structures involve an internal argument and are telic. Both transitives and unergatives project an external argument. On the one hand, transitives, in (6) below, involve an overt direct object, that may yield telicity. On the other hand unergatives, in (7), do not involve an overt object. Hale and Keyser (1993) first proposed that the unergatives (beside the external argument in Spec, *v*P) have a structure similar to the transitives in the sense that they project an internal argument position: the internal argument is a nominal head, thus capturing the denominal character of most unergatives. This fact allows many unergatives (in sentences like *sing a song* or in consumption verbs) to take an overt complement of a restricted semantic class (hyponymous) linked to the verbal root.⁷

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| (6) | $[_{vP} DP \ v \ [_{VP} DP \ [_{VP} V \ XP]]]$ | Transitives |
| (7) | $[_{vP} DP \ v \ [_V V \ N]]$ | Unergatives |

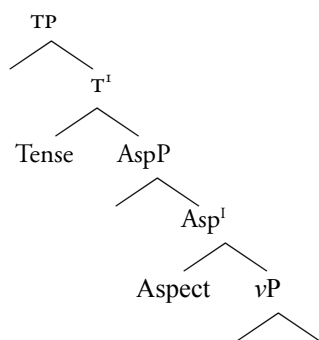
⁷ For an analysis and a review of cognate object with Unergatives see Mateu (2002), Ramchand (2008), Haugen (2009), Berro (2012). Furthermore, not all unergative verbs can take hyponym objects (Levin and Rappoport Hovav 1995; Folli and Harley 2007).

So children in the earliest stage may fix the parameter for which verbs with an external argument are selected by *have*, and verbs with internal arguments are selected by *be*. Nevertheless, the fact that *have* implies more complex predicates than the defective/unaccusative predicates selected by *be* may determine some differences in the distribution of the two auxiliaries in the earliest productions. We will check this prediction in the corpus of spontaneous speech in Section 3.

2.2 Grammatical Aspect

The attribution of grammatical aspect through tense morphology works on predicates with marked lexical-aspectual values (such as telicity/atelicity). The present perfect (*passato prossimo*) is a past tense and it interacts with lexical aspect in a representation *à la* Kratzer (1998), in (8), where T phrase selects different aspectual values in AspP.

(8)



For example, the *passato prossimo* in Italian encodes a perfective aspectual feature selected by a present tense.⁸ The perfective feature in AspP then interacts with the lexical feature and gives a reading of finished action for both types of predicates: telic or atelic. Thus, the *passato prossimo* on the one hand gives an entailment of completion for telic predicates such that the event has

⁸ The *passato prossimo* is a past tense even though the auxiliary is presented with the morphology of the present tense, and T head is present. Its interpretation as a past tense results from the incorporation of the perfective aspectual features. In opposition to *passato prossimo* in Italian there is the *passato remoto* (simple past) that is a past tense that is perfective and is selected by a past T head. For a discussion on Italian tense system see Bianchi and Bertinetto (2003), Giorgi and Pianesi (2007), Arosio (2011).

progressed to its natural culmination moment and, on the other hand, it establishes termination for atelic predicates (there is no natural culmination moment for atelic predicates; the final moment is an arbitrary moment). The *imperfetto*, for its imperfective feature, suggests ongoingness with the force of a conversational implicature and it applies in the same way to both telic and atelic verbs. All these interactions are summarized throughout Table 1.⁹

Table 1. Interaction between (a) Telicity and the Aspectual Tenses (adapted from van Hout and Hollebrandse 2001)

Grammatical Aspect		IMPERFETTO	PASSATO PROSSIMO
Lexical Aspect	TELIC	Ongoing	Completed
	ATELIC	Ongoing	Terminated

In our purpose, it is important to notice that the present perfect (*passato prossimo*) gives perfective entailment to all verbs it applies on. When children start to use the present perfect with all verb classes, they should assign the completed/terminated reading to all predicates. Since they fail in assigning perfective reading to all verb classes, it has been proposed that in acquisition children may rely only on the *aktionsart* of verbs to produce the morphology of the present perfect.

3. Corpus Analyses

In this Section we propose an analysis of the distribution of the forms of present perfect (*passato prossimo*) across verb classes, to confirm the early acquisition of the auxiliary split and to show that *have* and *be* are not used in the same way in the earliest stage.

Corpus: We used a longitudinal corpus of spontaneous productions of four Italian children aged between 18 and 36 months (Calambrone corpus: Diana, Martina, Raffaello, Rosa Cipriani *et al.* 1989; CHILDES database MacWhinney and Snow 1985). In the corpus we analysed just the declarative finite sentences. Over the 17.573 sentences in the corpus we analysed 2.838 declarative sentences. The same operations were performed on a corpus of adults' productions (children's parents and caregivers): initially we had 4.115

⁹ We will not refer to the *imperfetto* since in the present study we are referring to the verb forms with auxiliaries.

sentences resulting from the transcription of 10 files chosen randomly within the children's corpus, then we obtained 1.037 declarative utterances with lexical verbs. We looked for the forms of *passato prossimo* and the verb class they occurred with. We performed our analysis over three main general classes: unaccusatives, unergatives and transitives.

3.1 Results

The first data is about the distribution of form with auxiliaries across verb classes. Children do not use the same percentage of forms of *passato prossimo* for all verb classes and the same is true for adults. In fact, there is a tendency in children's production to use more compound tensed forms with unaccusatives and transitives than with Unergatives. Only 3% of the total of Unergative verbs shows an auxiliary morphology in children's productions. The percentage of occurrence of inflected forms of the *passato prossimo* along all the productions for each verb class is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Forms with Auxiliaries across Verb Classes in both Children and Adults' Spontaneous Speech

Auxiliary Selection across Verb Classes			
	<i>essere</i> (to be)	<i>avere</i> (to have)	Omission
Unaccusatives	66 (95%)	0	4 (5)%
Unergatives	0	6 (67%)	3 (33%)
Transitives	0	158 (68%)	75 (31%)

Children do not use the same percentage of forms of *passato prossimo* for all verb classes and the same is true for adults. In fact, there is a tendency in children's production to use more compound tensed forms with unaccusatives and transitives than with unergatives. Only 3% of the total of Unergative verbs shows an auxiliary morphology in children's productions. We then checked if children select the auxiliaries correctly: Table 3¹⁰ shows the percentage of the *essere* and *avere* selected for the *passato prossimo*.

¹⁰ We do not present data from adults, since adults do not present any mistake in the selection of the auxiliary and no omission.

Table 3. Percentage of Selection of the Auxiliary in the Compound Tensed Form in Children's Productions

Distribution of Forms with Auxiliaries across Verb Classes				
	Children		Adults	
	Forms with Auxiliary	Simple Forms	Forms with Auxiliary	Simple Forms
Unaccusatives	89 (15%)	509 (85%)	18 (9%)	184 (91%)
Transitives	233 (12%)	1644 (88%)	130 (20%)	515 (80%)
Unergatives	9 (3%)	285 (97%)	8 (10%)	80 (90%)

Children do not show any problem in assigning the proper auxiliary in the compound-tense form with each verb class. Infants regularly select the right auxiliary *essere* for unaccusatives and *avere* for unergatives and transitives. These results are consistent with the ones of Snyder and Stromswold (1997).

In order to investigate further the higher omission of *have* we considered the age at which the first forms are found with the different verb classes. The age at which children use the first forms of *passato prossimo* does not seem to be the same for all verb classes. The results from the four children show that none of them use compounds in the earliest stage. Furthermore, though there are strong individual differences regarding the first compounds with unaccusatives and transitives, all of them presented the same temporal pattern for the appearance of the first compound with unergatives¹¹: these are the last compound forms appearing in children's production as Table 4 shows.

Table 4. Age of First Appearance of *passato prossimo* (yy,mm,dd)

First Forms of <i>Passato Prossimo</i> (yy, mm, dd) across Verb Classes for Each Child			
	Unaccusatives	Unergatives	Transitives
Diana	01; 08, 05	02; 06	01; 10, 07
Martina	No forms	02; 04, 14	01; 07, 18
Raffello	02; 03, 14	02, 05, 13	01, 11
Rosa	02; 01, 14	03; 00, 24	02; 05, 25

¹¹ Martina does not use auxiliaries with unaccusatives. The analysis performed on the same corpus in Lorusso (2014) shows that she is, however, able to use the auxiliary with unaccusatives in interrogative contexts.

3.2 Interim Discussion of Corpus Analysis

The general data about the selection of the auxiliary confirms that children correctly choose it depending on the verb class. Nevertheless, children omit significantly more *have* than they do *be*: the fact that *have* selects transitive predicate with an external argument seems to influence the data of omission. Caprin and Guasti (2009) argued that the use of *be* as an auxiliary emerges later than the use of *be* as a copula because children are able to check in the earliest stage just the features of a single verb, as for copulas, and not of two verbs, as for the biclausal auxiliary constructions. This explanation can not account for the data about the distribution of *have*: both *have* and *be* imply biclausal sentences, the fact that *have* is omitted more and appears later than *be* resides in the type of predicates selected by *have*: namely, *have* is a possession verb that selects a full sentence with an external argument (as in Manzini and Savoia 2011).

Furthermore, the present perfect with unergatives is the last to appear for all children. The prediction of the *Aspect First Hypothesis* are confirmed by this result: children in the earliest stage use present perfect mainly with telic predicates (i.e. unaccusatives and transitives) and not with atelic predicates (i.e. unergatives). We checked the interaction between the use of perfective morphology with compositionally telic transitives and atelic unergatives through two experimental tasks in order to understand: 1) until which age children do not produce the perfective morphology of the *passato prossimo* with unergatives; 2) whether the delay with unergatives is due to the fact that these verbs are produced without an overt direct object which in Italian yields telic interpretation. In the next two Sections we present the results of two experiments on the production and comprehension of the present perfect with telic transitives and atelic unergatives.

4. Experiment 1: Production

This experiment is designed to recognize the pattern of expression of perfective/imperfective forms along ages and verb classes. Children are presented with a video in which both telic transitives and atelic unergatives are completed/terminated and then they are asked to describe the video using past tenses. The first goal of the production task is to investigate whether and when children start produce *passato prossimo* with both unergatives and transitives at a similar rate. Our proposal is that children in their early stages may have problems in deriving perfective (*passato prossimo*) with unergatives, because they are not able to identify the telicity through an overt object/endpoint that would measure out the event and its completion. Children, then, would prefer *passato prossimo* (the perfective form) with telic predicates and imperfetto (the imperfective form) with atelic verbs. Thus, our predictions coincide with the ones of the

Aspect First Hypothesis, since we both assume that children will use perfective forms with transitives and imperfective forms with unergatives. However, while *AFH* assumes that the cause of such behaviour is linked to the tense=aspect mapping, our proposal anchors this distribution to the relevance children give to the role of overt object to derive aspectual past tenses.

Subjects: Ten mother-tongue adult Italian speakers and fifty children participated in the study: ten three-year-olds, ten four-year-olds, ten five-year-olds, ten six-year-olds and ten seven-year-olds. The ten adults were tested at their homes in Conversano (Bari, Italy) and the children were tested at school 1° Circolo didattico “Giovanni Falcone” also in Conversano (Bari, Italy).

Stimuli and Procedure: the materials consisted of 8 silent digital videos in which a story was presented: the story involved three telic transitive verbs with an overt quantified object and three atelic verbs without overt objects. The example (9) below illustrates an example of telic transitive and Fig. 1 is a screenshot of the content of the video showed to the children. In (10) we provide an example of atelic unergative and in Fig. 2 a screenshot of the video.

(9) Telic transitive with overt objects in the experimental session

a. Marta fa la torta

‘Marta makes the cake’

[The girl starts to prepare a cake in the kitchen using pots, spoons and milk and fruit. Then, after a few seconds she shows a cake to the camera.]

Figure 1. A Screenshot of the Video in which the Character “makes a Cake” (from the author’s personal files)



- (10) Atelic unergative in the experimental session
- a. Marta dorme
'Marta sleeps'
[The girl is seen while she sleeps, then she wakes up.]

Figure 2. A Screenshot of the Video in which the Character "sleeps" (from the author's personal files)



Atelic events were represented with an endpoint as a specific design of our experiment (contrary to what happens in others experiment for Spanish such as in Hodgson (2003) where atelic verbs were represented in ongoing situations). The endpoints are given in our experiment to force a completed reading and, consequently, the use of *passato prossimo*. All events (telic and atelic) were presented in the same video in a random order. The actions represented were chosen in order to evoke familiar activities for the children. Infants, before watching the video, were introduced to the character in the story and they were asked to pay attention to what she had done the day before in order to describe it. The video presented the six actions sequentially as in (11).

- (11) Sequence of actions in the experimental session
- i. Marta sleeps
 - ii. Marta makes the cake
 - iii. Marta phones
 - iv. Marta washes the dishes
 - v. Marta eats the cake
 - vi. Marta sings

After watching the video, children were presented with six pictures representing the actions they had just seen in the video. Then, they were asked to describe such actions in the past with the request: *Describe what Marta did yesterday*. They were helped with some pictures presenting the resulting states.

Results: The first general result we present is the attribution of perfective and imperfective morphology to the general verb classes of telic transitives on one hand and atelic Unergatives on the other. The absolute numbers and the percentage of the responses are summarized in tab. 5.

Table 5. Responses with Telic Transitives

Distribution of Perfective/Imperfective Tense Morphology with Telic Transitives				
Telic verbs		Passato Prossimo	Imperfetto	Total
Age	3	31 (77,5%)	9 (22,5%)	40
	4	21 (52,5%)	19 (47,5%)	40
	5	29 (72,5%)	11 (27,5%)	40
	6	25 (62,5%)	15 (37,5%)	40
	7	32 (80%)	8 (20%)	40
	adults	33 (72,5%)	7 (27,5%)	40
Total		171	69	240

It seems clear that there is a systematic behaviour in attributing *passato prossimo* to telic transitives. The results in tab.5 give us the general percentage of perfective forms produced with telic verbs for all the individuals examined. At first sight, there are differences in the performance of the group of four- and six-year-olds. However, the statistical analysis performed does not indicate significant differences among the age groups. There is a tendency for all age groups to produce telic transitives in sentences with the *passato prossimo*.

Atelic unergatives have different distributions of perfective morphology depending on age. In Table 6 we give the absolute number and the percentages of the responses. The general percentage in Table 6 shows that there is a stronger variation for the production of the *passato prossimo* for atelic unergatives than with telic transitives. Children under the age of 5 produce the perfective with such verbs in less than half of the situations. They prefer to use imperfective forms in this context.

Table 6. Responses with Atelic Unergatives (absolute numbers and percentages)

Distribution of Perfective/Imperfective Tense Morphology with Atelic Unergatives				
Atelic verbs		Passato Prossimo	Imperfetto	Total
Age	3	19 (38%)	31 (62%)	50
	4	10 (20%)	40 (80%)	50
	5	23 (46%)	27 (54%)	50
	6	29 (58%)	21 (42%)	50
	7	28 (56%)	22 (44%)	50
	adults	34 (64%)	16 (36%)	50
Total		143	157	300

The likelihood ratio statistic performed on this data was 40.84 (p-value=0.024). That means that there is a significant difference among ages for the type of responses. Adults seem to behave in the same way with both verb classes: they show the tendency in selecting the *passato prossimo* without any differences among the two verb classes. Children aged between 5 and 7 years also show the tendency to select *passato prossimo* for both verb classes. So, adults and children aged between 5 and 7 years respond as the experiment requires. Three-year-olds show systematic difference in the responses for each verb class. Atelic Unergatives are expressed with a preferential imperfective morphology, while telic transitives are expressed with a preferential *passato prossimo*. This result is statistically significant by the Wilcoxon test: it is -1.92 (p-value=0.054). The same is true for four-year-olds. (The Wilcoxon statistic in this case is -2.23 (p-value=0.026)). That means that only three- and four-year-olds systematically attribute perfective morphology for telic transitives and imperfective for atelic unergatives. All the verbs within the same verb class present similar responses. The pattern we saw for the whole verb class is consistent with the results of each verb individually.

4.1 Interim Discussion of the Production Experiment

We found that only at the age of 3 and 4 children had used a systematic correlation between telic and perfective and atelic and imperfective. This means that after this stage they are able to use the perfective morphology of *passato prossimo* for all verb classes. We can also claim that in the early stage (three, four years) children do not pay attention to the fact that the action in the video is presented with an endpoint. The results of the experiment confirm the assumptions of the *Aspect First Hypothesis* since children use perfective morphology to refer to telic verbs and imperfective morphology to refer to atelic predicates. Our proposal can also be maintained since at least at three, four years the absence of

an object with unergatives generally blocks the systematic use of *passato prossimo*. The difference between our account and the *Aspect First Hypothesis* is based on the fact that we do not need to postulate knowledge about the lexical aspect of verb classes at the age of three, four. We propose that the mere presence of an overt object at spell out favours the perfective morphological derivations. In order to choose between these two competing accounts we need to understand whether all the forms of *passato prossimo* are understood as telic predicates, as *Aspect First Hypothesis* predicts, or whether the syntactic information of each verb class (i.e. the presence of overt objects) determines the available readings as we predict. The comprehension experiment below aims at answering this question.

5. Experiment 2: Comprehension

The aim of the comprehension task is to understand how the perfective forms of *passato prossimo* are interpreted by children. The variable of the experiment is the complete /incomplete reading children give to the perfective forms with different verb classes. The notion of completion implicit in the *passato prossimo* is not available until later stages according to Van Hout and Hollebrandse (2001). Thus, the first task of our experiment is to confirm that children do not have the same readings of *passato prossimo* available in adult grammar. If that is the case, the second task is to identify, if there are any, the VP features of the verb that trigger the complete/incomplete reading. The experiment consisted of a story followed by a *who* question in the *passato prossimo*. The answer to the question regarded the knowledge of the perfective features encoded in the *passato prossimo*. Children had to choose between two pictures representing a completed and a non-completed (ongoing) situation. The *passato prossimo* should trigger a reading of completion.

When faced with a *passato prossimo*, the *Aspect First Hypothesis* predicts that children are supposed to answer always choosing the completed/terminated situations since what they express and comprehend through the *passato prossimo* is the telicity of a verb. In this task children are supposed to have a telic reading, always choosing the situation with a clear culmination point. Our hypothesis predicts that children would be sensitive to the structural characteristics of verbs: the presence/absence of an overt object will trigger completed/uncompleted readings respectively. The aspectual information encoded in the tense morphology alone becomes available later.

Subjects: The subjects were the same as in the preceding experiment: 10 adults and 60 children aged between 3 and 7 years, all of them native speakers of Italian.

Stimuli and Procedure: The experiment is a sentence picture-matching task. Eight digital video stories were presented to the subjects. Then a question in the *passato prossimo* was asked. The task was to identify the (completed) event.

Subjects were introduced to the two characters in the story and referred to in the question. Then they were shown the videos. Each of the videos presented the two characters (character A and character B) performing the same action, but in each video one of the two girls completed the action (*completed situation*) while the other was still performing it (*ongoing situation*). While subjects were watching the video, the interviewer was describing the video. At the end of the video subjects were shown a picture representing the *ongoing/uncompleted situation* and a picture representing the *completed situation*. Then they were asked to choose the picture in order to answer the question “Who has *verb-ed*?”. The completed situation was the correct answer in all cases. The 8 stories represented telic transitive verbs in 4 cases (12) and in the other 4 cases atelic Unergatives (13). In Fig. 3 we present the pictures with the completed and the ongoing situation which were shown to the children after the video presenting the telic transitive “build the train”. In Fig. 4 we show the pictures of the completed and the ongoing after they were exposed to the video representing the atelic unergative to “walk”.

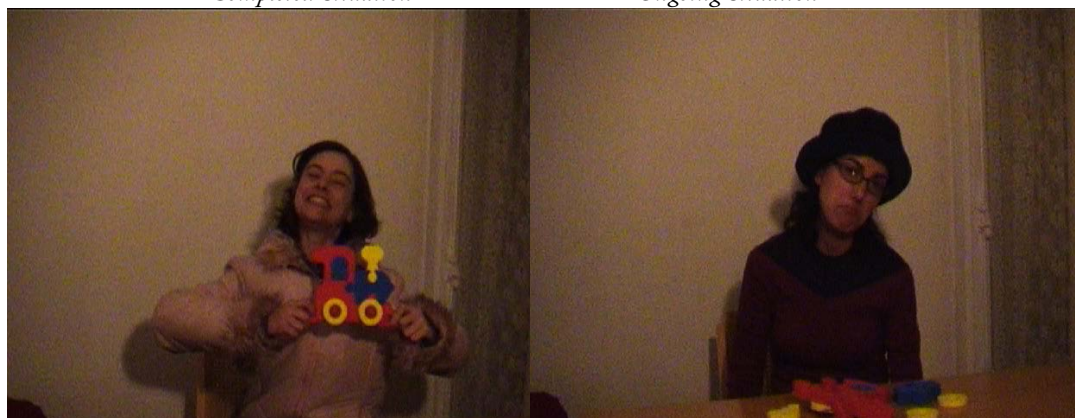
(12) Telic Transitives

- a. Bere il latte
'Drink the milk'
- b. Costruire il trenino
'Build the train'
- c. Mangiare il panino
'Eat the sandwich'
- d. Rompere i palloni
'Break the balloon'

Figure 3. The pictures that were shown to children after the video involving the telic transitive “build the train”: in the picture in the left the event is represented as *completed* while in the picture in the right is presented as ongoing /uncompleted (from the author's personal files).

Completed Situation

Ongoing Situation



(13) Atelic Unergatives

- a. Camminare
'Walk'
- b. Dormire
'Sleep'
- c. Ridere
'Laugh'
- d. Telefonare
'Phone'

Figure 4. The pictures that were shown to children after the video involving the atelic unergative “to walk”: in the picture in the left the event is represented as *completed* (the girl is sitting down after walking) while in the picture in the right it is presented as ongoing /uncompleted (the girl is still walking)

Completed Situation*Ongoing Situation*

Results: The first general result we present is relative to the interpretation assigned to telic transitives. In Table 7 we show the absolute number and the percentage of the responses assigned to this verb class: we present the total percentage of complete/terminated situations chosen with telic transitives. Telic transitives with an overt object have triggered very similar answers for all age groups. Children of all ages and adults have preferentially chosen the picture that represented the completed situations. We find a systematic completed reading attributed to the situations in which telic transitives were presented in the *passato prossimo*.

Table 7. Responses with Telic Transitives (absolute numbers and percentages)

Responses with Telic Transitives			
Telic verbs	Completed Situation	Ongoing Situation	Total
Age 3	38 (95 %)	2 (5 %)	40
4	39 (97,5 %)	1 (2,5 %)	40
5	40 (100 %)	0 (0 %)	40
6	40 (100 %)	0 (0 %)	40
7	40 (100 %)	0 (0 %)	40
adults	40 (100 %)	0 (0 %)	40
Total	237	3	240

The same cannot be said for the atelic unergatives. Table 8 presents the absolute numbers and percentages of the responses: the general distribution of terminated reading with unergatives in the *passato prossimo*. We can see that there are strong differences related to age: till the age of seven, children show a high proportion of ongoing readings for atelic unergatives. The completed reading encoded in the *passato prossimo* is not available till the age of 7.

Table 8. Responses with Atelic Unergatives (absolute numbers and percentages)

Responses with Atelic Unergatives			
Atelic verbs	Completed Situation	Ongoing Situation	Total
Age 3	17 (42,5%)	23 (57,5%)	40
4	19 (47,5%)	21 (52,5%)	40
5	24 (60%)	16 (40%)	40
6	17 (42,5%)	23 (67,5%)	40
7	35 (87,5%)	5 (12,5%)	40
adults	36 (90%)	4 (10%)	40
Total	148	92	240

The likelihood ratio statistic for the difference among ages in attributing terminated readings is 31.88 (p-value = 0.10), which means that there is a systematic differentiation for groups of age. Children attribute more non-terminated readings with unergatives than with telic transitive situations, in which a completed interpretation is given in almost all cases. The statistical analysis confirms that while adults and seven-year-olds do not show any different behaviour in attributing the completed reading to both verb classes,

children aged between 3 and 6 systematically attribute a non-terminated reading to the atelic verbs and a completed reading to the telic ones. The p-values of the likelihood statistic are all $p < 0,05$ for the children aged between 3 and 6 years. They distinguish between the tensed forms of the two verb classes for the different readings they attribute to them systematically.

5.1 *Interim Discussion of the Production Experiment*

The first result is that children do not systematically assign the perfective reading to the forms of *passato prossimo* with unergatives till the age of 7. This leads to two observations. First, children do not interpret the *passato prossimo* in the same way for the two lexical classes used in the experiment: they assign the completed readings preferentially to transitives. They are not sensitive to the feature of completion encoded in the verbal morphology with unergatives. Children do not recognize the grammatical aspect encoded in the verbal morphology as was previously claimed by Van Hout and Hollebrandse (2001). The second consideration is linked to the mechanism at work for the interpretation of the forms of *passato prossimo*. The different lexical information that each verb class encodes causes the different readings. Since the *passato prossimo* does not influence the interpretation, the children have direct access to the features of the verbs that determine their interpretation. The *aktionsart* of the verb is at work in children's responses since they attribute readings compatible with telicity: telic verbs are interpreted as completed situations, while atelic verbs are interpreted as describing non-terminated situations. This lexical aspect is not mapped in a one-to-one fashion to verbal morphology; otherwise children would have systematically chosen the completed reading for all the verb classes, since the stimulus is presented in a perfective tense that would have forced such a reading.

The *Aspect First Hypothesis*, which claims that verbal tense morphology is used to refer to lexical aspect, is ruled out since children analyse the *passato prossimo* with unergatives as not giving information about the completeness of the event. Thus, the perfective features are not analysed by children and the interpretations are linked to the compositional telicity/atelicity of the verbs. If we go back to the results of the production task, we know that children after the age of 5 years start to produce the *passato prossimo* with all verb classes (unergatives included). Why do they fail at the same stage to correctly analyze the forms they are able to produce? Our answer is that children after 5 years old still do not master the complex aspectual interaction between the *aktionsart* of verbs and the grammatical aspect encoded in the perfective morphology. In production, after 5 years old, they are able to talk about the past and to tell whether the event by each verbs is ongoing or completed. Nevertheless, in comprehension they use the *compositional* lexical aspect alone: when an overt object is expressed, children rely on the telic entailment of the event to attribute a completed reading.

Further investigations are needed to understand the interaction between aspectual value of the auxiliary morphology and the lexical aspect as it is encoded in the vP of the embedded predicate: 1) the interpretation of the present perfect with unaccusatives, with telic unergatives such as *partorire* ('to give birth') and with transitives; 2) the interpretation of imperfective morphology with all verb classes. However, we can at least argue that in child Italian the difference from adults are mainly found in the mapping between the perfective grammatical aspect and the predicates that do not show any overt mark of telicity. Similar results were also found for aphasics (in Yarbay *et al.* 2009): the computation of overt (a)telicity interferes with the distribution of the perfective morphology.

6. Conclusion

The present study investigated the validity of the *Aspect First Hypothesis* in child Italian by the analysis of the distribution of the present perfect in spontaneous speech and by testing children's production and comprehension of the perfective reading encoded in the present perfect.

The predictions of the *Aspect First Hypothesis* can account for the majority of the data we presented. Children differentiate between verb classes from the very early stages, as the data about the distribution of the auxiliary across verb classes shows. They omit the *have* auxiliary more than *be*: *be* auxiliary, in fact, selects a mono argumental defective predicates while *have* selects full sentences with active predicates.

Have is more complex than *be* for the predicates that it selects: transitive and unergatives. Transitive verbs select both a subject and an object. Furthermore, at the same stage we analysed (19-36 months) transitive predicates undergo the phenomenon of object clitic omission in child Italian (Guasti 1993-1994; Hammann *et al.* 1996; Jakubovicz *et al.* 1998; Wexler *et al.* 2004; Caprin and Guasti 2009; Tedeschi 2009).¹² The acquisition of clitic parameter plays a central role in the early stage of acquisition. The complexity of the transitive predicates is also linked to the difficulties in mastering of the object clitic pronouns: these pronominal elements differ from subject pronouns due to locality issues and agreement with the past participle in the constructions involving the auxiliary. In order to complete the picture, further development of the present study will be the comparison of the data of the omission of *have* with transitives and the omission of clitics in the early stage.

Unergatives are the other "complex" predicates selected by *have*. A delay, in fact, is found in the production of the *have*-auxiliary perfective morphology

¹² Clitic omission is found in a similar rate in both languages with auxiliary split (French, Italian) and language without auxiliary split (Catalan). Cf Wexler *et al.* (2004).

with unergatives. Until the age of 5 children preferentially produce perfective forms with telic transitives and imperfective forms with atelic unergatives. As *Aspect First Hypothesis* predicts, children use past or perfective forms mainly to refer to telic predicates and present or imperfective forms mainly to refer to atelic predicates.

Nevertheless, *Aspect First Hypothesis* cannot account for the result of the comprehension task. Children do not assign to the present perfect a completed reading with unergatives till the age of 7: there is no one-to-one mapping between the present perfect and the compositional telicity. Moreover, in the production task some forms of the present perfect are used with unergatives before the age of 5: children are able to refer to the past and completed reading also with unergatives.

Our proposal is that the presence of an overt object triggers the production and the comprehension of the perfective morphology. Since in Italian telicity is compositional, an overt direct object is a syntactic clue for determining the telic lexical aspect of verbs.

We share with the *Aspect First Hypothesis* the idea that the *aktionsart* of the verbs strongly influence the distribution of the present perfect morphology in the earliest stage. But, while the *AFFH* implies a correspondence between the *aktionsart* of verbs and the verbal morphology in the earliest stage, we propose that the presence of an overt syntactic element, such as the direct object, influences the distribution of the present perfect. The direct object, in fact, entails the telic lexical aspectual readings of verbs: their *aktionsart*.

So children by the very early stage are sensible to the structural configuration of verb classes as represented in (14-15). The presence of an overt internal argument favors the mastering of the perfective auxiliaries with unaccusatives (lower percentage of omission of *be* with unaccusatives) and transitives (where *have* auxiliary is produced and comprehended earlier than with unergatives, but it is omitted in a high percentage in the earliest stage maybe for factors linked to the acquisition of the object clitic pronouns).

- (14) Verbs with Internal Argument

$$\begin{array}{l} [_{vp} DP \nu [_{vp} DP \textit{Internal Argument} [_{vp} V \textit{XP}]]] \text{ Transitives} \\ [_{vp} \text{---} \nu [_{vp} DP \textit{Internal Argument} [_{vp} V \textit{XP}]]] \text{ Unaccusatives} \end{array}$$
- (15) Verbs with no Internal Argument

$$[_{vp} DP \nu [_{v} V \textit{N}]] \text{ Unergatives}$$

The resulting model of child grammar shows that the basic structural configuration of verb classes are acquired early on and therefore the lexical parameterization of auxiliary split is also mastered in the earliest stage. The non-adultlike behaviors are limited to the embedded predicate selected by *have* whose lexical aspect can not be retrieved directly by an overt direct object: specifically, to unergatives.

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Acquiring Romance Causatives: Evidence from Child Italian

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Abstract:

Romance *Faire-Infinitive* causatives have been thoroughly investigated in formal generative syntax (Kayne 1975; Burzio 1986; Baker 1988; Folli and Harley 2013, a.o.), conversely, they have scarcely been investigated in the domain of psycholinguistics. This study fills a gap in the acquisition literature since it provides experimental data concerning both the comprehension and the production of *Faire-Infinitive* causatives by three to six years-old L1 Italian-speaking children. The methodology used is a revised version of the Truth Value Judgement Task (Crain and Thornton 1998). Our data suggest that by age four Italian speaking children accurately comprehend and produce the structure under scrutiny although there is also later development. In the theoretical part of the paper some of the most influential proposals about the syntax of Romance causatives are discussed and a proposal about the status of the *causee* argument is developed. On the basis of crosslinguistic evidence it is argued that the *a-causee* is nothing but an oblique “quirky subject”, no different from the oblique subjects found in the ergative alignment of other Indo-European languages such as Kurmanji Kurdish.

Keywords: Child Italian, Datives, Quirky Subject, Romance Causatives, Truth Value Judgement Task

1. Introduction

The aim of the present paper is twofold: we present experimental data¹ concerning the acquisition of the so-called *Faire-Infinitive* causative (Kayne

¹ The data discussed in the present paper, previously unpublished, are the core of the author's 2013 MA Thesis (Università degli Studi di Siena).

1975) in L1 Italian and then we provide a formal account of its syntactic derivation that, in our view, is compatible with the acquisition facts. The paper is structured as follows. In the first Section we review previous experimental studies on the acquisition of periphrastic causatives. In Section 2 we describe the experimental design we used in our study and we provide information about the experimental subjects. In Section 3 we provide the results and in Section 4 we discuss our findings. Then in Section 5 we examine some issues concerning the syntax of the *Faire-Infinitive* causative. In the theoretical part of the paper we will particularly focus our attention on the status of the *causee* argument. Section 6 explores some of the implications of our theoretical claims. Section 7 concludes the paper.

1.1 Previous Studies on the Acquisition of Periphrastic Causatives

Before turning to reviewing previous psycholinguistic studies we exemplify an Italian periphrastic causative which will be the object of our study below:

- (1) a. La mamma ha fatto leggere il libro a Sara
 the mum made read.INF the book to Sara
 ‘Mum made Sara read the book’

In sentence (1a) the causative verb *ha fatto* ‘made’ embeds an infinitival complement which consists of a lexical verb *leggere* ‘to read’ which takes the DP *il libro* ‘the book’ as its internal argument and the a-*causee* *a Sara* ‘to Sara’ as its external argument. Whereas the causative verb takes the *causer* argument *la mamma* ‘the mum’ as its external argument.

The Romance-type periphrastic causative has always been a well-studied and debated topic in the formal generative literature. Conversely, it has scarcely been investigated in the domain of psycholinguistics. Most of the acquisition studies in the literature rely on data from corpora which contain the early naturalistic productions of children until around the age of 4. Therefore, little is known about the time course of acquisition of causatives crosslinguistically after the fourth year of age. Furthermore, most of these studies target less familiar languages like Inuktitut (Allen 1996), or Taiwan Southern Min (Lin and Tsai 2008). Okabe’s (2008) PhD thesis is the first attempt to assess the comprehension of child Japanese lexical and productive causatives by means of a controlled test. At present, as far as we know, there are only two experimental studies aimed at assessing the acquisition of causatives in a Romance language: Ammon and Slobin’s (1979) pioneering crosslinguistic work concerning Italian among other languages and a very recent study by Santos, Gonçalves and Hyams (2013) which tests causatives among other complex structures in L1 European Portuguese. For all the above reasons, our study fills a gap in the Romance acquisition literature as we provide experimental data both on the

comprehension and the production of *Faire-Infinitive* (Kayne 1975) causatives by L1 Italian three- to six-year-olds.²

1.2 *Studies on the Spontaneous Production of Child Causatives*

Evidence from spontaneous production studies shows that children learning English start to produce well-formed causative sentences with causative verbs like *make* and *get* around the age of 24–26 months. However, crucially non-target uses are attested until age 5. By that time, the child investigated by Bowerman (1982) could use the periphrastic causative sentence productively. The hypothesis entertained by Bowerman is that, in the initial stage of acquisition, L1 English-speaking children cannot properly distinguish between the different meanings conveyed by lexical vs. periphrastic causatives respectively (direct vs. indirect causation) and therefore they use the two structures interchangeably, as the non-target productions below suggest:³

- | | | |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| (2) a. | Daddy go me around | (2;8) |
| | ‘Daddy makes me go around’ | |
| b. | I’m singing him | (3;1) |
| | ‘I’m making him sing’ | |
| c. | See, she can’t eat. But I can’t eat her | (3;3) |
| | ‘See, she can’t eat. But I can make her eat/feed her’ | |
- (Bowerman 1974: 143; 1982: 14)

The inverse pattern is also attested (a periphrastic causative is produced in a context where only the lexical causative is felicitous). Bowerman claims that the overlapping between the two structures in the child grammar points to a formal correlation between the latter; however, the author does not discuss how the child eventually attains adult-like competence.

Courtney’s (2002) study on the spontaneous production of morphological causatives in child Quechua supports Bowerman’s claim that children initially do not differentiate between lexical and analytical causatives (periphrastic or morphological ones): Courtney found that children learning Quechua initially interpret all em-

² I am grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their helpful and detailed comments on an earlier version of this paper. All remaining errors are my own.

³ Interestingly, we found a strikingly similar non-target production in L1 Italian in support of Bowerman’s findings about the interchangeable use of lexical vs. periphrastic causative in early grammars (albeit one occurrence only, as most of our younger experimental subjects were either answering with a simple declarative non-causative sentence or with a target periphrastic causative):

*Il mago ha scomparito una cosa (subject 3 (3;2))

‘The magician has disappeared (incorrect past participle form) some stuff.’

bedded subjects of morphological causatives as non-volitional subjects, suggesting that they cannot properly associate the causative marker with indirect causation.

Allen (1996) investigates the spontaneous production of the analytical (morphological) causative in child Inuktitut (an Eskimo language). She found that in this language as well the causative morpheme starts being felicitously uttered between the second and the third year of age. Moreover, the author observes that it shows up in imperative contexts first.

The same data is found by Lin and Tsay (2008) for Taiwan Southern Min, a Sinitic language. The authors examine the early production of a child (1;2-3;3) and they report that the first type of causative which emerges in the child grammar is the analytic one, which is first found in imperative sentences and then it extends to proper causative contexts.

We exemplify a morphological and an analytical causative sentence in Taiwan Southern Min below:

- (3) a. li png ai ciah-hoo-liau
 you meal must eat- CAUS-up
 ‘You must eat up the meal’
- b. hoo gua sng
 let me play
 ‘Let me play’

(Lin and Tsay 2008: 470-471)

The authors claim that children learning Taiwan Southern Min (henceforth TSM) are able to consistently use the causative marker early on (from 1;10 years of age). The early onset of analytic causative in TSM is not surprising given that the element *hoo* is widely available in the primary linguistic data and it occurs in a variety of structures in the language: lexicalizing the causative morphological marker, the causative verb, the light verb “give”, dative case and also marking the agent in passive sentences. Hence, the non-causative uses of *hoo* could possibly “prime” its causative use. This line of reasoning is corroborated by the fact that the lexical causative, which crucially does not feature an overt *hoo* functional element, is acquired later by the child learning TSM. Further studies on the acquisition of early causatives are needed in order to shed light on the crosslinguistic timing of acquisition of the structure under scrutiny.

1.3 Experimental Studies on the Comprehension and the Production of Causative Sentences

In this Section we review three studies on the comprehension and the production of causative sentences in controlled settings.

Ammon and Slobin (1979) performed a pioneering experimental study using the Act-Out-Task methodology, aimed at assessing the comprehension of

analytical causatives (both periphrastic and morphological) in L1 Turkish, L1 English, L1 Serbo-Croatian and L1 Italian respectively. Their main finding was that causative sentences are accurately interpreted from the third year of age. The authors hypothesized that some types of causatives might be harder to acquire than others. For instance, in Turkish and Serbo-Croatian the embedded *causee* is inflected for case and, according to the authors, the child learning these two languages can rely on this syntactic cue in order to disambiguate the underlying structure. On the other hand, the processing of causative sentences in English and Italian is not disambiguated by any local overt syntactic cue signalling the underlying semantic relations of the arguments.

The results are coherent with the authors' assumptions about the structures of the languages examined: causative sentences are processed with a lesser degree of accuracy by English- and Italian-speaking children in comparison to Turkish- and Serbo-Croatian-speaking children. The authors explain the observed pattern as follows: the children learning Italian or English have to postpone the assignment of semantic roles as it can only be carried out after the whole sentence has been uttered in the target languages. Conversely, the assignment of the semantic roles to the arguments can be carried out online as the sentence is being processed in languages with overt case-marking.⁴

As Okabe (2008) underlines, none of the previously quoted studies used a controlled experiment to determine if the distinction between lexical and analytic causatives, both structural and interpretative, is encoded in early grammars.

In her dissertation Okabe tested children learning L1 Japanese (4-6 y.o.) using a revised version of Crain and Thorton's *Truth Value Judgement Task*, the same methodology used in the present study. We will illustrate this methodology in more detail in the next Section. Japanese is an ideal language to test the encoding of causation in child grammar, as it features both lexical

⁴ As far as we can see, the Italian pattern cannot be fully assimilated to the English one as the two languages differ wrt to the degree of "opacity" in Ammon and Slobin's terms displayed: in our view it is reasonable to argue that a sentence like *The horse make the camel run* does not feature any overt syntactic cues that might help the L1 learner during the processing of the sentence. However, in Italian, if the causative verb embeds a transitive lexical verb the embedded *causee* is obligatorily dative marked. The preposition *a* introducing the embedded *causee* is arguably the non-inflectional counterpart of dative case markings in languages like Turkish and Serbo-Croatian. Therefore, it might indeed serve as a local syntactic cue on a par with inflectional case markings in other languages. A recent study by Serratrice (2014) targeting the production of double object vs. prepositional object constructions (e.g. *Tom handed Mary the child* vs. *Tom handed the child to Mary*) to describe transfer events by L1 English children supports this idea. The author found that overall children (age range 5;4-6;5) use fewer DO constructions than PO constructions (PO N= 526, DO N= 120), with the number of produced DO constructions increasing only in the "focus on the recipient" condition. We take Serratrice's main finding to be compatible with our suggestion that the preposition *a* (much as *to* in the PO English construction) might disambiguate the Italian structures on a par with its inflectional counterparts in languages like Turkish and Serbo-Croatian.

and analytical morphological causatives which have not only distinct interpretations as already mentioned (direct vs. indirect causation), but also two different syntactic structures, with only the latter being syntactically derived and having a Spec,*v*P complement.

To assess whether the Japanese children had already acquired the relevant syntactic representation of the structures under investigation by age 4, Okabe presented her experimental subjects with causative sentences containing an anaphora, *zibun*.

As exemplified below, *zibun* needs a subject antecedent. Therefore, the sentence in (5) is ambiguous, but not its lexical counterpart, as there are two potential subject arguments, the causer in SpecTP and the *causee* in Spec,*v*P namely (4), which can serve as antecedent for *zibun*. The children will therefore correctly interpret lexical vs. syntactically derived causatives if they are able to assign the relevant readings to the sentences, differently put, if they are aware of the structural differences between the two types of causatives.

- (4) Buta_i -wa kuma_j -ni zibun-no_{i/*j} bousi-o kabuse-ta Lexical causative
 pig-TOP bear-DAT self-GEN hat-ACC put.on-PAST
 'The pig put self's hat on the bear' (*zibun* 'self' = pig, *bear)
- (5) Buta_i -wa kuma_j -ni zibun-no_{i/j} bousi-o kabur-ase-ta Productive causative
 pig-TOP bear-DAT self-GEN hat-ACC put.on-CAUS-PAST
 'The pig made the bear put self's hat on' (*zibun* 'self' = pig, bear)
 (Okabe 2008: 65)

Okabe's main result is that four years-old Japanese-learning children are aware of the structural differences between lexical and productive causatives. However, their competence is not completely adult-like in that they generally take the matrix subject rather than the embedded subject to be the antecedent of the anaphora. This preference might be due to the fact that the subject is canonically associated to the Spec,TP position. In order to verify whether her subjects were less likely to consider the embedded subject in Spec,*v*P as a proper subject in general, Okabe developed a second experiment where she contrasted the syntactically-derived causative with an indirect benefactive causative. The two structures minimally differ: the causative and the benefactive morphemes are, needless to say, different, but the case patterns are the same. However, despite the superficial similarity, in the case of the causative sentence the embedded subject is hosted in Spec,*v*P, whilst in the benefactive sentence the embedded subject is hosted in Spec,TP.

The fact that the accuracy improves in the case of benefactive indirect sentences might suggest that the strategy adopted by L1 Japanese children consists indeed in selecting a Spec,TP subject argument as antecedent of the anaphora. However, some children in the four years-old group consistently rejected the embedded subject of both causative and indirect benefactive sen-

tences as the antecedent of the anaphora, which indirectly suggests that these speakers somehow fail to recognize the “subjecthood” of the *causee* argument.

We now turn to review the only experimental study present in the acquisition literature targeting the production of a periphrastic causative (among other structures) in a Romance language. Santos, Gonçalves and Hyams (2013) are interested in the L1 acquisition of a range of infinitival structures, featuring in particular object control, perception and causative verbs in European Portuguese (henceforth EP). These infinitival structures just mentioned share a number of properties but they display structural differences at the same time. For instance, all these verbs may take an uninflected infinitival complement where a DP alternates with an accusative clitic on the main verb (6a) or they may take an inflected infinitival as shown in (7a) below:

- (6) a. A mãe viu-os / os miúdos comer bolos
The mother saw CL.Acc the kids eat.INF cakes
‘The mother saw them / the kids eating cakes’
- b. A mãe deixou -os / os miúdos comer bolos
The mother let CL.Acc the kids eat.INF cakes
‘The mother let them / the kids eat cakes’
- c. O Manuel proibiu-os / os meninos de visitar a Maria
The Manuel forbade CL.Acc the kids PREP visit.INF the Maria
‘Manuel forbade the kids to visit Maria’
- (7) a. A mãe viu eles comerem bolos
The mother saw they eat.INF.3PL cakes
‘The mother saw them eating cakes’
- b. A mãe deixou eles comerem bolos
The mother let they eat.INF.3PL cakes
‘The mother let them eat cakes’
- c. O Manuel proibiu-os / *eles de visitarem a Maria
The Manuel forbade CL.Acc they PREP visit.INF.3PL the Maria
‘Manuel prohibited them from visiting Maria’

(Santos *et al.* 2014: 4)

As the comparison between (7a, 7b) and (7c) shows, the embedded subject in the complement of an object control verb must check Accusative Case, whereas the embedded subject in the complements of perception and causative verb is base-generated as the subject of the lower clause and it checks Nominative Case. These facts suggest that despite the superficial similarities, the three verbs examined pertain to different verb classes.

The authors analyze object control verbs as structures taking two internal arguments: an object DP and a non-finite complement, which may canonically feature an uninflected infinitival (6c) or an inflected one (7c). On the other hand, perception and causative verbs embed various types of complements:

they can take uninflected infinitives (6a, 6b), inflected infinitives (7a, 7b), or finite complements (indicative in the case of perception verbs and subjunctive in the case of causative verbs). Interestingly, in EP, causative and perception verbs can therefore optionally embed defective complements (e.g. 8 much as in Italian) or full clausal complements (i.e. 7a, 7b).

- (8) a. A mãe viu saltar os miúdos
The mother saw jump.INF the kids
'The mother saw the kids jump'
- b. A mãe deixou saltar os miúdos
The mother let jump.INF the kids
'The mother let the kids jump'
- c. A mãe deixou comer o gelado aos miúdos
The mother let eat.INF the ice cream to.the kids
'The mother let the kids eat the ice cream'

(*Ibidem*: 5)

For what concerns the infinitival complements in (6a-b), the authors analyse them as instances of Raising to Object Structures (henceforth RtO) as suggested by Chomsky (2008) among others.

In these structures the embedded subject presumably cannot get its Case within the clause it belongs to and thus, it is commonly claimed that this DP raises to the relevant object position of the main clause in order to get Accusative Case. Now, the acquisition of Raising and Control are debated issues in the literature. Some authors e.g. Kirby (2011), building on production data, argue in favour of an early acquisition of RtO structures, claiming that children perform more accurately in experimental tasks involving raising rather than control, and that they may even misanalyse control structures as involving control. Conversely, Landau and Thornton (2011), basing their observation on production data (diary data from one child), analyse the development of complementation patterns of *want* and they suggest that Raising-to-Object with *want* emerges later than subject control structures with the same verb.

Therefore, Santos, Gonçalves and Hyams with their experimental work have tried to assess the rate of RtO in child EP productions, and have entertained the hypothesis that children initially tend to avoid RtO structures, as they prefer to produce less defective complements (i.e. inflected infinitives⁵ in line with Landau and Thornton 2011). Their hypothesis is consistent with the child L1 EP data, the prominent answering strategy being the inflected infinitive in child EP.

⁵ In order to discriminate between inflected and uninflected infinitives the authors made sure to include only plural embedded subjects in the test, thus making the morphological inflection on the infinitive clearly visible.

At this point it is interesting to compare the child EP data to our findings about L1 Italian. In Section 4 we will return to child EP and we will offer a possible explanation for the EP-speaking children's behaviour, which is compatible with our findings about L1 Italian.

2. *The Present Study*

Our study aims to provide further insights into the acquisition of the *Faire-Infinitive* causative, by exploring both the comprehension and the production of this structure with Italian preschool children. In particular, we conducted an experiment based on a modified version of the *Truth Value Judgement Task* (henceforth TVJT). This methodology presents a number of advantages, in that it allows the experimenter to access the linguistic competence of an experimental subject indirectly; at the same time, the experimenter is able to control for extra linguistic factors, so that he/she can make sure that the obtained results reflect the subject's linguistic competence.

2.1 *Subjects*

30 monolingual Italian preschoolers with no language or developmental impairment 30 monolingual children with no language or developmental impairment aged from 3;1 to 6;1 (mean age 4;5, SD = 0,87) participated in the study. The children were recruited in a kindergarten in Siena and were tested individually, in a quiet room. A control group of 13 monolingual Italian adults was also tested. Adult participants were all university students aged from 23 to 28.

2.2 *Method and Materials*

In this Section we describe the method and the materials used for testing the experimental group. The method used in the present study is a revised version of the Truth Value Judgement Task (henceforth TVJT, Crain and Thornton 1998).

In the original version of the TVJT the designed experimental trials were either drawings or scenes which were acted by an experimenter during the experimental session. We decided to present our experimental group with short videos which depicted everyday life situations. The actions displayed in the videos were carried out by dolls and Lego characters: we designed children-friendly video so as to make sure that even the three-year-old subjects would actively participate in the study.

During a session the experimenter uses a puppet. She introduces the puppet to the child and she asks the child to be the puppet's helper. The child (and the puppet too) is asked to carefully watch a video.

After each video is played, the experimenter asks the puppet to whisper in her ear what happened in the video.⁶ At this point the experimenter tells the child what the puppet whispered to her and the child is asked to confirm or reject the answer given by the puppet. This procedure makes sure that the experimenter can properly manipulate the kind of sentences which will be presented after each video. Therefore after each video, the child hears a well-formed periphrastic causative. If we are in the match condition, the sentence uttered adequately describes the situation depicted in the video, and the child is expected to confirm the correctness of the sentence if he/she can understand the meaning of a causative sentence. Thus, the match condition serves to measure the comprehension of causative sentences.

In the other condition, the mismatch condition, the sentence presented after the video is also a well-formed causative; however, the roles of the *causee* and the *causer* are crucially reversed.

Therefore, the child is expected to detect the fact that the sentence does not adequately describe the video and if he/she collaborates, once the experimenter asks to tell “what happened in the video instead”, the subject will autonomously produce a well-formed causative sentence. In the mismatch condition, then, a periphrastic causative is elicited so that the production of the *Faire-Infinitive* causative in early Italian can be assessed.

We now recap how the experimental procedure works by providing the reader with a short dialogue:

Match Condition

Experimenter: (to the puppet) Tell me what happened in the video.

(the puppet whispers in the experimenter's ear)

Experimenter: Ah. (the puppet said that...) *Il mago ha fatto sparire il bambino*
(Lit. the magician made disappear the kid). Is that correct?

Subject: Yes.

Mismatch Condition

Experimenter: (to the puppet) Tell me what happened in the video.

(the puppet whispers in the experimenter's ear)

Experimenter: Ah. (the puppet said that...) *Il nonno ha fatto riposare la mamma*
(Lit. the grandpa made relax the mum). Is that correct?

⁶ Notice that in the original version of the TVJT elicitation tasks are conducted by two experimenters. One experimenter presents the stimuli (drawings or scenes on a screen) to the child; the other experimenter manipulates and dubs a puppet. The present study had to be conducted by the author only. We reckoned that the children might have been puzzled if the experimenter had played multiple roles during the task; thus, to simplify the procedure and avoid possible confusion, we had the puppet whispering to the experimenter's ear rather than directly talking to the child, as required in the original version of the TVJT.

Subject: No!

Experimenter: Oh. Tell me what happened in the video instead.

Subject: *La MAMMA ha fatto riposare il nonno.* (Lit. THE MUM made relax the grandpa)

The task consists of 21 items per condition for a total of 42 items, plus 20 fillers. The fillers were simple declarative yes/no sentences. The target items were divided according to different verb classes: we presented 20 stimuli containing a transitive verb (*buttare* 'throw', *chiudere* 'close', *prendere* 'take', *riparare* 'repair', *lavare* 'wash', *raccogliere* 'pick up', *cercare* 'find', *leggere* 'read', *spegnere* 'switch off', *nascondere* 'hide', *pulire* 'clean', *sollevare* 'lift', *aprire* 'open', *spostare* 'move', *appendere* 'hang', *mangiare* 'eat', *strappare* 'tear', *guardare* 'watch', *spingere* 'pull', *portare* 'bring'), 16 stimuli containing an inergative verb (*nuotare* 'swim', *riposare* 'relax', *dormire* 'sleep', *correre* 'run', *smettere* 'stop/quit', *ridere* 'laugh', *fermare* 'stop', *partecipare* 'take part', *starnutire* 'sneeze', *tossire* 'cough', *lavorare* 'work', *funzionare* 'work', *impaurire* 'frighten', *bere* 'drink', *obbedire* 'obey') and 14 stimuli containing unaccusative verbs (*entrare* 'enter', *salire* 'get on', *partire* 'leave', *sparire* 'disappear', *apparire* 'appear', *scappare* 'escape', *cadere* 'fall', *scendere* 'get off', *andare* 'go', *tornare* 'come back', *arrivare* 'arrive', *uscire* 'go out', *inciampare* 'trip', *passare* 'pass'). We performed a computerized randomization of the items so that we would not present more than two consecutive match or mismatch items. We designed the sentences so that they would not contain more than 9 words (causative sentences containing a transitive verb being the longer ones e.g. *La mamma ha fatto mangiare i pop corn ai bambini.* Lit. The mom made eat the popcorn to the kids). We included high-frequency words in the test. Since we had numerous stimuli, we tested younger children (three- to five-year-olds) in two different 30-minute sessions. Five- to six-year-olds and adults could successfully complete the task in a single 30/40-minute session.

2.3 Coding

All the sentences collected were produced in the mismatch condition. All the sentences produced were audio recorded and then transcribed.

A total of 664 sentences were produced (children n. 394, adults n. 270, missing answers n. 85). Children's and adults' answers were coded as:

a) FOC CAUS (Focalized Causative) if containing a (contrastively) focalized *causer* argument (e.g. *LA MAMMA ha fatto riposare il nonno.* Lit. THE MOM made relax the grandpa);

b) NON FOC CAUS (Non-focalized Causative) if containing a non-focalized *causer* argument (e.g. *La mamma ha fatto riposare il nonno.* Lit. The mom made relax the grandpa);

⁷ Note that the elicited periphrastic causative features a (contrastively) focalized *causer* argument.

c) CLEFT FOC CAUS (Clefted Focalized Causative) if the *causer* argument was clefted and focalized (e.g. *È LA MAMMA che ha fatto riposare il nonno*. Lit. IT IS THE MOM, who made relax the grandpa);

d) CLEFT FOC DECL (Clefted Focalized Declarative) if the subject produced a simple declarative sentence featuring a clefted focalized external argument (e.g. *È IL POLIZIOTTO che ferma l'uomo*. Lit. IT IS THE POLICEMAN that stops the man);

e) FOC DECL (Focalized Declarative) if containing a focalized declarative sentence (e.g. *I BAMBINI vogliono partecipare*. Lit. THE KIDS want to participate);

f) NON FOC DECL (Non-Focalized Declarative) if containing a simple non-focalized declarative sentence (e.g. *La mamma manda le bambine a lezione*. Lit. The mom sends the girls to class);

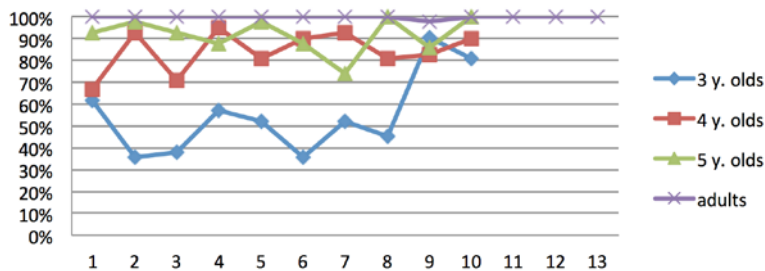
g) NO CORRECTION if the subject misunderstands the trial and consequently fails to correct as expected in the production task;

h) NO ANSWER if the subject did not answer.

3. Results

3.1 Comprehension

Graph 1. Percentages of Correctly Understood Causatives by Age



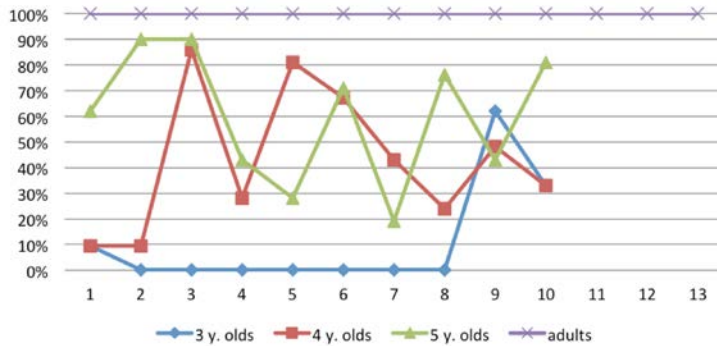
We can observe that three-year-olds are only slightly above chance level (55% percent of correctly understood causative sentences). The level of chance performance has been assessed by means of a Binomial Test which yielded the following results: 6 children out of 10 in the third-year-old group are above chance. This means that our three-year-old group is a representative sample of a three-year-old L1 Italian population. All of the four and five years-old children are above chance level.

The rate of correctly understood causatives for the four to five year old group reaches 85%, whilst five- to six-year-olds are able to understand a causative structure 91% of the time. Adults are at ceiling.

3.2 Production

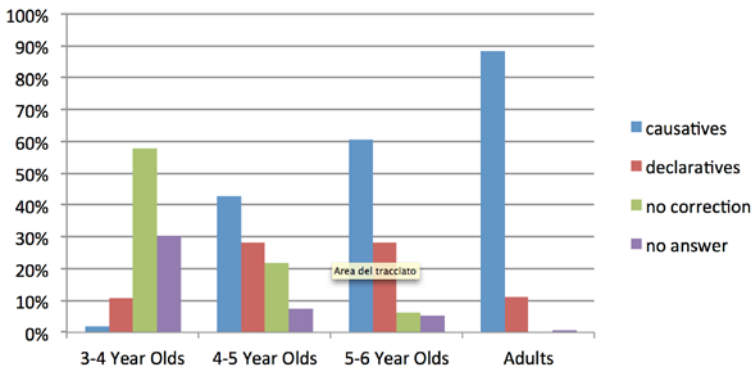
We now turn to the results concerning the elicited-production Task (Mismatch Condition).

Graph 2. Production Rate of Target Causative Sentences



As Graph 2 above shows, the overall performance of the three- to four-year-old group is affected by the poor performance of the youngest experimental subjects (subjects 1 to 7) aged 3;1 to 3;7. We will comment on this poor performance in the next Section. However, as the production of subject 9 crucially reveals, L1 Italian children start to produce well-formed causative sentences before age four, at 3;8. Four- to five-year-olds resort to a target causative sentence 43% of the time. Their behaviour then, is not yet fully adult-like, as demonstrated by the high rate of non-target declarative sentences produced. This is shown in Graph 3 below:

Graph 3. Answering Strategies Attested



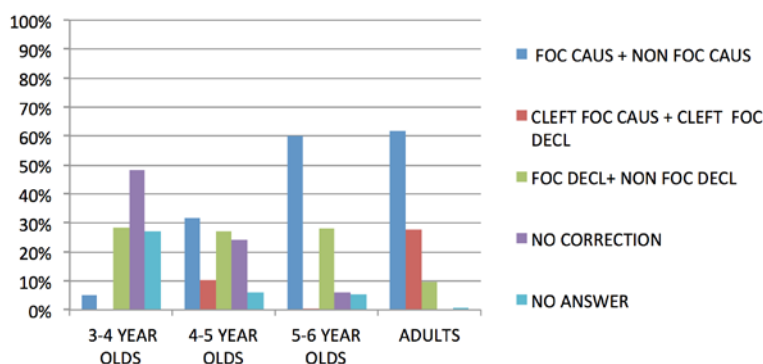
Interestingly, both the four- to five- and the five- to six-year-old groups answered with a declarative sentence 28% of the time. The controls clearly

tend to answer with a causative sentence during the elicitation task rather than with a declarative sentence, which confirms that the causative sentence is the most pragmatically appropriate.

As is shown in Graph 3 above, the four- to five-year-olds were able to meet the pragmatic requirements of our task: the children of this age group provide corrective focalized answers when necessary, as suggested by the low rate of missing answers and failed corrections (20% of the time).

At this point, it is worth having a closer look at the type of sentences produced by our experimental group.

Graph 4. Sentence Types Produced



Our controls consistently provided target causative sentences and they marginally produced (focalized or non-focalized) declaratives. As expected, the controls exclusively produce corrective (focalized) sentences. Moreover, we can observe that the cleft doesn't seem to be a particularly productive corrective answering strategy in Italian, as shown by the overall low rate of clefted causative sentences (focalized or non-focalized) produced both by adults and children.

On the other hand, children resorted to different answering strategies and a clear developmental pattern emerges. Until 3;8 (subjects 1 to 7) children resist the elicitation procedure. Crucially, they never answer with a target causative sentence, but rather resort to a simpler declarative sentence. This data suggests that children younger than 3;8 have difficulties with corrective sentences more generally. In turn, four- to six-year-olds have no problems focalizing the *causer* constituent i.e. producing corrective sentences, as suggested by the fact that they answer with a focalized declarative sentence nearly 30% of the time. However, crucially, the overall rate of pragmatically infelicitous answers progressively diminishes with age: the performance of the five-year-old group does not substantially differ from that of the controls.

4. Discussion

The satisfactory performance of the 3;8 and the 3;9 subjects suggest that our experimental design is suitable for testing three-year-olds; therefore, as far as we can see, the reason why children aged 3;1 to 3;7 perform poorly in the test has nothing to do with the experimental design per se. Many acquisition studies have reported that subjects younger than 3;5 are biased to confirm what the experimenter (or the puppet depending on the task) says, (the so-called “yes-bias phenomenon” discussed by Crain and Thornton 1998) and therefore they resist the elicitation procedure. This explains the high percentages of missing answers and failed corrections observed for this age group (27.1% missing answers and 48% missing corrections with the overall percentage of non-target answers reaching 75%).

Moreover, if we compare the comprehension and the production data we can observe that overall children perform significantly better on the comprehension task rather than on the production task. Many studies targeting the acquisition of complex sentences found the same pattern (see Guasti 2007 for an overview): in general, evidence seems to suggest that the ability to process complex sentences (such as passives, causatives or object relatives) temporally precedes the ability to productively use complex sentences; in other words, the ability to process *fare a* causatives is a prerequisite for the their production. Interestingly, our results concerning the comprehension of causative sentences in L1 Italian converge with Okabe’s (2008) findings for L1 Japanese. Evidence suggests that between the fourth and the fifth year of age children attain adult-like knowledge of indirect causation.

Turning to the production task, our main finding seems to be that from 3;8 years L1 Italian children start to produce well-formed causative sentences and then continue to develop their ability to do so. Therefore, any formal account of the syntax of Italian-type Romance causative should take into account the fact that this structure doesn’t seem to be particularly difficult to acquire, in other words, it should presumably be regarded as a relatively computationally simple sentence.

In the light of the previous discussion it is not surprising that children younger than 3;8 answer with simple declarative sentences. More interestingly, non-target declarative sentences are marginally attested in the children’s productions until age 5. Thus we need to explain this non-target behaviour. It is reasonable to assume that from age four, children are able to meet the pragmatic requirements of the task, providing a corrective answer when necessary.

In our view, there can be two different reasons why children aged 3;8 to 6;1 occasionally produce infelicitous declarative sentences. It could be the case that sometimes children misunderstand the task and consequently merely describe the situation depicted in the video, with a simple non-causative sentence. It could also be the case that, once the subjects resort to an answering strategy, say the

declarative sentence, they tend to repeatedly use it during the task, even though it is pragmatically infelicitous.

Furthermore, we checked whether the presence vs. absence of a dativized *causee* influenced the children's productions. Recall that we presented 20 stimuli featuring a transitive verb, 16 stimuli containing an intransitive verb and 14 stimuli containing an unaccusative verb. The stimuli containing intransitive and unaccusative differ from those containing transitive verbs for what concerns their argument structure. (Embedded) transitive verb have a richer argument structure featuring a theme argument and a dativized *causee*. When the causative verb embeds an unaccusative or a unergative verb, the theme argument is absent and the *causee* argument receives Accusative Case instead of Dative Case.

The presence of an extra (internal) argument plus a dativized *causee* in the case of causative complements containing transitive verbs could in principle increase the computational cost of transitive (vs. unaccusative and unergative) causative complements.

Interestingly, no significant effect of verb class was found. In other words, only two subjects (out of 30 subjects) produced significantly more causatives featuring an unaccusative or unergative verb than causatives featuring a transitive verb.⁸

All in all, we take the performance of our child population to be satisfactory, indicating that children as young as 3;8 are aware of the fact that not all verbs behave alike in terms of their complementation patterns, i.e. by age four L1 Italian children have learnt that restructuring verbs like *fare* in Italian embed a structurally deficient complement.

In the next Section we will show that Romance causatives embed structurally impoverished complements.

⁸ Both subjects (subject 2 (5;2) and subject 7 (5;9)) produced 9/21 causatives. These subjects could successfully produce causatives featuring unaccusative or unergative verbs but crucially, they systematically avoided producing causative structures featuring an embedded transitive verb. Instead of producing a causative containing a transitive verb (and a dativized *causee*), they would resort to an infinitival sentence like (9a) below:

- (9) a. LA MAMMA ha detto di nascondere il regalo al babbo
 THE MUM told the dad to hide.INF the present
 'Mum told the dad to hide the present'
 Sentence expected:
 LA MAMMA ha fatto nascondere il regalo al babbo
 'MUM made the dad hide the present'

Apparently these subjects have problems producing embedded dativized *causees* in particular. In fact, they can successfully produce embedded goal datives as in (9a) above.

It is worth noting that the causative verb is never replaced when the *causee* gets Accusative Case. It could be the case that some datives are more difficult than others.

Further studies are needed in order to assess the complexity of different kinds of datives.

Santos *et al.* (2014) reported that children learning EP tend to produce full infinitival complements while systematically avoiding more functionally reduced structures such as RtO structures. It is certainly true that EP-speaking children avoid RtO structures, however interestingly, adults also significantly prefer a CP complement structure over a non-CP complement (the total number of answers featuring a CP complement reaches 70%), even though they master both kinds of complements. There could be different reasons why RtO structures are not mastered by EP-speaking children. Our findings indicate that L1 Italian children can actually produce and understand reduced/defective infinitival structures such as *fare a* causatives, therefore we are led to think that the observed difficulty with Raising to Object Structures (Landau and Thornton 2011; Santos, Gonçalves and Hyams 2013) probably has little to do with the fact that these are non-CP infinitival structures; rather, it could be the case that Raising is a computationally costly operation for young children.

5. Observations on the Syntax of *Faire-Infinitive* Causatives

Following a number of studies e.g. Belletti and Rizzi (2012) in Bellucci (2013), we argued for a *smuggling* approach to the syntax of Romance causatives.

A *smuggling* approach was first proposed by Collins (2005) for the derivations of Passive and Raising structures in English. Belletti and Rizzi (2012) argue that the same *smuggling* operation is involved in the derivation of active causative sentences. In active Romance causatives (just like in the passive) moving a chunk of VP out of the embedded vP is a way to avoid the intervention effect of the embedded subject in Spec, vP. The idea is that, if the chunk of VP doesn't move across the embedded subject, the internal argument cannot be properly assigned Accusative Case as the embedded subject intervenes between T phi and the object. Consequently, once the chunk of VP is attracted to the Specifier of a functional CausP head, which presumably lexicalizes the Causative Voice, the embedded subject remains stranded in the Spec, vP position. Therefore, the higher functional head responsible for the assignment of Accusative Case can identify the internal argument as a proper goal and assign Accusative Case to it and no Relativized Minimality violation arises. Collins' approach to the passive appeals to the same formal mechanism, the only difference being that the internal argument in the passive moves further to the Spec, TP position in order to satisfy the EPP; and that the functional head that triggers the movement of the chunk of the VP is Voice P hosting the preposition "by" (see the structure in 10a below) in the case of Passive voice, rather than CauseP as in (11a):

- (10) a. T_{phi}...[VoiceP [VP V DP_{ia}] by ...[vP DP_{ca} [~~VP~~ V ~~DP_{ia}~~]...]]...]
 T_{phi}...[CauseP [VP V DP_{ia}] CAUSE [vP DP_{ca} v fare [vP a DP_{ea} [~~VP~~ V ~~DP_{ia}~~]]]]]

However, as an anonymous reviewer correctly points out, even if we want to maintain that the derivations of the passive and of *fare a* causatives involve the same formal mechanism e.g. *smuggling*, children cannot be expected to acquire both structures simultaneously. In fact, a long passive structure such as *La mela è mangiata dal bambino* ‘The apple is eaten by the child’ formally resembles an active *fare da* causative more than an active *fare a* causative sentence (see Harley and Folli 2007 for a recent discussion of the different properties of *fare a* and *fare da* Romance causatives respectively), as suggested by the non-accidental presence of a *by/da* phrase.

In the acquisition literature there is no general consensus on the timing of acquisition of the passive crosslinguistically. However, recent studies on the topic have suggested that not all types of passives are equally difficult for children, thus different kind of passives emerge at different stages of acquisition in child grammars (see Manetti and Belletti 2013). In the light of the previous discussion, the data coming from studies on the acquisition of the passive in L1 Italian are better compared to those concerning the acquisition of *fare da* causatives (rather than *fare a* causatives) in L1 Italian. To the best of our knowledge, the acquisition of *fare da* causatives has not yet been investigated. This could be a topic for further research.

We now turn to examining some relevant aspects of the syntax of *fare a* causatives, focusing our attention on the status of the *causee* argument in particular.

We start by observing that there is only an apparent realignment of cases from Nominative-Accusative to Dative Accusative in an embedded sentence like (12a) below:

- (12) a. L'insegnante ha fatto leggere questo libro agli studenti
 The teacher AUX.3SG made read.INF this book to the students
 ‘The teacher made the students read this book’

According to Kayne (2004), prepositions, including French *à* ‘to’ and its Italian counterpart *a*, are probes in the sense of Chomsky (2000, 2001, and 2004), responsible for the checking of Dative Case. The author develops a raising approach to the syntax of Romance *Faire-Infinitive* causatives, whereby *a/à* is a functional head on the main sentential spine. The *causee* is then attracted to the Spec position of the latter outside the causative vP where it checks Dative Case, as in (13a).

- (13) a. [[PP *causee* [P' [P *à*] [causeP causer vcause [vP *causee* [VP [V
 DPobject]]]]]]

The *causer* moves to the Spec of TP in order to satisfy the EPP. However while *à* is in the matrix sentence, the following DP is actually the subject of

the infinitival at some point in the derivation. In our view, Kayne's raising analysis is unwarranted, in that it is not obvious that *à* heads a functional projection taking the causative predicate as its complement. The need to place the preposition above the causative verb is a direct consequence of the authors' theoretical assumptions about Accusative and Dative Case checking.

Kayne assumes that an argument receives Accusative Case via a feature checking relation with a higher Agr-DO projection. Similarly, Dative Case is checked against a higher Agr-IO projection. Since the feature checking operation must be local, both the internal argument and, crucially, the preposition and the *causee* argument must raise to Agr-DO and Agr-IO respectively. Under this approach, VP-Preposing is a necessary step in the derivation. If VP-Preposing does not apply, the internal argument is too embedded and it cannot receive Case and therefore the derivation crashes. Recent work by Chomsky (2013) sheds doubt on the tenability of movement operations such as VP-Preposing under current minimalist theorizing. In this paper we offer an alternative view on the licensing of dativized arguments which is compatible with VP-Preposing, although it does not crucially hinge on raising (movement) of the preposition and of the *a-causee*.

We adopt Manzini and Savoia's (2011a) view that oblique case is interpretable. From this perspective, Dative Case assignment is not implemented via a feature checking relation (thus no abstract higher Agr-IO projection is needed), but rather what is descriptively known as "dative" is reduced to a more elementary predicate notated as $Q\subseteq$. Interpretively, what the $Q\subseteq$ says is that the argument to which dative morphology (or its prepositional counterpart) attaches has in its domain of inclusion either another DP as in *Ho dato il libro a Gianni* 'I gave Gianni the book' or a VP as in *Ho fatto leggere il libro a Gianni* 'I made Gianni read the book' as we will show.

Other treatments of *causees* are available, notably in the Applicative literature. According to Applicative approaches (Cuervo 2003; Pytkäinen 2008; Boneh and Nash 2012, a.o.), dativized arguments are licensed in the specifier of a functional ApplP taking the theme in its object position. *Causees* in particular are hosted in High Applicative phrases, introducing a relation between a theme and a predicate/event. It is not clear why we would want to analyze *a* as a di-functional Applicative head: in fact this is not how it is treated in Cuervo (2003). If so, however, extending the Applicative treatment to Romance is all the more problematic since there would be no overt morphological counterpart of the Applicative morphemes of the Bantu languages studied by Pytkäinen (2008) in Romance.

Our key observation is that, independently of causative environments, dative/oblique subjects are widely attested crosslinguistically.

Examples often quoted in the formal literature are the "quirky" subjects of Icelandic (14a). We may add oblique subjects in ergativity splits, e.g. Kurmanji Kurdish (15a) from Baker and Atlamaz (2013); dativized subjects are

also found in a more familiar language like Latin in necessity contexts with the gerund: in such contexts the subject (the external argument of transitives and the internal argument of unaccusatives) is turned into a dative (16a):

- (14) a. Henni leiddust strákar
 Her (dat) bored boys.the (nom)
 ‘She found the boys boring’
 Icelandic (from Sigurðsson 1996: 1)
- (15) a. Te ez di-m.
 You (dat) I (dir) see.PAST.1SG
 ‘You (sg) saw me’
 Kurmanji (from Baker *et al.* 2013: 2)
- (16) a. *hominibus moriendum est enim omnibus*
 men (dat) to die is indeed all (dat)
 ‘All men must indeed die’
 Latin (Cicero, *Tuscolanae Disputationes* 1.9.15)

In this paper, we support the idea that the Romance *causee* is nothing but an oblique “quirky” subject as in (17a)

- (17) a. [vP QUIRKY SUBJECT [v VP]]

The difference between the Romance *causee* and quirky subjects of the Icelandic type is that, according to analyses of the latter, Icelandic quirky subjects target the [Spec,TP] position, while we propose that the Romance *causee* is base-generated in [Spec,vP]. In this respect, the dative/oblique case assigned to the *causee* is better compared to the oblique case assigned to the external argument in languages like Kurmanji Kurdish in the ergative alignment (15). That the ergative case is inherent case, assigned by the verb, is a conclusion widely attested in the literature (Johns 1992; Woolford 2006; Legate 2012, a.o.).

Various questions arise at this point. A crucial question is why dativized subjects in Italian show up precisely in the complement of causative verbs. In other words why they are possible and necessary in such contexts while they are not to be found in – say – main sentences of the language. Notice that the examples in (14)-(16) are all main sentences.

The crucial fact is that restructuring predicates (which subsume *Faire-Infinitive* causatives) embed structurally deficient complements (Wurmbrand 2001 and references therein). This is exactly why these predicates are transparent for certain properties, which are otherwise clause-bound. For instance, only the complements of restructuring predicates like *fare* ‘to make’, allow

clitics associated with an argument of the embedded verb to cliticize on the matrix verb. This is the so-called “clause union effect”. Now, the degree of structural deficiency of restructuring complements is a debated issue. Competing analyses have been proposed which all try to formally capture the already mentioned “clause-union” or “restructuring effect”.

A first set of approaches (Kayne 1975; Rouveret and Vergnaud 1980; Burzio 1986; Belletti and Rizzi 2012) which we have reviewed in some detail, appeals to VP-Preposing whereby a chunk of VP including at least the infinitival and its internal argument moves to the Spec of a higher functional head leaving the embedded subject stranded in the lower VP. Couched in more recent Minimalist terms, VP-Preposing is a way to empty the phase. According to another set of approaches, causativization involves some process of incorporation; for instance, for Baker (1988) it is the embedded lexical verb that incorporates into the matrix predicate. The incorporation approach to complex predicate formation has recently been revived by Wurmbrand (forthcoming). Relying on evidence coming from German and various Austronesian languages, Wurmbrand proposes that restructuring complements feature an additional (default) Voice head. It is this Voice head which undergoes incorporation into the matrix restructuring verb.

Whatever the implementation, we side with the consequence of an incorporation analysis à la Wurmbrand that the complement selected by *fare* is effectively a predicate, possibly vP, or VoiceP, but with Voice incorporated to the matrix. In the absence of a T layer, is clear that subject of the embedded verb cannot be assigned Nominative Case; this is exactly why the *causee* shows up as a “quirky” dative subject.

In other words, what we are suggesting is that in the Italian-type complements the *causee* is licensed vP-internally. Under this approach the *v* category serves as both the transitivizer and the introducer of the external argument as in the formulation of Chomsky (1995). That oblique subjects can be licensed vP-internally has also been claimed by Nash (2014). The author, examining the ergativity split in Georgian, argues that the difference between a Nominative and an Ergative behavior of the same language, and possibly across languages, can be ascribed to the capacity of the transitive subject to be theta-licensed and by consequence Case-licensed in a position outside vP only in the nominative alignment.

Clearly, a result of this crucial difference is that the transitive subject in the ergative alignment is licensed in SpecvP. Similarly, we have argued that the Romance *causee* needs to be licensed vP-internally exactly for the same reason: as the causative complement is structurally deficient, the transitive subject cannot be theta-licensed and by consequence Case-licensed in a position outside the vP and this is exactly why it is realized as a “quirky dative”. This also explains a fact that it has long been noted in the formal literature (Rouveret and Vergnaud 1980, a.o.), namely that a dativized *causee* only appears

when the causative verb embeds a transitive lexical verb. If we assume that T is lacking in the causative complement, Nominative Case cannot be assigned to the embedded external argument in the causative complement. Nor is the other structural case available to the *causee*, since Accusative Case is taken up by the embedded internal argument. Therefore, the *causee* must receive an oblique case i.e. Dative. If the embedded lexical verb does not take an internal argument, then the embedded external argument receives Accusative Case.

In order to formally characterize the “quirky subject” status of the *a-causee* we adopt Manzini and Savoia’s (2011), Manzini and Franco’s (forthcoming) analysis of Oblique case which reduces the descriptive dative to a more elementary predicate introducing a part-whole relation (notated as $Q\subseteq$), ultimately a possession relation, saying that the event is “included by” the argument. The authors endorse the traditional idea that cases are relations i.e. elementary predicates equivalent to Ps (Fillmore 1968).

Various strands of literature have connected dative to possession since the work of Kayne (1984). If we examine the dativized argument of a ditransitive sentence, the link between datives and possession becomes very clear: the sentence “I give the book to John” has been analyzed as “I give [John HAS a book]” in the literature (Pesetsky 1995, a.o.). Manzini and Savoia (2011a) following Belvin and den Dikken (1997) similarly construe possessors as “zonally including” the possessee. The inclusion relation is notated as (\subseteq) and since the relational content is carried out by Q in DPs (as in generalized quantifier theory), dative is labeled $(Q\subseteq)$. Interpretively, what the $Q\subseteq$ elementary predicate, lexicalized by *a* in Italian, does, is saying that the *a-causee* in a sentence like *Maria ha fatto leggere il libro a Gianni* ‘Maria had Gianni read a book’, has in its domain of inclusion/possession the lower VP event *leggere il libro* ‘read the book’. Therefore, this analysis points to the different formal/scopal properties of oblique/dativized arguments as opposed to the canonical (nominal) properties of non-oblique DPs.

In short, we treat the *causee* as an oblique subject on a par with the oblique subjects found in Indo-European languages (e.g. Kurmanji) in the ergative alignment, which according to a number of analyses, reflect a reduced structure of perfects, parallel to the impoverished structure of the causative complement.

6. Further Developments

In the previous Section we argued that the Romance *causee* is structurally similar to the oblique subjects found in Indo-European languages in the so-called ergative alignment and we have shown that it has scopal properties which differentiate it from canonical DPs (non-oblique arguments). In this Section we explore the theoretical implications of our proposal.

We have also discussed the results of our experiment, suggesting that L1 Italian children by age four master *fare a* causatives and, by consequence, their

structurally deficient complements featuring a dativized subject. We therefore predict that, in the early stages of development, children can be expected to detect the fact that the formal properties of dativized/oblique (subject) arguments substantially differ from those of non-oblique arguments. Recent experimental findings, which we briefly review below, seem to suggest that our prediction is borne out crosslinguistically. The first study worth mentioning is by Mahalingappa (2013). The author examined the L1 acquisition of Case marking in Kurmanji Kurdish, using an elicitation production task and also collecting naturalistic speech productions. Recall that our analysis of the Romance *causee* rests on the assumption that this kind of subject is formally similar to the subjects found in languages which display ergativity splits. Kurmanji Kurdish features a tense-based ergativity split: in the present tense Kurmanji follows the familiar Nominative-Accusative system, conversely, in the past tense, Ergative-Absolutive case marking occurs. In (18a) we show the relevant case marking patterns in two transitive sentences:

- (18) a. Lawik- \emptyset qîzik-ê paçî di-k-e
 Boy (nom.;dir.) girl (acc.;obl.) kiss dur-do;PRES.3SG
 ‘The boy is kissing the girl’
 b. Lawik-î qîzik- \emptyset paçî kir
 Boy (erg.;obl.) girl (abs.;dir.) kiss do;PAST.3SG
 ‘The boy was kissing the girl’

(Mahalingappa 2013: 244)

In present tense sentences, the external argument is in so-called direct case, the internal argument is oblique, and the verb agrees with the external argument, whereas in past tense sentences, the external argument is oblique, the internal argument bears direct case, and the verb agrees with the internal argument. The general result seems to suggest that as early as 2;0 children are sensitive to the ergativity split. At 2;6 years of age the children productions are comparable to the adults’ ones in terms of case marking: in the present tense the most used case marking pattern is direct-oblique, whereas in past sentences, the external argument is inflected for ergative case, while the internal argument appears in the absolutive form. Interestingly, the author observed that oblique subjects were even overgenerated by two 2;5 y.o. L1 Kurmanji children; - in other words double oblique-marked sentences were attested whereby an oblique-direct case marking pattern was expected. These results converge with our results about L1 Italian in that both studies point to an early mastery of oblique subjects.⁹

⁹ We are aware of the fact that comparing our results to Mahalingappa’s is slightly problematic, as the structures investigated do not minimally differ. Mahalingappa (2013) tested

We have already mentioned the results of Serratrice (2014), which we repeat here for ease of reference. In her study the author investigated the production of double object (henceforth DO) vs. prepositional object constructions (henceforth PO) (e.g. Tom handed Mary the child vs. Tom handed the child to Mary) to describe transfer events by L1 English children. Overall children (age range 5;4-6;5) use fewer DO constructions than PO constructions (PO N= 526, DO N= 120), with the number of produced DO constructions increasing only in the “focus on the recipient” condition. Again, these results as far as we understand are compatible with the idea that dativized/oblique arguments are easily mastered by children; whether they are morphologically marked or not, they seem, at least in some cases, to be preferentially used; in other words, evidence seems to suggest that children can discriminate between canonical DP arguments and QP arguments in the case of obliques early on, the overt case marking (or its counterpart in languages like Italian, the prepositional introducer *a*, *to* in English) serving as a disambiguating cue.

7. Summary and Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined the results of our experimental study on the acquisition of Romance *Faire-Infinitive* causatives by L1 Italian children.

We have started our discussion by reviewing previous studies on the acquisition of causative sentences. The overall results indicate that until age three (and even later on for some languages), children use lexical and analytical causatives interchangeably (Bowerman 1974 and 1982; Allen 1996; Courtney 2002). By age four, children demonstrate the ability to comprehend (Ammon and Slobin 1979; Okabe 2008 on child Japanese) and produce (Santos et al. 2014 on child EP) well-formed causatives sentences, although their performance is not fully adult-like yet.

We have then focused our discussion on the acquisition of Romance causatives in particular, and have described the experimental designed used in the study as well as the participants.

Using a revised version of the *Truth Value Judgement Task* we found that L1 Italian children as young as 3;8 can successfully understand and produce

the acquisition of oblique subjects in main sentences in child Kurmanji, whereas in this paper we are directly concerned with sentences featuring oblique subjects which are commonly analysed as bi-clausal structures (Kayne 2004, a.o.). However, dativized/oblique arguments in Romance as well are found in main sentences as well (although their distribution is quite limited): a case in point are the experiencer subjects of psych verbs or goal datives in ditransitives (note that Manzini and Franco (forthcoming) analyse Romance goal datives as obliques). It would be interesting to check when the latter structures are acquired in L1 Italian to see whether their timing of acquisition overlaps with the one indicated by Mahalingappa (2013) for the Kurmanji oblique subjects. We leave these issues for future research.

fare a causatives which are commonly taken to feature structurally deficient complements (Wurmbrand 2001 a.o).

A clear developmental pattern emerges: the accuracy of the answers provided by our subjects considerably improves with age, which is confirmed by the fact that the number of non-target declarative sentences produced dramatically drops as age increases.

The five-, six-year-olds already demonstrate the ability to meet the pragmatic requirements of our experimental task. Unsurprisingly, the performance of the controls is homogeneous, as they consistently produce a pragmatically felicitous focalized causative sentence.

In short, our findings suggest that *fare a* causatives are acquired early in L1 Italian therefore they should be regarded as relatively computationally simple sentences. Presumably more than one factor determines the early emergence of causatives in the Italian child grammar.

Depending on one's theoretical assumptions, for instance it can be argued that children have no problems with the *smuggling* operation (Belletti and Rizzi 2012).

In the theoretical part of the paper (Section 5) we have addressed some theoretical issues concerning the syntax of the *Faire-Infinitive* causative, focusing our attention on the status of the *causee* in particular.

We have proposed that the *causee* is nothing but a vP-internal oblique subject. The parallel is with the oblique subjects found in the ergative alignment in Indo-European languages (e.g. Kurmanji Kurdish).

In order to formally characterize our claim about the *causee*, we have adopted Manzini and Savoia (2011), and Manzini and Franco (forthcoming) analysis of oblique Case, which reduces the descriptive dative to a more primitive part-whole relation (notated as $Q \subseteq$).

Furthermore, we have predicted that children should be expected to detect the formal properties of oblique subjects and more generally, should be able to discriminate oblique arguments from non-oblique ones. Our prediction seems to be borne out: children show an early mastery of oblique arguments (both prepositional and morphologically-marked) crosslinguistically (Mahalingappa, 2013, on child Kurmanji and Serratrice, 2014, on Prepositional Object constructions in L1 English), and they also demonstrate the ability to distinguish them from non-oblique ones. We take this fact to indicate that presumably there are two distinct representations for oblique subjects and non-oblique subjects in the child grammar. If our line of reasoning is on the right track, the presence of a "quirky subject" in the *fare a* causative doesn't seem to increase the computational cost of the sentence in any way; rather, it might indeed serve as a disambiguating cue, favouring the early acquisition of the structure in L1 Italian.

As far as we can see, we can conclude that our theoretical claims are compatible with the acquisition facts, which is a welcomed result.

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Syntactic Protocols to Enhance Inclusive Cultural Identity. A Case Study on Istro-Romanian Clausal Structure*

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Abstract:

This paper has a general and a specific goal. The general goal is quite ambitious and consists in proposing a new linguistic approach, named Protocol Linguistics, that should encompass points of division among linguists of different theoretical persuasion and permit a common effort to put the most recent advances in linguistics at the service of general interests, such as language policies, language education, language rehabilitation, endangered language documentation, and many more third mission type of environments. The second specific goal is to provide an example of a possible protocol for the documentation of a severely endangered language, Istro-Romanian, a variety of eastern Romance spoken in the Istrian peninsula in Croatia, also named Vlački or Žejanski. The general aim is to suggest that language awareness based on knowledge of syntax, which highlights similarities as well as differences and conceives the differences as variation among a small range of choices, can ground the construction of inclusive cultural identity, which will enhance social cohesion as well as the preservation of minority languages.

Keywords: Endangered Languages, Istro-Romanian, Language Awareness, Metalinguistic Competence, Protocol Linguistics

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1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and Structure of the Paper

The human language capacity interacts with almost every single aspect of human behavior. The study of language from the internal linguistic perspective is however conducted as a niche discipline whose recent advances are rarely disseminated into other fields. As a consequence, the considerable headway made by linguistic theories since the beginning of the last century has had little impact on social phenomena. Linguists are apparently skeptical as regards the sociological impact of their work. And they are also unable to join in a common effort, abandoning technicalities that are necessary at highly specialized levels of discussion but constitute an obvious impediment in establishing a dialogue with scholars working in other sciences and decision takers acting on political and social issues.

We believe that knowledge of the dual nature of language between the biological and cultural dimensions is crucial to take decisions and plan language education and teaching, rehabilitating techniques, compensatory tools for disabled subjects, documentation and preservation of minority and heritage languages, to mention just a few areas that have great impact on the society.

This paper aims to set the foundations of a metamodel of linguistic research, called Protocol Linguistics, that can be shared by linguists of different empirical specializations and theoretical persuasion and be accessible to the non-linguistic World. The proposed syntactic model is declined in “protocols”, which are descriptive properties of natural languages, organized in clusters. The paper will tackle the issue from one of the many possible areas in which linguistic knowledge could have strong impact; namely, documentation of endangered languages.

Minority groups are subdue to constant tension between cultural isolation and assimilation. Awareness of the multifaceted form of the language faculty which makes human beings naturally multilingual can help the construct of identities that are not based on mutually exclusive features, but on the recognition of the differences conceived as manifestations of broader, more abstract common properties. Documentation of a language in serious danger and the hope of preservation can be supported by disseminating linguistic metacompetence on language types and families, language contact, language history and change, bilingualism and acquisition. In this perspective, we propose a case study on an eastern Romance language, Istro-Romanian, also named Vlaški-Žejanski, located in Croatia not far from the Italian border.

The structure of the paper is as follows. The rest of this Section grounds the claim that linguistic metacompetence is necessary to construct a special type of language awareness that can build inclusive (as opposed to exclusive)

cultural identity. Section 2 sketches the notion of Protocol Linguistics, with special reference to syntax. Section 3 provides an example of the application of a few protocols to Istro-Romanian. Section 4 spells out the possible results of such protocols to different actions that can be taken, all converging to construct language awareness to enhance inclusive cultural identities.

1.2 Linguistic Metacompetence and Inclusive Cultural Identity

Minority languages run two very dangerous tendencies that are experienced at every corner of the Globe. On the one hand, lack of prestige leads to abandonment of the minority language in favor of the majority language, with or without consequent loss of cultural identity, but with secure loss of one of its most important components; that is the language. This is also due to general biases against bilingualism and a misconceived notion of native competence. On the other hand, the pride set on the cultural values of local varieties can lead to refusal of the prestige or standard language with the result of creating linguistic and cultural ghettos, which marginalize their components and doom the minority language to poverty of registers, limited to informal usages and slang, and ultimately also leading the language to extinction.

As usual, knowledge is the only means for cultural enhancement. Knowledge of the general properties of language and of the specific properties of the numerous languages each speaker masters can, in our opinion, be a solid pillar for the construction of cultural identity and language documentation and preservation. The language awareness we want to raise is based on linguistic metacompetence, namely on knowledge of language, conceived as a complex human cognitive capacity, a biological endowment interacting with the social nature of human beings.

The linguistic research on the impact of language in the formation of cultural identities (cf. Edwards 2009, for an introduction) has up to now only dealt with the study of accents and vocabulary, almost completely disregarding syntactic matters, which are instead crucial to understand language history, contact and attrition, as well as L1 and L2 acquisition.

Formal syntactic research, and in particular the theory known as generative grammar, aims at capturing the general properties of language that are inborn and common to all human beings (principles), and the restricted possibility of variation that is also inborn and needs to be set for one choice or another (parameters), through exposure to linguistic input, which is necessarily varied and mixed. How parameters are set and what consequences the exposure to a mixed input can have are two issues, particularly relevant to the study of languages situated in transregional and transcultural environments. Settling down these issues in a form, accessible to the general public and open to multidisciplinary enrichment can in our opinion be the ground

for a particular kind of language awareness enhancing the construction of inclusive cultural identity.

Awareness should be at the base of positive cultural identity. This is true in particular if awareness of specific aspects of one's culture is based on sound argumentation and not on biased pride or despise of competing cultures and languages. For example, the notion of linguistic ancestor as proof of cultural descend may become a sensitive one, especially if there are no clear historical witnesses in one sense or another.

A related issue is the fact that multiculturalism and in particular multilingualism was and still is the norm. The very idea of a "pure" cultural identity formed across time and holding in the present is a myth that finds no justification in either linguistic or psycho-sociological perspective. Only very secluded tribes develop isolated cultures, which are usually conservative and underdeveloped. Contacts and contaminations are the basis of economical, cultural and technological development. Language change goes parallel to cultural change in that the human being is naturally multilingual and the languages/varieties coexisting in a complex society naturally influence each other in interesting ways.

The kind of awareness we are aiming at is awareness of a cognitive capacity (the human language faculty) and how one's language(s) can be situated in a vast but not infinite frame of linguistic variation. It can be declined along three different dimensions: (i) awareness of language as a human capacity manifested in languages, varieties, dialects, which are multi-systems formed by and including coexisting subvarieties, differentiated at different degrees of inclusiveness; (ii) awareness of the multilingual nature of the individual, understood as the cognitive capacity of unconscious competence of more than one variety, dialect, sociolect, or standard language, which makes a single person a member of multi-layered groups at different degrees of inclusiveness; and finally, (iii) awareness of differences and similarities across the different coexisting languages / varieties in the competence of the same individual. Awareness of these three aspects of language can, in our opinion, enhance the construction of language identity in an inclusive fashion, and help eliminate or at least constrain the many ethnic and social biases conveyed by language. This kind of awareness, we propose, can be achieved through knowledge of basic properties of language in general and of particular languages. Such properties can be captured in the forms of protocols, which we describe in the following Section.

2. Protocol Linguistics

A protocol is an established procedure which applies in the same way with the same tools in different but comparable situations. It therefore permits to avoid interference that may cause problems of different types while pursuing

an objective. When the objective regards the acquisition of information, it ensures that such information is comparable. The language awareness that we aim to build is grounded on comparison. A linguistic feature is described as a general principle declined into a restricted number of variation possibilities. Comparison between two or more languages can highlight differences and similarities between those languages. If a linguistic difference is conceived as a restricted variation of choice inside one and the same open variable, the cultural identity constructed on language awareness will have an inclusive nature. In other words, linguistic diversity can be conceived as unifying and not as dividing.

It would be unfair to deny that the present proposal stems from the principle and parameters framework, but also typological linguistics has implication patterns that suggest a similar unifying perspective. We conceive a protocol feature not just as a single proposition, to be valued as true or false (present or absent) in a language, but as a cluster of related properties. This is different from the approach taken in other inventories of language features such as WALS¹ or SSWL.² Going from the more general to the more specific, we can construct protocols with growing clustering complexity and language specificity, as will be detailed in this Section.

Establishing the relevant features for the relevant languages produces a simple table-chart with the languages that are relevant to our search on the horizontal axis and the properties that are going to be tested on the vertical axis and valued dichotomously with a +/- value.

2.1 The Horizontal Axis: the Relevant Languages

As anticipated above, we present a case for the proposed protocol methodology applying it to a severely endangered eastern Romance variety³ spoken in the Croatian peninsula of Istria, called Istro-Romanian by the philological-linguistic tradition and Vlaški-Žejanski by the communities speaking the language.

The population migrated to the geographical area of Mount Učka before the 16th century (cf. Pușcariu 1926), but it is hardly clear to historians, linguists or anthropologists when exactly they arrived in the region nor where they originate from. Today, the speakers of Istro-Romanian seem to constitute the smallest (ethno-)linguistic community in Europe. The majority of them are elderly or middle-aged, very few children have even passive competence of it.

¹ <<http://wals.info/>> (09/2015).

² <<http://sswl.railsplayground.net/>> (09/2015).

³ We deliberately use the terms “variety”, “dialect”, and “language” as synonyms, in the sense of “manifestations of the human faculty of language”.

This linguistic variety is classified as *seriously endangered* (UNESCO Atlas of World's Languages in Danger).⁴ In 2007, it was included on the *List of protected intangible cultural heritages* by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia.

The debate as to the origin and classification of Istro-Romanian is, for many (linguists and non-linguists), a central topic. There are two more acknowledged theories. One claims that Istro-Romanian is one of the four “historical dialects” of the Romanian language arising from Proto-Romanian, on a par with Daco-Romanian (present day Romanian), Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian. The other claims that it detached from the common linguistic trunk later than the other idioms, thus it is simply a Daco-Romanian dialect (Kovačec 2009).

Istro-Romanian is of particular interest to show how Protocol Linguistics can enhance inclusive cultural identity. There are at least three dimensions of linguistic research which relate Istro-Romanian to other better studied varieties, avoiding a fossilization of the issue on the Daco-Romanian vs. Proto-Romanian ancestor, which cannot be settled in view of lack of documentation.

The first is the inter-Balkan dimension. Croatian and Romanian are Balkan languages at different degrees (Romanian being one of the “most Balkan”, Croatian being one of the “less Balkan” ones, cf. Mišeska-Tomić 2006 for an overview). The issues that can be settled are the following: What are the Balkan features present in Croatian and Romanian? Are these features also present in Istro-Romanian? For those features that are present/absent, do they come from (a previous stage of) Proto-Romanian and were reinforced/weakened by the contact with Croatian? Are there Balkan features in Istro-Romanian that are not present in either Romanian or Croatian but are present (for example, in Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian, which are considered by Joseph 1999 as “more Balkan” than Romanian)? Zegrean (2012) gives an overview of the Balkanisms present in Istro-Romanian with respect to the other three Balkan Romance languages. Her conclusion is that Istro-Romanian is the “least Balkan” of all. This is not surprising, considering the geographical position and the contact with Croatian.

A second obvious line of interest raised by the study of Istro-Romanian is the intra-Romance dimension: What Romance features of Romanian are present/absent in Istro-Romanian? In the perspective of a partial contact with the Italo-Romance varieties present in the Istrian peninsula until the last century, would it be correct to hypothesize any influence or contact that these varieties may have induced on Istro-Romanian in the preservation of certain Romance properties absent in Balkan-Romance?

⁴ <<http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/>> (09/2015).

A third perspective is provided by the alloglottal dimension: Croatian is only marginally Balkan; on the contrary, it has many Slavic features that are not present in Balkan languages. What are the Slavic features of Croatian also present in Istro-Romanian? The alloglottal perspective can also be considered from a broader point of view and raises two other questions: Are there Slavic features in Istro-Romanian that are not present in the neighboring varieties (Croatian, Chakavian)? Are there Romance features in Istro-Romanian that are not present in Italian or in Romanian?

In this paper we provide no direct answer to any of these questions. The protocols are designed to raise empirical questions that can inspire elicitation tests, interviewing techniques, and a system of corpus annotation that will in the long run give us more precise results.

The horizontal axis of our tentative chart for Istro-Romanian will therefore include Romanian, Croatian, and Italian (including their non-standard varieties).

2.2 *The Vertical Axis: the Clusters of Feature*

The vertical axis is much more dependent on how deep our survey is intended to be. For expository purposes, we can only be quite sketchy at this stage. Our prototype protocol starts from the core properties of sentence structure.

The subject-predicate dichotomy is acknowledged by all linguistic theories. Another uncontroversial property is that in many languages the verbal element expressing finite Mood (and Tense) also agrees for the person features of the subject. Furthermore, rich verbal inflection for the person of the subject often correlates with the possibility of omission of pronominal subjects in finite clauses. Finally, the Subject Verb order can vary across languages (cf. Dryer 2013). The first cluster of properties for the comparison of the four languages at stake includes: Subject-Verb Agreement, SV/VS alternation, null Subject pronouns in finite clauses.

Auxiliary insertion to express past Tense or perfective Aspect is generally found across European languages. The two possible auxiliaries *be* and *have* select a past participle form of the verb, which agrees with the subject for the gender and number in the presence of auxiliary *be* only. The second cluster of properties we suggest can be formulated as: Auxiliary + Past participle to express past Tense/perfective Aspect; Auxiliary alternation according to V-classes; Auxiliary *have*-past participle agreement; Auxiliary *be* + past participle agreement.

The position of the verb in the clause is the pivot of a number of properties such as its position with respect to adverbs, the possibility of V-fronting to the left of an auxiliary (which is present in many Balkan languages, and not present in Romance), and the possibility of VP-deletion in short answers (which is absent in Romance but present in Slavic).

Great variation across the languages of Europe is found as regards the position of clitics in the clause, which can appear to cluster around the Tense position, or to occupy the so-called Wackernagel position (the second position in the clause). The clitic nature is in general reserved to functional elements such as pronouns, auxiliaries, or negative particles. A tentative protocol for this intricate matter must therefore regard these two dimensions.

In the following Section we give a first formulation of the partial protocols for Istro-Romanian providing some tentative answers mainly based on fieldwork conducted by Iulia Zegrean in 2009-2010.

3. A Partial Protocol for Istro-Romanian Clausal Structure

Before starting the presentation of the data, a caveat on orthography is at stake. We do not take a position on how to spell Istro-Romanian. Vrzić (2009) makes a recent proposal grounded on the spelling system of Croatian, motivated by the fact that the people who speak it are not used to writing it because they have been educated in Croatian. Zegrean (2012) follows the system in Kovačec (1971 and 1978) and Sârbu (1992) and the original orthography when quoting examples from the literature. We follow this general practice despite the fact that it can create some inconsistencies.

3.1 Subject Verb Agreement

The four languages under consideration display Subject Agreement on the Tensed form of the verb. This is generally common in many languages of the world. Dryer (2011a) points out that 437 out of 711 languages have the pronominal subject expressed by affixes on verbs (and therefore not expressed independently). The presence of subject agreement is however not always sufficient to allow for a null subject pronoun in finite clauses, as is the case of French (Kayne 1975) or some Italian dialects (cf. Manzini and Savoia 2005). Istro-Romanian, Romanian, Italian, and Croatian all behave in the same way, displaying a null subject pronoun, as in (1):

- | | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------------|------------------|
| (1) | a. | Cunosc doi mladić | (Istro-Romanian) |
| | b. | Cunosc doi tinerei | (Romanian) |
| | c. | Conosco due giovanotti | (Italian) |
| | d. | Znam dva mladića | (Croatian) |
| | | '[I] know two young-men' | |

In the generative tradition (Rizzi 1982; Burzio 1986 for Italian; Dobrovie Sorin 1994 for Romanian), this property is correlated with the possibility of VS order, in particular with unaccusative verbs. Our four languages all confirm this tendency:

- (2) a. Vire ur cârștiân (Istro-Romanian)
 b. Vine un om (Romanian)
 c. Arriva un uomo (Italian)
 d. Dolazi neki čovjek (Croatian)
 ‘[‘There] comes a man’

Subject agreement, null subject pronouns, and postverbal subjects make Istro-Romanian as perfectly congruent with both Croatian, eastern Romance, and Central Romance.

3.2 Auxiliary Selection and Past Participle Agreement

Istro-Romanian is parallel to Romanian in displaying only one auxiliary to express past Tense, namely *have* and no past participle agreement with the subject any verbs. We observe unaccusatives in (3) and transitives in (4):

- (3) a. Kristina a verit (Istro-Romanian)
 b. Cristina a venit (Romanian)
 ‘Cristina has arrived’
- (4) a. Lara a poidit paninu (Istro-Romanian)
 b. Lara a mâncat un sandwich (Romanian)
 ‘Lara has eaten a sandwich’

In this respect, Istro-Romanian is quite different from Croatian, which behaves like other Slavic languages in forming the past tense with an adjectival form of the verb agreeing with the subject and occurring with the auxiliary *be*, with both unaccusatives (5a) and transitives (5b):

- (5) a. Kristina je stigla
 Cristina is arrived.F.SG
- b. Lara je pojela sendvič
 Lara is bought.F.SG. [a] sandwich

The presence of auxiliaries to form past tenses is an innovation of Romance with respect to Latin. It must be noted that all attested medieval Romance languages display the *be/have* alternation that differentiates unaccusative verbs with auxiliary *be* and subject agreement on the past participle, and all other verbs (transitives, ditransitives and intransitives) with auxiliary *have* and no agreement on the past participle. Here we give an Italian example:

- (6) a. Cristina è arrivata
Cristina.FSG is arrived.FSG
- b. Lara ha mangiato un panino
Lara.FSG has eaten a sandwich

The gradual loss of the *bel/have* alternation is witnessed in the historical grammar of Spanish. We are not aware whether this has been the case of Romanian as well, whose earliest attestations are however later (from the 16th c.). However, Alexandru Nicolae (p.c.) draws our attention on the possibility in modern Romanian to have something morphologically though not semantically parallel to (6a): *Cristina e venită (de ieri)* (lit. C. is come (since yesterday), ‘Cristina has been here since yesterday’). This property is also present in the other Balkan Romance languages (cf. Mišeska-Tomić 2006). We could suppose that this is a residue of an older stage with the same auxiliary alternation we find in the more central Romance languages. In any case, the contact with Croatian does not seem to have had any influence on auxiliary selection in Istro-Romanian.

3.3 Verb Movement

Istro-Romanian is quite similar to Croatian in what in generative grammar is called “Long Verb Movement”, which consists in fronting the past participle to the sentence initial position at the left of the auxiliary. We call this phenomenon V-preposing, to make our terminology theoretically agnostic:

- (7) a. Stigla je (Croatian)
come.FSG. is
- b. Verit-a (Istro-Romanian)
come-has
‘She arrived’

V-preposing is obligatory when the sentence only consists in auxiliary and past participle. This is due to the fact that the auxiliary in Croatian (8a) is a clitic in Wackernagel position. The same appears to hold in Istro-Romanian (8b):

- (8) a. *Je stigla (Croatian)
be come.FSG
- b. *A verit (Istro-Romanian)
has come

Italian behaves in the opposite way (9a). V-preposing is impossible (9b), unless the past participial form is contrastively focused (9c):

- (9) a. È arrivata (Italian)
is arrived.F.SG
b. *Arrivat(a) è
c. ARRIVATA è (NON partita)
arrived.F.SG [she] is (not departed.F.SG)

Today's Romanian (10a) is more similar to Italian, but V-preposing (10b) can be found in the literary register and in some tenses⁵ (cf. Dobrovie Sorin 1994; Rivero 1994). Note that it was more common in Old Romanian as witnessed by (10c):

- (10) a. A venit (Romanian)
has come
b. #Venit-a (Istro-Romanian)
Come=has
c. Cumparat-a den voivodesei den Țara Leșescu
[He/She] bought=has from voivod.F.SG.Gen from Țara Leșescu
(*CI Inventar Bozen*, 1594, from Chivu *et al.* 1979)

This piece of data suggests that V-preposing in Istro-Romanian is the heritage of a common Balkan Romance origin. It is, in fact, also present in Megleno-Romanian (Mišeska-Tomić 2006: 377-78).

It is well known that isolated languages have a conservative tendency. The contact with Croatian which has a similar, though not identical phenomenon (cf. Čavar and Wilder 1994), has certainly played a major role in the preservation of this property which is now almost lost in modern Romanian. This hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that the conditions on the optional vs. obligatory nature of V-preposing are not exactly the same in Istro-Romanian and Croatian.

For example, in Croatian the auxiliary must immediately follow a preverbal DP subject, as in (11). This is not the case in Istro-Romanian (12):

⁵ Oana Savescu makes us notice that verb preposing is more natural with conditional verbs that are formed by a special form of the auxiliary *have* plus the infinitive form of the verb. So that a sentence like (i) has a grammatical counterpart with verb preposing in (ii):

- (i) eu l-as mânca
I CL would eat
(ii) Mânca-l-as
eat CL would
'I would eat it'

- (11) a. Redento je čitao knjigu (Croatian)
 Redento is read book.Acc
 'Redento read the book'
- b. *Redento čitao-je knjigu (Istro-Romanian)
 Redento read-is book. Acc
- (12) a. Redento čiteit-a libru (Istro-Romanian)
 Redento read=has book.the
 'Redento read the book'
- b. Vaca durmit-a tota nopta
 cow-the slept=has all night-the
 'The cow slept all night long'
- c. Kristina verit-a ier
 Kristina come=has yesterday
 'Kristina has arrived yesterday'

Our elicited corpus does not contain the Istro-Romanian counterpart of (11a); but the ungrammaticality of (13b) suggests that the auxiliary cannot encliticize onto a full DP subject:

- (13) a. Dejan mes-a ân beserica (Istro-Romanian)
 Dejan gone-has in church
- b. *Dejan a mes ân beserica
 Dejan has gone in church
 'Dejan went to church'

But an auxiliary can encliticize on non-verbal constituents, as we observe with the Time adverb 'yesterday' in (14a), and the complementizer 'that' in (14b):

- (14) a. Ier-a Redento čuda čiteit (Istro-Romanian)
 yesterday=has Redento much read
 'Yesterday Redento read a lot'
- b. Se ganę k-a Redento čuda čiteit
 SE says that=has Redento much read
 'It is said that Redento read a lot'

Example (14) also shows that the enclitic auxiliary can move above the subject in Istro-Romanian: a property that is not shared by Romanian and is instead found in Croatian.

Furthermore, the clitic cluster formed by the auxiliary and the clitic negation (15a) or a clitic object (15b) can stand alone and does not need a host:

- (15) a. Nu-a nič čiteit (Istro-Romanian)
 not=has nothing read
 ‘[He/She] read nothing’
 b. L-am vezut
 [I] him.AccCL-have1SG seen
 ‘I saw him’

It is important to note the asymmetry between third person on the one hand and first/second person on the other. It is apparent that first and second person pronouns in (16) can serve as hosts for the clitic auxiliary (or as part of the cluster containing the clitic auxiliary) while third person pronouns cannot, parallel to full DPs, as observed in (13) above:

- (16) Indicative present perfect tense: auxiliary + participle (of *fini* ‘to finish’)

SG	1	io-m finit	PL	noi am finit
	2	tu-i finit		voi aț finit
	3	je finit-a (*je a finit)		čelj finit-a (*celj a finit)

A frequency adverb like *vet* ‘already’, which is clearly borrowed from Croatian, gives unexpected results in (17a). It allows for the auxiliary to occur immediately after a DP subject, differently from (13b) above, suggesting that in some cases, the auxiliary can be proclitic onto the following word (the adverb in this case). Furthermore, in (17a) the adverb can optionally appear after the past participle, which mildly contrasts with Croatian that disprefers the adverb after the past participle (17b), and sharply contrasts with Romanian that cannot split the auxiliary and the past participle in (17c):

- (17) a. Kristina a {vet} verit {vet} (Istro-Romanian)
 b. Kristina je {već} stigla {?već} (Croatian)
 c. Cristina a {*deja} venit {deja} (Romanian)
 ‘Christine has (already) arrived (already)’

Romanian only has a restricted number of weak adverbs that may appear between auxiliary and past participle: *mai*, *tot*, *cam* (cf. Dobrovie-Sorin 1994). Istro-Romanian may have extended this possibility (or maintain a possibility available in an early stage of the language) in contact with Croatian.

To conclude, as regards the position of the auxiliary and the past participle, it seems that Istro-Romanian preserves a property of Old Romanian that is, at least superficially, shared with Croatian, namely V-preposing. Furthermore, it has not developed a strict adjacency requirement of the Aux–V order, that is found in Modern Romanian with most adverbs, probably in contact with Serbo-Croatian.

3.4 Clitic Clusters

Istro-Romanian, parallel to Romanian, presents a positional difference of masculine vs. feminine third person accusative clitic pronouns, in that the feminine clitic appears more embedded in the verbal cluster: in compound tenses, masculine *l-* is proclitic to the auxiliary (18a), while feminine singular *vo* is found between the auxiliary and the past participle (18b). We are not sure whether *vo* is enclitic on the auxiliary or proclitic on the lexical verb, but we note in (18c) that it is certainly not enclitic to a lexical verb:

- (18) (Istro-Romanian)
- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| a. | Nu l- am vezut
[I] not him.CL have.1SG seen
'I haven't seen him' | Neg > CL_{masc} > AuxCL > PastPart |
| b. | Nu-am vo vezut
[I] not have.1SG her.CL seen
'I haven't seen her' | Neg > AuxCL > CL_{fem} > PastPart |
| c. | *Nu-am vezut vo | Neg > AuxCL > PastPart > CL_{fem} |

The cases in (22b-c) sharply contrast with their Romanian counterparts (23b-c), (cf. Dobrovie-Sorin 1994):

- (19) (Romanian)
- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| a. | Nu l- am văzut
I not him.CL have.1Sg seen
'I haven't seen him' | Neg > CL_{masc} > AuxCL > PastPart |
| b. | *Nu-am o văzut
I not have.1SG her.CL seen | Neg > AuxCL > CL_{fem} > PastPart |
| c. | Nu-am văzut- o
I not have.1SG seen-her.CL
'I haven't seen her' | Neg > AuxCL > PastPart > CL_{fem} |

This difference can be related to the possibility in Istro-Romanian vs. the impossibility in Romanian to separate the auxiliary from the past participle (cf. 17a above). Once again, we find a property related to the apparent attraction of the auxiliary towards the initial part of the clause, which makes Istro-Romanian similar to Croatian.

Istro-Romanian is very similar to other languages in displaying the order dative > accusative in the clitic cluster. As may be expected given the properties observed above, the cluster can appear sandwiched between a preposed past participle and the auxiliary, or it can serve as the host of the second position auxiliary.

- (20) (Istro-Romanian)
- a. Dăt -ȝi -l -am. PastPart > **CLDat** > **CLmascAcc** > AuxCL
 given you.Dat it.CL have.1SG
- b. ȝi l -am dăt. **CLDat** > **CLmascAcc** > AuxCL > PastPart
 you.Dat it.CL have.1SG given
 'I gave it to you'

The differences and similarities with Romanian and Croatian are expected. Modern Romanian does not really allow any past participle preposing. For this reason (21a) is very marked, though not ungrammatical:

- (21) (Romanian)
- a. #Datu -ȝi -l -am. PastPart > **CLDat** > **CLmascAcc** > AuxCL
 given you.Dat it.CL have.1SG
- b. ȝi l -am dat. **CLDat** > **CLmascAcc** > AuxCL > PastPart
 you.Dat it.CL have.1SG given
 'I gave it to you'

On the other hand, since the Croatian auxiliary is in Wackernagel position, the clitic cluster cannot intervene between the fronted past participle and the auxiliary, as in (22a). The auxiliary is the first in the cluster and is followed by the pronouns, which display the dative > accusative order observed in Romance, as in (22b). The other possibility is when the clause is introduced by an adverb, thus the order Aux > dative > accusative is also present in case an adverb is in first clausal position as in (22c):

- (22) (Croatian)
- a. *Dao/*Dala ti ga sam
 given.M/F you.Dat it.CL have.1SG
- b. Dao/Dala sam ti ga
 given.M/F you. have.1SG Dat it.CL
 'I gave it to you'
- c. Juče sam ti ga dao/dala
 Yesterday have.1SG you.Dat it.CL given.M/F
 'Yesterday I gave it to you'

From the two properties of clitic clusters observed above, the question arises as to how the feminine clitic is positioned in the case of V-preposing in Istro-Romanian. A minimal pair with the masculine is given in (23)-(24):

- (23) a. Redento l-a vezut
Redento he.Acc.CL = has seen
b. Redento vezut-l-a
Redento seen he.Acc.CL =has
- (24) a. Redento {vo} vezut-a {vo}
Redento {her.Acc.CL} seen = has {her.Acc.CL}
'Redento saw him/her'
b. * Redento vezut(-v)o-a (also cf.) *Nu-am vezut (v)o

The contrast in (23)-(24) shows differently from Romanian, in Istro-Romanian the feminine clitic can be procliticized onto the fronted past participle as in (24a) and is never enclitic on the finite verb (24b), confirming what was shown in (18c).

3.5 Yes/No Questions and Short Answers

Istro-Romanian presents an interrogative particle *če* which is obligatory in wide scope *yes/no*-questions (25a). If it is missing, part of the question is presupposed. The interpretation of (25b) can be paraphrased as '(How about) Kristina, did she come?' while the paraphrase of (25c) is 'Was it Kristina who arrived?':

- (25) a. Če-a verit Kristina? (wide scope question)
PRT-has come Kristina
b. (*Če) Kristina a verit? (narrow scope question on the subject)
c. (*Če) Verit-a Kristina? (narrow scope question on the verb)
'Did Kristina come?'

Če occupies the first position in the clause, and as such is the host of the clitic cluster in second position. Compare the ungrammatical version of (25b-c) with the grammatical examples in (26):

- (26) a. Če-ai fost în čine?
PRT have2SG been in cinema
'Have you been to the cinema?'
b. Če-l vezi?
PRT him.CL see.2SG
'Do you see him?'
c. Če nu vo vezi?
PRT her.CL see.2SG
'Don't you see her?'

In this respect, Istro-Romanian is completely parallel to Chakavian, which presents a similar particle *ča* (27). But it is not dissimilar to some Italian dialects, like for example Anconetano in (27b). This shows that the phenomenon is also present in Romance, despite its absence in Romanian (28a-b), which presents the question marker *ce* only in the *ce face* construction:

- (27) a. Ča je prišla Kristina? (Chakavian)
 b. Che è venuta Cristina? (Anconetano)
 PRT is come Cristina
- (28) a. Cristina a venit? (Romanian)
 Cristina has come
 b. A venit Cristina?
 Has come Cristina
 c. Ce face Cristina, a venit? (Substandard Romanian)
 What does Cristina, has come
 ‘Has Cristina arrived?’

A contact-induced linguistic property such as the formation of an interrogative marker is easily integrated in a system that is able to accommodate it, as the Romance system, with a rich left peripheral expansion of the clause. This is in all cases a common property of the languages of the world, as shown by Dryer (2011b) who reports that 584 among 954 languages display an interrogative marker to mark Yes/No Questions.

A striking property that distinguishes Istro-Romanian from all other Romance languages, is the possibility of VP deletion, at least as regards short answers. To a question like ‘Did you sleep?’ with an intransitive verb, and the first/second person alternation in the answer we can obtain two possible answers as in (29):

- (29) Če -ai durmit ier? (Romanian)
 PRT have.2SG slept yesterday
- a. Durmit -am
 slept have.1SG
- b. Ăm.
 have.1SG
 ‘Did you sleep yesterday? Yes, I slept. / I did.’

As regards the (quasi-)clitic nature of the auxiliary observed in 3.2 above, it is interesting to note that while the first person auxiliary, formed by a vowel and a consonant can stand alone (29b), there is variation as regards the second person, formed by a diphthong, which requires for some speakers a preceding consonant *v-*, which we could not relate to any element and for some speakers

is a condition for the acceptability of the short answer (30a). The consonant disappears if the auxiliary is clustered with the negation (30b):

- (30) Če m-am ponešeit bire âz?
 PRT REFL.1SG have.1SG behaved well today
 a. %(V-) Ai.
 have.2SG
 b. N-ai.
 not-have.2SG
 'Have I behaved well today? You have / You haven't'

The weakest form of the auxiliary is the third person, which either requires V-preposing (31a), or is obligatorily spelled out with the consonant (31b-c):

- (31) Če mes-a az Goran ân Trst?
 PRT gone have.3SG today G. inTriest
 a. Mes -a.
 gone have.3SG
 b. *A.
 have.3SG
 c. V-a.
 CONS-have.3SG
 'Did Goran go to Triest today? Yes, he went'

This property is only shared by Croatian and is not present in Romanian, or in any Romance variety that we know of:

- (32) a. Da, imam. (Croatian)
 Yes, [I] have
 b. Ne, nemam
 No, [I] not-have
 c. Da, hoću
 Yes, [I] will
 d. Ne, neću
 No, [I] not-will

In this subsection we have observed two contact induced features of Istro-Romanian that distinguish it from Romanian, namely the presence of an interrogative marker in Yes/No questions and the possibility to have VP-deletion in short answers.

3.6 A Provisional Protocol for Istro-Romanian

In this Section we have documented some properties of Istro-Romanian clausal syntax in a comparative perspective with Romanian, Croatian and Italian. They can be clustered under 6 headings, as in the following chart:

(33)	Istro-Romanian	Romanian	Croatian	Italian
Subject-Verb Agreement	+	+	+	+
SV/VS order	+	+	+	+
null subj. pro in finite clauses	+	+	+	+
Aux in past.T / perf.Asp:	+	+	+	+
<i>have</i> - PastPart agr	+	+	-	+
<i>be</i> + PastPart agr	-	-	+	+
Clitics	+	+	+	+
subject pronouns	-	-	-	-
object pronouns	+	+	+	+
auxiliary	+	+	+	-
negation	+	+	+	+
Aux in Wackernagel pos.	+/-	(+)/-	+	-
3rd.P Subject host	-	#	+	#
1st/2nd. P. Subject host	+	#	+	+
Aux Adv V	+	+/-	+	+
V-preposing	+	(+)/-	+	-
Clitic clusters with Aux	+	+	+	+
Acc.M/F in diff. pos.	+	+	-	-
PastPart Cl Aux	+	(-)	-	(-)
CL Aux PastPart	+	+	-	+
PastPart Aux Cl	-	-	+	-
overt interrog. marker	+	-	+	(+)/-
short answers	+	-	+	-

The clusters of properties proposed in (32) are necessarily tentative and incomplete, due to limitations of space and more importantly of in-depth knowledge of this language. The aim of the paper has been to propose the protocol methodology, designed to be quite flexible to include future advances of comparative linguistics.

For example, a more in-depth research on VP-deletion could relate the possibility of short answers to V-preposing. A deeper knowledge of clitic clusters could relate the descriptive clusters provided in 5 with the Wackernagel vs. T-position of the auxiliary. A better way of capturing person restrictions is necessary, as the ban of encliticization of the auxiliary on the third person subject may depend on properties independent of the Wackernagel position of the auxiliary. Of course, many properties have been left

out, as for example the presence vs. absence of infinitival clauses, which is a major Balkan feature.

The protocol methodology can easily be extended to any aspect of language, including lexicon, phonology, but also pragmatics, discourse features, etc. We have started with syntax for two major reasons, apart from the fact that we are syntacticians: first because syntax is less considered in endangered language methodology, and second because the type of comparison done here is directly based on the new comparative methodology of the principles and parameters framework.

4. Conclusion

Despite its incompleteness, the protocol in (32) can be a good start in writing a grammar of Istro-Romanian for documentation, revitalization, standardization, as well as for educational purposes. Linguistic metacompetence must be made available to all actors in the process of regaining power on the language and approaching the issue of the historical origin in a more objective perspective.

Despite only taking into account a few properties, the Protocols presented above permit to obtain an inclusive perspective of Istro-Romanian across at least four dimensions. First of all, the universal dimension: the possibility in a language to omit the subject, related to richness in verbal morphology, and to find a DP subject in post-verbal position is shared by the languages observed and is rather common worldwide. Second, the inter-Romance dimension: the lack of the *bel/have* auxiliary alternation collocates Istro-Romanian in the Balkan-Romance group, distinguishing it from central Romance (Italian). Third, the contact with Croatian has strengthened properties that are going to be lost in Romanian, as is the case of V-preposing (marginally present in Romanian but more frequent in old Romanian and Megleno-Romanian). It has created an innovation, such as the interrogative marker (that is compatible with the rich clausal left periphery of Romance varieties as witnessed by Italian dialects, and is a wide-spread property among the languages of the world). It has also created two phenomena that (to our knowledge) are not found in any Romance languages, namely short answers and VP deletion and the (quasi) Wackernagel position of auxiliaries. Finally, the different position of accusative masculine vs. feminine clitics is a peculiarity of Romanian that is found with micro-parametric differences in Istro-Romanian, which has a different behavior of the auxiliary (also due to contact with Croatian).

From this brief overview, two major aspects of the language emerge: the historical origin of Istro-Romanian as belonging to Balkan-Romance and the strong contact with Croatian, a language that in modern time is the (other) first language of the speakers. These dimensions are two equally important sides of the same precious coin, in that they both concur in making the language

not as an isolated individual species, but as the result of language contact and change. If language is one of the fundamentals of cultural identity, disseminating metalinguistic awareness of these aspects can help the community of speakers interact with the research community of linguists to support language documentation, plan the means of dissemination of metalinguistic competence in education, and ultimately construct inclusive cultural identity that is not in contrast with the national Croatian identity of the speakers but is also not in contrast with the eastern Romance nature of the language and at the same time could easily overlap with identities construed outside Croatia.

In this perspective, we hope, Protocol Linguistics can contribute to enhancing inclusive cultural identity, in the perspective of one of the Horizon 2020 goals; namely, to create “inclusive, innovative and secure societies”⁶.

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(De)Legitimization Strategies in the “Austere Prose” of Palmiro Togliatti*

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Abstract:

This article illustrates the specific linguistic ways which introduce the pragmatics and semantics of de-legitimization and symbolic power in political discourse. We will show that the words produced in political discourse, represent an enabling tool to create the effects of meaning related to the process of (de)legitimization as a slip/change of meaning. Taking into account the few previous studies on de-legitimization strategies, our intention is to analyse this discursive practice in the political discourse of Palmiro Togliatti, considering as the focus of our analysis three speeches delivered in the period 1947-1952. We will show that Togliatti employed many different discursive strategies that can be included within the (de)legitimization spectrum.

Keywords: Authoritative Discourse, Dehumanization, (De)legitimization, Political Discourse, Vocatives

1. Introduction

In this paper, we will try to illustrate some legitimization and delegitimization strategies employed in the public discourse of Palmiro Togliatti, the leader of the Italian Communist party – the largest Communist Party in

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non-Communist Europe at the time – focussing on the period 1947-1952. The choice of this time range is not based on random sampling. By 1948 the Cold War had divided Europe into two camps and many nations were forced to choose between East and West. We are especially interested in analyzing (de)legitimization at work in this complicated and anxious historical context.

Furthermore, the pragmatics of (de)legitimazation strategies in political discourse has been a widely studied and debated topic in recent years, but most studies have concentrated on the linguistic behaviour of contemporary actors on the political scene. We believe that studies devoted to analyzing these practices in a historical perspective are timely and can provide useful insights for the study of language as an instrument of control and symbolic power in (evolving) discourse and society (cf. Bourdieu 2001).

The figure of Togliatti is particularly challenging from the viewpoint of discourse analysis (and for most researchers not particularly appealing, cf. Cortelazzo 2011). In 1947-1948, Togliatti's line of moderate (parliamentary) Communism was sharply criticized by his international allies because of his conservatism and nationalism. In the Italian political elections of April 1948, the joint Communist-Socialist list was defeated due to a combination of fear (we should remember that Czechoslovakia had fallen to the Communists only two months before), Catholic Church, and the influence of the propaganda from the United States. Hence, Togliatti was a defeated social actor struggling to legitimize his actions and the political agenda of the Italian Communist Party. By legitimizing himself as an important social actor, he was necessarily forced to delegitimize his political opponents.

In pragmatics, and more broadly in social studies, the notions of legitimization and delegitimization have been considered two sides of the same coin (cf. e.g. Martín Rojo 1995; Martín Rojo and Van Dijk 1997; Cap 2008 and 2013). Legitimization is standardly related to a positive evaluation of the self, whereas delegitimization is related to the negative evaluation of the “other”/“enemy” (cf. Hellín-García 2013). Concerning delegitimization, as is well illustrated in Chilton:

it can manifest itself in acts of negative other-representation, acts of blaming, scape-goating, marginalizing, excluding, attacking the moral character of some individual or group, attacking the communicative cooperation of the other, attacking the rationality and sanity of the other. The extreme is to deny the humanness of the other. At the other end of the spectrum legitimization, usually oriented to the self, includes positive self-presentation, manifesting itself in acts of self-praise, self-apology, self-explanation, self-justification as a source of authority, reason, vision and sanity.

(Chilton 2004: 47)

We will see in this paper that the “austere prose” (Cortelazzo 2011) of Palmiro Togliatti was also not immune to the recourse of persuasive tools interpreted by the current literature as delegitimization practices.

In recent years, (de)legitimization practices have been analysed both from a functionalist perspective and a mentalist perspective. Broadly speaking, the functionalist enterprise (cf. e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Van Dijk 2005; Van Leeuwen 2007, a.o.) addresses strategies of (de)legitimization and their linguistic means of realization in discourse, in order to decode relationships between language and ideology, language and power, language and gender, and so on. For instance, Van Leeuwen lists four main categories of (de)legitimization tools: authorization (citing established figures or traditions), moral evaluation (linking their agenda to a system of values), rationalization (mentioning the goals/faults of institutionalized social practices) and mythopoesis (employing narratives that reward legitimate/punish delegitimate actions) (Van Leeuwen 2007: 92; cf. also Van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; Hellín-García 2013).

The mentalist viewpoint on the other hand tries to account for implicit inferences in discourse. In this context, a clear issue related to (de)legitimization is that of manipulation. In recent studies (cf. Blass 2005; Allott 2008; Saussure 2008; Maillat 2013, a.o.), Relevance Theory, in particular, has been employed as a robust tool to interpret and explain how (readily) the addressee can be manipulated (Sperber and Wilson 1995). As is well illustrated in Maillat:

In a relevance-theoretic framework, interpretation is efficiency-driven. From an evolutionary perspective such a system is expected to look for processing shortcuts. Manipulation takes advantage of this natural – inevitable – attraction towards cognitive shortcuts and exploits it. And in many cases it gets away with it because, as Sperber and Wilson (1995: 90) underline: [...] people are nearly-incorrigible “cognitive optimists”. They take for granted that their spontaneous cognitive processes are highly reliable, and that the output of these processes does not need re-checking. In a recent development of these ideas, Sperber *et al.* (2010) claim that the cognitive system evolved a separate mechanism, “epistemic vigilance”, in order to offset the cognitive drawbacks of this drive towards efficiency. The role of the epistemic vigilance filter is to ensure that the cognitive mechanisms governing interpretation are not misled or trapped too often. In that sense epistemic vigilance is predicted to be intimately related to manipulative uses of language, as they are expected to function in opposite directions.

(Maillat 2013: 197)

As Sperber (1994 and 2000) convincingly shows, a socio-political actor can in principle argue for an untruthful assumption with clever logic and convince/manipulate the addressee.¹ We will see that Togliatti's argumenta-

¹ Sperber (2000) has shown how deception and manipulation can be seen as a “natural” part of communication. Sperber claims that human beings are provided with a “logico rhetorical module” that allows the addressee of a manipulative message to analyze the message for its internal/external consistency. This logico-rhetorical module would have evolved as an adaptation to the deceptive possibilities inherent in communication, somewhat along

tion implies the recovery of assumptions and *shortcuts*, which had a felicitous (and massive) manipulative effect. The psychological effects on the processing effort of the addressee in Sperber and Wilson's (1995) view can possibly play a role in justifying the attainment of manipulation. To resist manipulation is not an easy task from the viewpoint of processing. As shown in Rocci:

In order to maintain a common ground 'for the sake of understanding' the sceptical addressee needs to keep in middle term memory a representation of the ways in which this common ground differs from his/her real beliefs. Note that this extra mnemonic effort is similar in nature to the one which is necessary to the liar in order to lie consistently.

(Rocci 2005: 103)

The rest of the paper is articulated as follows. Section 2 illustrates the (few) previous analyses devoted to the study of the political speech of Togliatti. Section 3 shows and analyses the types of delegitimization strategies employed by Togliatti in his speeches. In particular, we have chosen to concentrate our analysis on three significant speeches delivered by Togliatti between 1947 and 1952. Chronologically, the first one is the speech delivered at the *Assemblea Costituente* (Constituent Assembly) on March 27th announcing the vote of the PCI in favour of the insertion of the Lateran Pacts in the new Republican Constitution, the second one is the speech of January 1950 in Modena during the funerals of the victims of the massacre of January 9th at the *Fonderie Riunite*, the third one is the speech delivered at the Chamber of Deputies on December 8th 1952 against the electoral law presented by Minister of Internal Affairs Mario Scelba. The Conclusion follows.

2. Previous Analyses of Togliatti's Discourse

The language and rhetoric of Palmiro Togliatti have attracted the interest of very few scholars (cf. e.g. Paccagnella 1975; Paradisi 1982; Antonelli 2002; Fedel 2003). Rather curiously, the same has happened with other leaders who have contributed to the Post-War Constitution of Republican Italy, such as Alcide De Gasperi or Pietro Nenni, if we exclude a few (mainly lexicographic) studies (cf. D'Anna 2010; Cortelazzo 2011; and references cited there).

The authors who have studied the political speeches of Togliatti noted as their main features the use of an austere and solemn prose, and a rigorous (textually concatenated) rhetoric. Antonelli (2002) argued that the speeches of Togliatti maintain substantial adherence to the rules of the "literary model", despite using a simple, fluid syntax, based on parataxis with only very few subordinate (mainly causal and final) clauses. Paccagnella (1975) stressed

the lines of *Machiavellian intelligence* (Byrne and Whiten 1988; cf. Blass 2005). This adaptive system, as "epistemic vigilance" leads to a "persuasion-counter persuasion arms race" (Blass 2005: 178; cf. also Chilton 2005).

that the architecture of the rhetoric of Togliatti was firmly structured, in strict consistency with a “logical schema”, clearly emerging from the internal distribution of his speeches (cf. also Fedel 2003; Baldi 2007 and 2012).

Cortelazzo (2011) notes that Togliatti’s political discourse is characterized by rhetorical tools such as invective, rhetorical questions, climax, and constant repetition of key terms (structuring a shared Communist lexicon) and anaphora, but he considers such devices as “gimmicks” oriented to highlight the rigorous argumentative structure. In particular, among the typical patterns of argumentation employed by the leader of the Italian Communist Party, Paradisi (1982) detected a structure based on the so-called ‘unità contraddittoria’ (contradictory unity), that is a way of developing the discourse by organizing it based on a scheme of the type “*X but Y*”. A clear example of this structure can be found in the speech given at Modena at the funeral of the victims of the massacre of January 9th 1950. Consider the passage below in (1) (from now on the most important fragments are highlighted in bold).

- (1) **È stato detto: basta!** [...] **Ripetiamo questo basta**, tutti assieme, dando ad esso la solennità e la forza che promanano da questa stessa nostra riunione. **Ma dire basta, non è sufficiente**, perché gli assassini e gli eccidi si succedono come le note di una tragedia.
 ‘Some have said stop! [...] We repeat this ‘stop’ all together, giving it the solemnity and strength emanating from our meeting. But saying just ‘stop’ is not enough, because the murders and massacres follow like the notes of a tragedy’.

The speech in (1) is structured on a binary scheme where a *correction* triggered by the connective *ma* (‘but’) introduces the focal point of the argumentation. Delegitimization techniques also seem to be effectively encoded in Togliatti’s political speeches through the “*X but Y*” pattern, as shown in (2):

- (2) **Ci hanno accusato** di essere i nemici della proprietà. **Ma** coloro che ci hanno accusati **erano loro stessi una banda di ladri** che ha messo a sacco **l’Italia intera**.
 ‘We were accused of being the enemies of property. But those who have accused us were themselves a gang of thieves who looted the whole of Italy’.

In the example in (2), taken from *Rapporto ai quadri comunisti di Napoli*, a speech given on April 11th 1944, in which Togliatti illustrated the so-called “Svolta di Salerno” (Salerno turning point),² Togliatti – in order to delegitimize (already falling) Fascism – downplays the typical Communist rhetoric based on the abolition of private property (and, more broadly, on class warfare),

² The “Svolta di Salerno” (a quite controversial political shift) was basically a compromise between antifascist parties, the monarchy and prime minister Pietro Badoglio to work together to defeat fascism and set up a government of national unity.

stressing some kind of patriotic nationalism, which is a very unusual behaviour for a Communist leader. In the next Section, we will further explore the (de) legitimization strategies employed in Togliatti's political speeches, showing that his polished rhetoric was not exempt from subtle and open attacks on his enemies.

3. The Main Tools of (De)Legitimization in the Speeches of Togliatti

In this Section, we will analyse some of the most important (de)legitimization tools employed by Palmiro Togliatti in his speeches. We have chosen to focus our analysis on three significant speeches delivered by Togliatti between 1947 and 1952, a period dense with agitation and instability in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.³ The first one is the speech given at the *Assemblea Costituente* (Constituent Assembly) on March 27th, announcing the vote of the PCI in favour of the insertion of the Lateran Pacts in the new Republican Constitution (a quite controversial choice for a Communist Party), the second one is the speech of January 1950 in Modena during the funerals of the victims of the massacre of January 9th at the *Fonderie Riunite*, in which six workers were killed by the militaries (belonging to *Arma dei Carabinieri*, a division of the Italian army), the third one is the speech given at the Chamber of Deputies on December 8th 1952 against the electoral law presented by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mario Scelba, and in defence of the principles of the Italian Constitution.

3.1 Authoritative Voices, (Shared) Emotions and Dehumanization

Palmiro Togliatti employed many different strategies that can be included within the (de)legitimization spectrum. One of the main characteristic features in the speeches of the Communist leader is the use of authoritative voices/ references to legitimize his agenda (and conversely to delegitimize the agenda of his political enemies). Consider the excerpts in (3).

³ The source from which the speeches are taken is *Opere di Palmiro Togliatti* (6 vols.), edited by Ernesto Ragionieri, Franco Andreucci, Paolo Spriano and Luciano Gruppi (Editori Riuniti, Roma).

- (3) a. ricordo che **Gramsci** mi diceva che il giorno in cui si fosse formato in Italia un governo socialista, in cui fosse sorto un **regime socialista**, uno dei principali compiti di questo governo, di **questo regime**, sarebbe stato di liquidare completamente la questione romana garantendo **piena libertà alla Chiesa cattolica**. (27/3/1947)
 ‘I remember that Gramsci told me that the day he set up a socialist government in Italy, the day in which a socialist regime would come about, one of the main tasks of such a government would be to liquidate completely the Roman question ensuring full freedom of the Catholic Church’.
- b. Il **Guizot**, che esprime questa **ricerca di equità** nel modo più chiaro, lo asserisce: “Se la maggioranza è spostata per artificio, vi è menzogna; se la minoranza è preliminarmente fuori combattimento, vi è oppressione. Nell’un caso e nell’altro, **il governo rappresentativo è corrotto**”. (8/12/1952)
 ‘Guizot, who expresses this quest for fairness in the clearest way, says: “If the parliamentary majority has shifted by artifice, there’s a lie; if the minority is preliminarily out of action, there is oppression. In either case, representative government is corrupt’.
- c. **Sonnino** si richiamava apertamente, nel proporre e difendere la proporzionale, al **fatto storico della Comune**. Si trattava di dare una impronta definitiva di democraticità, di rappresentatività e di giustizia all’ordinamento costituzionale dello Stato, nel momento in cui il **movimento sociale non può più essere soppresso con la forza**. (8/12/1952)
 ‘In proposing and defending the proportional system Sonnino openly invoked the historical fact of the Paris Commune. This was to give a final impression of democracy, representativeness and justice to the constitutional order of the State, at a time when the social movement cannot be suppressed by force anymore’.
- d. porto l’espressione della solidarietà e del cordoglio profondo del Partito comunista italiano, del **partito di Antonio Gramsci** [...]. (9/1/1950)
 ‘I bring the expression of solidarity and profound condolences of the Italian Communist Party, the party of Antonio Gramsci’.

As shown in recent work by Van Leeuwen (2007) and Reyes (2011) (contemporary and past), “voices of expertise” are employed in political discourse to show the addressee that recognized authorities in a specific field (in the precise case of Togliatti, mainly *social politics* are “backing the politician’s proposal with their knowledgeable statements” (Reyes 2011: 801). Basically, Togliatti strengthens his position referring to the “authorization” that a speaker “from outside” brings to the immediate context of his speech.

It is interesting to note the fact that Togliatti used not only voices close to his system of values (cf. the founding father of Italian Communism, Antonio Gramsci in 3a, 3d), but also voices from outside the Communist enterprise (cf. 3b, 3c). The “voices” of François Guizot, a French conservative liberal politi-

cian of the Nineteen Century, and that of Sidney Sonnino, a former liberal Italian Prime Minister, are a case in point. The communicative intention is quite clear: if (past) authoritative (leading) figures of the opposite political side agree with our plans, our enemies are necessarily delegitimized because they are not able to interpret and represent their political roots.

Another typical delegitimization tool employed by Togliatti, despite his “cold prose” is the use of a set of (shared) emotions with the addressee. This aspect of Togliatti’s discourse emerges especially outside the Parliamentary Court, in his speeches to an “ordinary people” audience. Consider the following passages, taken from the speech given in Modena during the funerals of the victims of the massacre of January 9th 1950.

- (4) a. Voi chiedevate una cosa sola, il lavoro, che è la sostanza della vita di tutti gli uomini degni di questo nome. Una società che non sa dare lavoro a tutti coloro che la compongono è **una società maledetta. Maledetti sono gli uomini** che, fieri di avere nelle mani il potere, si assidono al vertice di questa società maledetta, e con **la violenza delle armi, con l’assassinio e l’eccidio** respingono la richiesta più umile che l’uomo possa avanzare: la richiesta di lavorare. (9/1/1950)

‘You asked only one thing, work, which is the substance of life of all men worthy of this name. A society that cannot provide jobs for all its members it is a damned society. Damned are those men who, proud to have power in their hands, stand at the top of this damned society, and with the violence of guns, with murder and massacre, reject the humblest request a man could advance: the request for a job’.

Questo drappo e questi colori sono il simbolo della **nostra** unità, dell’unità della patria e di tutti i cittadini italiani nella difesa dei valori essenziali della **nostra** esistenza. Tutta la **nostra** vita, tutta la vita e tutta la lotta del nostro partito, ci fanno fede che io non vorrei pronunciare, in questo momento, altre parole che non fossero un appello severo ad unirsi tutti, davanti a queste bare, per deprecare ciò che è accaduto, **per respingere questa macchia dalla realtà della vita del nostro paese**. (9/1/1950)

‘This flag and these colours (of *the Italian flag*) are the symbol of our unity, the unity of the homeland and of all Italian citizens in defence of the essential values of our own existence. Our whole life, the whole life and the whole struggle of our party, show that we are authentic in what I do not want to say, at this moment, other words beyond a severe appeal to stay unite, in front of these coffins, to deplore what has happened, to reject this stain from the reality of the life of our country’.

Politicians linguistically achieve dynamics of shared emotions with their audience through “constructive strategies”, namely, utterances realizing a “we” group *versus* a “they” group by the means of specific acts of reference (Van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999: 92; cf. also Van Dijk 2005; Reisigl 2008; Capone 2010). For instance, in Togliatti’s speech the appeal through shared emotions

(encoded also *via* invectives as in 4a), allows him to build up (and possibly, overdraw) the opinions of his audience regarding a full set of matters. In particular Togliatti is asking for *actions*: he is asking his audience to fight against the Italian *status quo*. Here, the “right to work” is conveyed as one of the cornerstones of the Communist agenda, against the (perverted) behaviour of those who hold power that are in fact killing those asking for a work. Togliatti is stressing here – *via* a path of shared emotions – that his opponents are delegitimized by their own actions and that his agenda is emotionally (namely, without interpretative efforts) the right one to follow.

Furthermore, mention of the words ‘società maledetta’ (damned society) evokes a series of nuances in the audience’s mind, emotionally linked with (dreadful) previous experiences (consider again, in this regard, that Italy had just come out from twenty years of Fascist regime). Through emotionally bulky experiences, meanings are dialogically shaped and built (Bachtin 1980; cf. also Reyes 2011). The passage in (4a), for instance, triggers an emotional path (fear, sadness, and, potentially, revenge) in the audience, ideal to (de)legitimize political moves based on the aftermath of such shared feelings. Indeed, as argued in Reyes (2011: 806): “Emotions are key in the legitimization process, because they condition and prepare the audience to receive proposals and courses of actions. Emotions skew the audience towards accepting and supporting the proposal of the social actor, who has triggered the emotions in the first place”.

As already pointed out, the negative representation of public actors and the attribution of negative qualities to their actions (cf. *Maledetti sono gli uomini che, fieri di avere nelle mani il potere [...] con la violenza delle armi, con l’assassinio e l’eccidio respingono la richiesta...* ‘Damned are those men who, proud to have power in their hands [...] with the violence of guns, with murder and massacre, reject the humblest request’) allow creation of a two-folded event, in which the speaker and addressee are in the “us-group” (see e.g. the constant use of the first person plural pronoun in 4b) and the social actors depicted negatively constitute the “them-group”. In this precise case the government, who according to the words of Togliatti, has directly killed innocent peoples whose only fault was to ask for a job is clearly delegitimized, being in the “them-group”.

Another common tool of delegitimization employed by the Italian Communist leader was depersonalization/dehumanization as a discursive practice. Consider the examples below:

- (5) a. quando tra i presenti a un’assemblea si muove uno **spettro**, è inevitabile che **quello spettro** attiri l’attenzione e ad esso ci si rivolga. **Onorevole Tesauro**, lei qui è lo **spettro del regime fascista** [...]. (8/12/1952)
 ‘when among those who are present in the Assembly, there is a ghost it is inevitable that this ghost draws attention, so that we talk directly to it. Mr. Tesauro, here you are the ghost of the fascist regime’.

- b. Lascerò da parte le volgarità, gli articoli come quelli che scriveva l'altro giorno un **illustre camaleonte**, il signor Mario Missiroli, domandandosi che cosa c'è sotto all'atteggiamento dei comunisti [...] proprio lui che, per esaltare i Patti del Laterano, scrisse un intiero volume che, si dice, ebbe il personale plauso di Mussolini! È evidente che lezioni di etica da **un camaleonte non le prendiamo**. (27/3/1947)

'I will leave aside vulgarity, such as the articles that were written the other day by an illustrious chameleon, Mr. Mario Missiroli, wondering what's underneath the attitude of the Communists [...] the same man who wrote a full volume to exalt the Lateran Pacts, a volume that, it is said, had the personal approval of Mussolini! It is clear that we do not take lessons in ethics from a chameleon'.

One of the first authors to recognize depersonalization/dehumanization as a discursive delegitimizing technique was Bar-Tal (1989) (cf. also Tileagă 2007). Dehumanization constitutes possibly the extreme case of prejudice and stereotyping. Those who are not humans (clearly outside any possible "us-group") are automatically excluded from the realm of acceptable norms and values. In (5a, 5b) Togliatti refers to his enemies as ghosts or animals bearing malicious/wicked qualities. Note, interestingly, that both the social actors to which Togliatti refers are clearly linked to the (already) delegitimized Fascist regime.

3.2 (*Mythical*) Past and (*Hypothetical*) Future

A further (de)legitimization technique used in Togliatti's speeches is the use of a "timeline" of events by which the scope of his discourse goes beyond its immediate and physical context and enters the course of actions (cf. Jackendoff 1983; Dennett 1991). Often past events and key figures of the past (cf. the Section above) are recalled to delegitimize the conduct of the social actors who are perceived as enemies. For instance, consider the fragment in (6) in which the (French) bourgeoisie is historically depicted as evil, but this judgment transcends history because its conduct represents a "macchia indelebile" (an indelible stain),⁴ thus involving both the context of the discourse and the future actions to undertake. Note also in the passage in (6) the use of the peculiar "*X but Y*" argumentative schema of Togliatti introduced in Section 2, with the fragment "Si spegne l'eco delle fucilate, ma resta odor di polvere nell'aria!" ('the echo of gunfire ends, but there is still a smell of dust in the air!')

⁴ Note that in the *lexicon* of Palmiro Togliatti *stains* play a special role in delegitimizing the opponent and leaving them aside from the system of values shared with the audience (cf. e.g. the excerpt in 4b).

- (6) La **rivoluzione operaia** del giugno 1848 è **soffocata nel sangue**. Sull'atto di nascita del **regime borghese**, installatosi in Francia dopo il secondo crollo napoleonico, sta la **macchia di sangue** delle fucilate con le quali venne fatta **strage degli eroici combattenti della Comune**. È una **macchia** indelebile. Si spegne l'eco delle fucilate, ma resta odor di polvere nell'aria! Il movimento operaio si afferma, **va avanti**. (8/12/1952)

'The workers' revolution of June 1848 is drowned in blood. On the birth of the bourgeois regime, set up in France after the second fall of Napoleon, there is the burden of the bloodstain of gunfire with which the heroic fighters of the Commune were slaughtered. It is an indelible stain the echo of gunfire ends, but there is still a smell of dust in the air! The workers' movement goes on'.

The opposite pole of the timeline (the future) is also an "arena" for the conquest of social power by political actors. It has been recognized that in political discourse, the legitimization strategy projects the (hypothetical) future according to the possible actions taken in the present (cf. Fairclough 2003; Reyes 2008 and 2011). It has been said that future events constitute "an ideologically significant site in which dominant political actors and institutions can exert power and control" (Dunmire 2007: 19). This pattern is particularly evident in Togliatti where literally "future means action" (this attitude is especially evident in the speech of Modena), possibly due to the fact that the *simulacrum* of a better future/world was a standard part of Communist rhetoric (cf. Ilie 1998). Consider that the lexicon employed by the communist leader, as documented in (7a, 7b) below, is also full of terms such as 'nuovo' (new), 'rinnovamento' (regeneration), 'rinascita' (resurgence) and so on that clearly aim at legitimizing, conveying a positive set of shared values and emotions influencing the actions to be undertaken.

- (7) a. Come partito di avanguardia della classe operaia e del popolo italiano, coscienti della nostra forza che ci ha consentito di concludere vittoriosamente cento battaglie, **ci impegneremo ad una nuova, più vasta lotta**, in difesa della esistenza, della sicurezza, degli elementari diritti civili dei lavoratori. **Ci impegniamo a svolgere un'azione tale**, di propaganda, di agitazione, di organizzazione, che raccolga ed unisca in questa lotta **nuovi** milioni e milioni di lavoratori, tutte le forze sane del popolo italiano. Ci impegniamo a preparare e suscitare un movimento tale, un sussulto proveniente dal più profondo stato di cose che grida vendetta al cospetto di Dio. (9/1/1950)

'As a vanguard party of the working class and of the Italian people, aware of our strength that allowed us to successfully conclude a hundred battles, we are committed to a new, broader struggle in defence of life, safety, the basic civil rights of the workers. We will engage in such an action, propaganda, agitation, organization, gathering new millions and millions of workers in this fight, all the clearest forces of the Italian people. We are committed to prepare and launch a movement which rises up from the deepest state of affairs, that cries out to heaven for vengeance'.

- b. La nostra lotta è lotta per la **rinascita** del nostro Paese, per il suo **rinnovamento** politico, economico e sociale. In questa lotta noi vogliamo l'unità dei lavoratori, prima di tutto, e, attorno a essa, vogliamo si realizzi l'unità politica e morale di tutta la nazione. **Disperdiamo le ombre** le quali impediscono la realizzazione di questa unità! (27/3/47)
'Our struggle is a struggle for the rebirth of our country, for its political economic and social renewal. Through this struggle, we want the unity of the workers, and around it, we will realize the political and moral unity of the whole nation. Let's remove the shadows which prevent the realization of this unity!'

In the excerpts considered above, another overt legitimization device also appears quite clearly, namely manifest *altruistic behaviour*, which according to Lakoff (1996; cf. also Baldi and Savoia 2009) is crucial to social actors in order to legitimize their decisions and activities. Indeed, when a social actor altruistically works toward the "inclusion" of other/marginal social groups (e.g. the unprotected, the poor, the weak, etc.) s/he has more chances to be accepted and endorsed by her/his addressee. Furthermore, enemies are delegitimized threatening a hypothetical awful future if their intentions happen to be translated into actions. Consider, as a clear example, the passage below in which Togliatti addresses the conduct of Mario Scelba, predicting an anti-progress "back to the past" effect.

- (8) **A questo ci vorrebbe riportare l'onorevole Scelba:** al Parlamento eletto per curie. (8/12/1952)
'Mr Scelba would like to bring us bak to this: to a Parliament elected by curias (e.g. classes)'.

3.3 Questions, Answers, (Re)Projections and Delegitimization

A further notable way of conveying a delegitimization effect in Togliatti is through a refined system of question and answer. The question reports the problem. The answer indicates the actor(s) responsible for the problem, who is, thus, delegitimized through this peculiar rhetorical device. Consider the example below:

- (9) **Chi vi ha condannati a morte? Chi vi ha ucciso? Un prefetto, un questore irresponsabili e scellerati?** Un cinico ministro degli interni. Un **presidente del consiglio** cui spetta solo il tristissimo vanto di aver deliberatamente voluto spezzare quella unità della nazione che si era temprata nella lotta gloriosa **contro l'invasore straniero**; di aver scritto sulle sue bandiere quelle **parole di odio** contro i lavoratori e di scissione della vita nazionale che **ieri** furono del **fascismo** e oggi sono le **sue**. (9/1/1950)

'Who has sentenced you to death? Who killed you? Irresponsible and wicked prefects, or police superintendents? A cynical interior minister. A Prime Minister whose only merit was deliberately wishing to break the unity of a nation that had risen in the glorious struggle against the foreign invader; the merit of having written words of hate against the workers on his flags and words destroying national life that yesterday belonged to Fascism and today are his own'.

In (9) Togliatti notably refers directly to the victims indexically, using second person pronouns (*vi*, you), and a sequence of questions introduces the alleged 'material' culprits ('un prefetto', 'un questore'). The real "moral" culprits ('un ministro...', 'un presidente del consiglio') are introduced in the answer (cf. Bar-Tal 1990). The moral culprits are depicted as the instigators of the massacre of Modena, and, according to Togliatti, are only capable of words of hate toward the working class. This is clearly a subtle strategy of delegitimization.

Note that, in (9) the agenda of the prime minister (Alcide De Gasperi) of the newborn Italian Republic is again compared to Fascism, a political movement, which was already delegitimized by history. Further note that, quite strangely for a communist leader, Togliatti, in his prose, often resorts to patriotic nationalism (cf. "lotta gloriosa contro l'invasore straniero", 'glorious struggle against the foreign invader'), as a positive emotion to share with his audience (cf. also excerpts in (4b) and 7b) (cf. Silverstein 2003). Finally note that the same question and answer strategy of (de)legitimization is also employed in the discourses held in the Parliamentary court, as documented by the excerpt in (10), in which Togliatti tries to delegitimize the Democrazia Cristiana (Christian Democrats) party, claiming that it is not the only defender of the freedom of religious conscience of the Catholic workers, and that left wing parties can also have (are legitimized to play) that role.

- (10) **Perché ci siamo trovati** a un certo momento e ci troviamo ora **in una specie di vicolo cieco**? Perché il nostro dibattito è arrivato a questo punto di evidente drammaticità? [...] I colleghi di parte democristiana alle volte parlano presentandosi come unici difensori della libertà della coscienza religiosa delle masse cattoliche. **Non credo che alcuno dei partiti di sinistra voglia lasciare loro la esclusività di questa funzione.** (27/3/47)

'Why were we at some point and are we now in a sort of dead end? Why has our debate come to this point of obvious drama? Our Christian Democrat colleagues sometimes speak posing themselves as the only defenders of the freedom of religious conscience of the Catholic masses. I do not think any of parties of the left want to leave them the sole responsibility for this function'.

In the passage in (9), we may also see that Togliatti pays attention to the words (actually, *parole di odio*, 'words of hate') of his adversaries. Actually, attention to the lexicon and discourse of his enemies seems to be a recurring theme in Togliatti's political speeches. Consider the passages in (11):

- (11) a. Ho sentito testé l'onorevole **De Gasperi affermare** che per lo meno una di queste formule [...] avrebbe potuto essere accettata [...] Mi permetta, onorevole De Gasperi, ma **ciò che ella ha detto è una svalutazione diretta dell'Assemblea**. (27/3/47)
 'I have just heard Mr De Gasperi say that at least one of these formulas [...] could have been accepted [...]. Allow me, Mr De Gasperi, what you said is a direct write-down of the Assembly'.
- b. Onorevole De Gasperi, **qui è mancato qualcosa, è mancato, più che l'intermediario, il rappresentante autorizzato di questa voce, che è la voce della nazione**. (27/3/47)
 'Mr De Gasperi, here something is missing, more than the intermediary, we have missed the authorized representative of this voice, which is the voice of the nation'.
- c. L'onorevole **De Gasperi ha parlato**, e io mi aspettavo parlasse come capo del governo [...] Ripeto: avremmo voluto che l'onorevole De Gasperi non parlasse qui, come **ha parlato**, quale esponente del Partito democristiano o, ancora di meno, come **esponente della coscienza cattolica**, la quale non si estrinseca né si può estrinsecare in un solo partito. (27/3/47)
 'De Gasperi spoke, and I expected him to speak as the head of the government [...] I repeat: we wanted De Gasperi not to speak here, as he spoke, as leader of the Christian Democrat Party or, even less, as a spokesman of the Catholic conscience, which is not extrinsic nor can be externalized by a single party'.

Here, the voice and discourse of De Gasperi are constantly delegitimized. Togliatti says that De Gasperi underestimates the role of the Parliamentary court, that he is not able to speak with the voice of the nation and finally that he speaks (at most) as a Party leader and not as a Prime Minister. De Gasperi is ideally projected to a role/status inferior to the one that he is assumed to play and fulfil, by means of the critical analysis of his own (fallacies in) discourse (cf. Joseph 2006; Fraser 2010). Hence, we propose to labelling this manifest delegitimizing technique as *(re)projection* (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Baldi 2007; cf. also Lambrecht 1996), namely, an argumentation practice by which the opponent acquires a low-key profile in view of her/his own (inappropriate) words/acts/thoughts. Consider that this technique really seems to be a key point in Togliatti's speeches as also shown by the excerpt in (12), where the thoughts of the opponent (here Alfonso Tesauero) are delegitimized again due to a (re) projection close to Fascism, and we have already seen that such "historicist" delegitimization represents another permanent feature of Togliatti's speeches.

- (12) ma **chi ha sottomesso al fascismo il pensiero**, la scienza, ha commesso il **peccato più grave**. Lei ha peccato contro lo spirito, onorevole Tesauero, e **questo peccato non è remissibile**. Lei lo sa! (8/12/1952)
 'but those who have subjected their thoughts and their science to Fascism have committed the greatest sin. You have sinned against the spirit, Mr. Tesauero, and this sin is not subject to repentance. You know it!'

3.4 Vocatives, Imperatives, and Their (De)Legitimizing Role

Another notable trait of Togliatti's speeches is the great use of vocatives, as illustrated in (12) below, where the vocatives are highlighted in bold.

- (12) a. Bene hai fatto, **o città di Modena**... (9/1/1950)
 'You did well, city of Modena'
 b. E voi, **o compagni e fratelli caduti**... (9/1/1950)
 'And you, comrades and brothers fallen'
 c. Ma lasciamo gli scherzi, **o onorevole Nitti** (27/3/47)
 'But let's leave aside jokes, Mr. Nitti'

The pragmatic contribution of vocatives can be illustrated as a tool indicating that the meaning expressed by the clause is of special relevance to the referent of the vocative (the addressee) (Portner 2004; see also Zwicky 1974; Zupnik 1994; Danler 2005). Vocatives introduce a different discourse level, embedding topic-focus-illocution layers; this corresponds to the special status of vocatives, which essentially name the addressee characterizing her/him as present in the discourse and externalizing her/his participation. Vocatives reveal the membership to the domain of knowledge, beliefs which are presupposed by discourse procedures. In the use of Togliatti they either indicate the loyal and good people (12a, 12b), the sole legitimate people, or address the enemies, with direct delegitimizing attacks (12c). This is clearly a discursive strategy deliberately employed by Togliatti in order to activate a specific mental representation and a specific shared scenario in the addressee (cf. also Baldi and Franco 2014 on parallel considerations based on the speeches of Benito Mussolini); a typical (de)legitimization strategy.

Also, imperatives can be assumed as means for the political actor to achieve joint reference with the addressee (cf. Bierwisch 1980; Hamblin 1987; Wierzbicka 1991; Portner 2014, a.o.). They are an instrument of "directive force": "*it is easy and typical for imperative sentences to be used to try to get someone (the addressee, normally) to take some non-linguistic action*" (Portner, forthcoming). Indeed, they are heavily employed by social actors in search of legitimization because their effect goes beyond the immediate context of discourse and, in a way, (re)project a performance (cf. Section 3.3 on the concept of *reprojection*). As expected, imperatives are used quite often in Togliatti's speeches (addressing both the audience and his opponents), as shown by examples in (13).

- (13) a. E voi, compagni [...] **riposate!** (9/1/1950)
 'And you, comrades, rest!'
 b. Ma voi, madri, sorelle, spose, **non piangete!** (9/1/1950)
 'But you mothers, sisters, brides, don't cry!'

- c. **Ricordate** le discussioni che avemmo alla Costituente (8/12/1952)
'Remember the discussions we had at the Constituent Assembly'
- d. **Cercate di governare** meglio di quanto non abbiate governato finora (8/12/52)
'Try to govern better than you have done so far'

4. Conclusion

This paper analyzed different ways by which legitimization takes place in discourse. Language is undoubtedly the most important means of the political actor for establishing and maintaining his/her legitimization. "The fundamental legitimating explanations are, so to speak, built into the vocabulary" (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 112). The words produced in political discourse, represent an enabling tool to create the effects of meaning related to the process of (de)legitimization as a slip/change of meaning.

The impossibility of separating politics from words is motivated by the fact that language is the true essence of policy; words, then, are political "even without their knowledge" (Debray 1994: 141). Politics, meanwhile, tries in language to find the way to obtain consent, legitimacy, the evocation of those symbolic models within which the word is a myth and "everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse" (Barthes 1991 [1957]: 109).

Political language has always been the object of investigation of morality and policy, which started from the assumption that political communication is a powerful factor in society. A leader wins or loses power by using or by not effectively using political language, and the masses are rendered impotent or gain strength, are deceived or informed, through the discursive strategies.

Reyes (2001: 782) defines legitimization as "the process by which speakers accredit or licence a type of social behaviour. In this respect, legitimization is a justification of behaviour (mental or physical). The process of legitimization is enacted by argumentation, that is, by providing arguments that explain our social actions, ideas, thoughts, declarations, etc". This suggests that a decontextualized study of legitimization and (de)legitimization strategy is not possible.

Legitimization provides the justification of the most important elements of the value system by reference to the institutional tradition. Tradition is conveyed through narratives whose outcomes are legitimization actions and punishment for non-legitimate actions. The positive image of "us" can be increased by emphasizing its positive aspects and, at the same time, the negative image can be reduced by omitting its negative aspects. We have examined the different aspects through which political communication takes place and, in particular, the linguistic-pragmatic procedures aiming at introducing a particular vision of the political opponent.

As is well known, at the level of everyday communication it is not always necessary to produce rational justifications to be believed (if one has the confidence of the interlocutor) as, indeed, it is not often satisfactory to produce objective data. Different implications at different levels are involved, including the social one. Referring to Greimas (1976), in the perspective of a discursive grammar and the system of presentation of speech, Desideri (1984: 21) notes that in political discourse, the modality “making someone know something” has the tendency to turn into the “making someone believe something” modality. Thus, the political instrument of “ritualized identification” and, more generally, the discourse’s persuasive strategies are achieved through the “making someone know something” modality which turns into the “making someone believe something” and, finally, into the “making someone want something” modality.

Desideri (1984: 19) highlights some of the typical features of political speech: a relationship with the social conditions of production and reception, the crucial role of the ritual features of enunciation, and of recognition by receivers. Actually, political communication is primarily structured in terms of enunciatory procedures that build through the structures of discourse trust and elements of consensus between the addresser and the receiver (cf. Baldi 2007).

One aspect which we discussed concerns the communicative modalities of Togliatti’s political speeches. The interaction between the sender of the political message and the addressees is based on a process, which cyclically identifies and distinguishes the two subjects of communication. Within the process of signification, the role of the addressees seems susceptible to manipulation and to a progressive change through the communicative components that in the “political speech” play the central role.

Turning now to the texts we have considered, we can observe that Togliatti’s legitimization typically takes the form of a verbal process in which the authority utterance clause introduces some form of obligation modality. The role model authority plays an important role in legitimization both through emotions and the appeal to rationality. This paper shows the strategies adopted by Togliatti in order to obtain persuasion; in his political speeches, Togliatti is careful to express a lexical and semantic-pragmatic relationship between words and their referents.

The argumentative system of the Italian Communist leader is always well structured and coherent and gives rise to very accurate prose. The textual progression seems addressed to accompany the addressee in the correct decoding of the message with respect to the intentions of the sender. In this perspective, a logical and well-organized presentation of the arguments supporting it by means of famous phrases and shared arguments is proposed. Finally, the use of anaphoric reference helps the addressee to correctly infer the intentions of the speaker and not to lose the thread.

Linguistic intentionality is what animates a speech act: it is the reason why the speech act is proffered as well as the intended consequence of the speech act. If all goes well, and the speaker’s communicative purpose is understood

properly, the addressee will fulfil that purpose. Intention originally meant aiming at. So, it is reasonable that the utterance should aim at something (its purpose) and be fulfilled if the purpose is taken up (Capone 2010: 2965).

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Compliment Patterning among Young Speakers: A Diachronic and Translational Study of English and Dubbed Italian Film Dialogue

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Abstract

The construction and translation of socio-pragmatic meanings in film speech poses intriguing challenges due to the complex semiotic nature of audiovisual texts. This exploratory case study presents the results of an analysis that aimed to detect and discuss the use of compliments by teenagers in English and dubbed Italian film dialogue as represented in two cult teen movies released in different decades. The results indicate that compliments tend to occur quite frequently both as creative and formulaic structures. Moreover, the formulaic patterns themselves acquire creative features due to the presence of informal and trendy expressions. Hypotheses are made about the motivations behind different distributional patterns between the two movies, thus indicating potential diachronic variations. Translation strategies are also surveyed, and both cases of creativity and dubious solutions are highlighted.

Keywords: Compliments, Films, Translation, Youth Language

1. Introduction

The contemporary era is far from the times when orality and writing used to be incontrovertibly the prototypical forms of human communication. Today screens are omnipresent in our daily lives, television sets, laptops, tablet computers, smartphones, and portable media players of all shapes and sizes being musts for individuals. The ubiquity of audiovisual technology makes it inevitable for linguistic research to acknowledge multimedia products as worthy of investigation in order to observe how language is used in semioti-

cally complex spaces such as films.¹ The distinctive feature of language in this type of audiovisual text is summed up in the formula with which scholars traditionally refer to film dialogue, i.e. “prefabricated orality” (Chaume and Baños-Piñero 2009: Section 1). This means that the scriptwriters assemble the linguistic items and rhetorical strategies available in one language to re-create the dynamics of oral interaction and produce believable dialogues. One of the fundamental factors at stake in this operation is the re-creation of the “illocutionary point”, i.e. the intention of a speaker when producing an utterance (Searle and Vanderveken 1985: 13-15). Due to the multi-channel nature of audiovisual texts, the speaker’s pragmatic goals should match the actions performed on screen in order to achieve coherence between words and images. This process is particularly challenging if a film is to be translated for dubbing, as is a standard practice in many countries such as Italy. In this case, in addition to coherence between words and the visuals, lip synchronization also plays a central role when the actor’s mouth is visible in close-ups.

Concerning the English/Italian language pair, which is the focus of the present study, extensive research has been conducted on film dialogue on the basis of corpora socio-linguistically varied in terms of the age of interlocutors (e.g. Freddi and Pavesi 2009). The genre of teen movies has largely been neglected, with the exception of a few case studies (e.g. Bianchi 2008; Zanotti 2012). This gap is surprising, given that research on the language used by teenagers in naturally-occurring conversation is extremely prolific both in English (e.g. Stenström, Andersen, and Hasund 2002; Bucholtz 2011) and Italian (e.g. Cortelazzo 2010). Moreover, teenage speech has always been appealing to linguists, mainly because it is extremely creative. Its level of interest lies in the fact that adolescents frequently manipulate standard linguistic structures so as to create a personal code for distancing themselves from adults. In this sense, their language is a strong vehicle of identity because it encodes their values, which change rapidly from one generation to another (Edwards 2009). For this reason, filmic teen speech is worthy of inclusion in linguistic research on dubbing.

Based on these motivations, the present study aims to investigate the language of teenagers as represented in English and dubbed Italian film dialogue, with a specific focus on the speech act of complimenting. For this purpose, I have conducted an exploratory case study that analyzes compliments in two famous American teen movies and their Italian dubbed versions, namely *Clueless* released in 1995, and *Mean Girls* released in 2004. More specifically, the questions which I intend to answer are:

¹ Today films are among the audiovisual products to which we are most frequently exposed. This can be deduced if we consider that there is a growing availability of TV channels airing movies 24 hours a day (e.g. AMC in the USA, Iris in Italy) and online or pay-TV movie libraries (e.g. Sky Store in Europe).

- a) What linguistic structures do teenagers predominantly use for complimenting in the English versions?
- b) How do compliments change from the 1990s to the twenty-first century?
- c) What critical issues may occur in their translation for dubbing in Italian?

In order to provide adequate background to situate the upcoming analysis, in the following Section I discuss key issues concerning compliments in naturally-occurring conversation and film dialogue.

2. Previous Studies on Compliments

Compliments are defined in the literature as speech acts that “explicitly or implicitly attribute credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some ‘good’ (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer” (Holmes 1986: 446). Compliments have the primary function of establishing or reinforcing common ground with the addressee, and a series of sub-functions which vary depending on the situational context such as thanking, greeting, or introducing to conversation (Wolfson and Manes 1980). For this reason, they can be seen as strategies for positive politeness aimed at minimizing the threat to the addressee’s positive face, i.e. the human social desire to be appreciated and approved by other people (Brown and Levinson 1987).²

2.1 Compliments in Naturally-Occurring Conversation

Compliments in spontaneous conversation have been extensively studied in a wide range of languages, with English being to the fore (Wolfson and Manes 1980 on American English; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1989 and Lorenzo-Dus 2001 on British English; Herbert 1989 on South African English; Cordella, Large, and Pardo 1995 on Australian English; Holmes 1986 on New Zealand English).³ The most substantial body of research which provides quantitative data on compliment types in American English, which is the subject of this study, was conducted by Wolfson and Manes (1980). They collected a corpus of 686 compliments used at the Universities of Virginia and Pennsylvania during a wide range of everyday interactions

² Pomerantz (1978) who first draws attention to compliments also highlights the interactional dilemma that compliments pose, where the Modesty Maxim (minimize praise of self) clashes with the Agreement Maxim (minimize disagreement between self and other).

³ For studies on compliments in other languages, see Golato (2004) on German, Maiz-Arevalo (2012 and 2013) and Placencia and Lasso (1999) on Spanish, and Yuan (2002) on Chinese.

by taking down notes from naturally-occurring conversation. Nine recurrent lexico-grammatical patterns emerged, which led to the assumption that the speech act of complimenting has a formulaic nature. In particular, “NP is/looks (really) ADJ”, “I (really) like/love NP”, and “PRO is (really) a ADJ NP” account for nearly 80% of the entire corpus (Wolfson and Manes 1980: 402-404). Formulaicity also concerns semantics (*ibidem*: 400-402). Seventy percent of the adjectival compliments contain “nice”, “good”, “beautiful”, “pretty”, or “great”. Seventy-six percent of the compliments formed with a positive verb contain “love” or “like”. Regarding intensifiers, in over one third of the data only “really”, “very”, “such”, and “so” occur.

In subsequent years, the research by Wolfson and Manes (1980) came under criticism from scholars such as Boyle (2000: 27), who argues that the methodology adopted may have influenced the results, in that other “less noticeable” types of compliment may go unnoticed by observers taking down notes from naturally-occurring interactions. Boyle (2000) suggests that compliments can be separated into explicit and implicit. The explicit ones can be understood out of context and present a set of formulaic patterns, i.e. those identified by Wolfson and Manes (Boyle 2000). On the other hand, implicit compliments do not have fixed structures, and the judgment is understood by means of inference and indexical knowledge (Boyle 2000). According to Boyle (2000: 37-41), implicit compliments include either a comparison with a person that, according to the speaker, the addressee might admire (e.g. “There’s something Karen Carpenterish about your voice”, where the addressee is an amateur singer and Karen Carpenterish is a very famous one), or a reference to something that the addressee has done and which s/he is proud of (e.g. “You’ve worked with Elizabeth Taylor!”).⁴ In addition to the implicit/explicit dichotomy, scholars such as Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1987) also propose the distinction between direct and indirect compliments, with the former attributed directly to the interlocutor (e.g. “You are really beautiful”), while the latter is attributed to a person associated with the interlocutor so that the effect reverberates metonymically on her/him (e.g. “Your husband has very good taste”).

Other categories established by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1987) are the honest/dishonest pair, and the solicited/unsolicited pair. Honest compliments are sincere in nature, whereas dishonest ones have a subtle, “cruel” intention (“This dress really suits you. It makes you look slimmer”, i.e. the speaker is actually saying that the addressee is not slim, which is not a compliment). Unsolicited compliments are made spontaneously, while solicited ones are made when the addressee is expecting a compliment (Speaker: “Don’t you think I

⁴ Explicit structures enhance the likelihood that the compliment is recognized as such, thanks to their conventionality (Wolfson and Manes 1980). Contrarily, implicit structures require more processing effort and contextual clues play an important role for interpretation. For this reason, implicit compliments are frequently used as a politeness strategy: they satisfy the Approbation Maxim, yet they cause no embarrassment to the addressee (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1989).

look good?” Addressee: “You look amazing”). It should be noted that many different combinations of the types shown so far can occur. The previously mentioned dishonest compliment, for example, is also direct and implicit.⁵

2.2 *Compliments in Film Dialogue*

Compliments have also received some attention in the studies devoted to the realization of speech acts in film dialogue, in line with the general tendency within linguistic research to investigate multimedia language varieties, as mentioned in the introduction.

Rose analyzes a corpus of 40 American films released from the Seventies to the early Nineties. A quantitative comparison is made between the compliments identified in Rose’s corpus and the data emerging from the study by Wolfson and Manes (1980) in naturally-occurring interactions. All the nine syntactic formulas shown occur in Rose’s corpus with equal distribution, with the exception of the third pattern: “I (really) like/love NP” which is relatively infrequent (a difference of about ten points compared to spontaneous speech). However, the major clash with Wolfson and Manes’ (1980) results is that the occurrence of creative patterns – i.e. Boyle’s (2000) implicit compliments – is far higher than formulas (Rose 2001: 315-318). This is especially evident in semantics, where the five formulas account for less than half the data.

Bruti (2009) confirms the strong tendency towards creativity in film dialogue by analyzing qualitatively the realization of compliments in the Pavia Corpus of Film Dialogue, i.e. a parallel corpus of 12 British and American transcribed movies and their Italian dubbed versions released between 1999 and 2005. According to Bruti (2009: 147), the recurrence of creative patterns in complimenting can be explained as a device for developing characters throughout the plot. It should be added that a film needs to entertain the audience, and, intuitively, this is better achieved by means of creativity rather than monotony and repetitiveness.

Bruti (2009: 151-156) also examines how compliments are translated in the Italian dubbed versions of the films contained in the Pavia Corpus. She detects a tendency to translate compliments by intensifying the semantically positive load of the original utterances. Interestingly, this is identified by

⁵ There is considerable debate among scholars about how to classify compliments according to the type of strategy with which the illocutionary point is expressed, and the terminology used is far from homogeneous. In order to simplify the question, a recent proposal is made by Bruti in line with Bączkowska and Izwaini (quoted in Bruti 2013: 37), who split compliments into the following categories:

- Direct: the compliment is attributed directly to the addressee and the judgment is incontrovertible.
- Indirect: the compliment is not attributed directly to the addressee.
- Implicit: the compliment requires an inferential effort.
- False: the compliment has a subtle illocutionary point of a different nature.

Alfonzetti (2006: 86) as a typically Italian verbal habit when a compliment is performed in naturally-occurring conversations. A prototypical example is the use of superlatives, e.g. “Vediamo questo braccialetto [lo guarda] è carinissimo”, literally “let’s see this bracelet [she looks at it] it’s the cutest” (Alfonzetti 2006: 86). However, Bruti (2009) advocates for more data in order to ascertain whether this translation strategy is adopted on a regular basis in film dubbing.

The studies on compliments mentioned so far were conducted on corpora sociolinguistically varied in terms of the age of interlocutors, while this study will focus on compliments exchanged among teenagers.

3. Methodology

The films under investigation are *Clueless* (1995, A. Heckerling, USA) and *Mean Girls* (2004, M. Waters, USA), hereinafter CLU and MG. The corresponding Italian dubbed versions are *Ragazze a Beverly Hills* (Dubbing: Mar International. Italian dialogues: Lorena Bertini. Dubbing director: Marco Guadagno) and *Mean Girls* (Dubbing: PUMAI Sdue. Italian dialogues: Fiamma Izzo. Dubbing director: Giuppy Izzo). These movies revolve around teenagers’ lives at high school, particularly that of the most popular girl in the school. I selected these movies with two motivations. First, they are milestones in the teen movie genre, and MG is considered a sort of up-to-date sequel to CLU (Driscoll 2011: 56-62). Many situational contexts are even similar across the two movies. In the light of this, diachronic comparisons can be construed “as like with like”.

Secondly, as mentioned in the introduction, language plays a central role in both the movies. Carmen Fought maintains that “the interesting thing about CLU is that the language was basically another character in that movie. A lot of research was put into it to really capture how Californians talked at the time [...]” (quoted in Bierma 2005). In the same vein, an article recently published on *The Independent* refers to MG as a movie that “defined a whole generation – and gave it a new language” (Orr 2015). The dialogue used in the movie is made up of clever lines, and numerous words and expressions have entered the “vernacular” used in naturally-occurring conversation, with one hapax even used in the social network Twitter by the White House (*ibidem*).⁶ In the light of this, an analysis of compliments may also have validity from a sociolinguistic point of view, i.e. to reveal how compliments are actually performed by teenagers in the 1990s and the twenty-first century.

In order to analyze compliments, the movies were fully transcribed orthographically by the author. In addition to the lines uttered by the characters, I included relevant paralinguistic behavior, kinetic features, non-linguistic

⁶ The adjective “fetch”, coined in MG with the meaning of “cool”, was twitted by the White House on August 2013 as a caption below a photo of Obama’s dog.

contextual information, and graphic representations of linguistic signs which appear on screen (e.g. a close-up on chat messages). The internal organization of the transcripts can be seen in the examples 1-11 which will be shown in Section 4. In the left-column the names of the interlocutors are reported and comments are inserted. The central column is devoted to the English transcript, while the right-column presents the Italian version.

The analysis was structured into three main phases. The first was to detect the speech act of complimenting in the English versions. The starting point for disambiguation was the definition of compliments provided by Holmes (1986: 446) which is reported in Section 2. The second phase was to identify and discuss the distinctive features of the compliments found. As starting points for description, I used the taxonomies for compliments by Wolfson and Manes (1980), Boyle (2000), and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1987) mentioned in Section 2.1. The third phase was to compare the compliments contained in the 1995 movie to those in the 2004 movie, and several hypotheses were made about the potential motivation behind the differences detected. The third phase was to examine and discuss how compliments are translated in Italian, in search of potentially critical issues and recurrent translational strategies.

4. Results and Discussion

The descriptive data that resulted from the analysis of the transcripts will be presented and discussed in the following sub-sections. As Table 1 shows, the total number of compliments found in the movies under analysis is 71.

Table 1. Compliments in CLU and MG

Film	Occurrence of compliments	Number of running words in the transcripts
CLU	34	11,719
MG	37	11,640
Total	71	23,359

4.1 Features of Compliments

4.1.1 Formulas

As starting points for description, Wolfson and Manes' (1980: 402-404) results on compliments in spontaneous conversation can be used. Table 2 shows the distributional patterns for compliments in Wolfson and Manes (1980) and in the movies under analysis.⁷

⁷ I am aware that Wolfson and Manes (1980) offer results corresponding to language use in the late Seventies, and that they focus on a different age group. However, I only use their results as a starting point of reference for a description of compliments in CLU and MG. Moreover,

Table 2. Syntactic Patterns for Complimenting⁸

Type (for citation in the text)	Syntactic pattern	Example	% of occurrence in spontaneous conversation (n=686)	% of oc- currence in filmic teen speech (n=71)
First	NP is/looks (really) ADJ	'You really look amazing'.	53.6	38.0
Second	I (really) like/love NP	'I love your skirt'.	16.1	9.9
Third	PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP	'That really is a good idea'.	14.9	7.0
Fourth	You V (a) really ADJ NP	'You're doing some great work here'.	3.3	-
Fifth	You V NP (really) ADV	'You did wonderful'.	2.7	2.8
Sixth	You have (a) (really) ADJ NP	'You have really good eyebrows'.	2.4	2.8
Seventh	What (a) ADJ NP!	'What a great pack- aging con- cept!'	1.6	-
Eighth	ADJ NP!	'Cool bag!'	1.6	8.5
Ninth	Isn't NP ADJ!	'Isn't it awe- some!'	1.0	-
Creative structures	Varied	'A little slice like you...'	2.8	31.0
	Total		100.0	100.0

Wolfson and Manes (1980) is the only study on American English where formulaic compliments are distinguished into sub-categories. More recent studies such as Yu (2005) distinguish between formulaic and creative compliments, but do not proceed to identify sub-types of the former.

⁸ Legend: Really: any intensifier. Look: any sense-verb. Like and love: any verb of liking. ADJ: any semantically positive adjective. NP: A noun phrase which does not include a semantically positive adjective. PRO: you, this, that, these, or those. All verbs are cited in the present tense.

The predominant pattern is “NP is/looks (really) ADJ”, where the noun phrase often consists of the demonstrative pronoun *that* functioning as an exophoric or endophoric deictic, e.g. *That is so cute!* (CLU). All the other syntactic patterns identified by Wolfson and Manes (1980: 402-404) have at least one occurrence in the movies under analysis, with the exception of number four “PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP”, number seven “What (a) ADJ NP!”, and number nine “Isn’t NP ADJ!”. Although the data are too limited in number to assess whether or not the absence of these patterns is a coincidence, the results from the present study may serve as initial observations for further investigation. For example, it is interesting to notice that while the *What* and *Isn’t* patterns are not represented, a high frequency of informal structures such as incomplete sentences occur. In particular, ADJ NP recurs with an ellipsis of NP (‘Handsome!’ in CLU) or the addition of an intensifier (‘So adorable!’ in MG).

Subject ellipsis also occurs in several cases of the second pattern in Table 2, which is also quite recursive, e.g. ‘Love it!’ (MG). From a comparison between the two movies, the pattern “I (really) like/love NP” is mostly used in MG, while only one occurrence is found in CLU. This result triggers a curiosity about the uses of the *like/love* pattern in teen language from a diachronic point of view. Intuitively, judgments expressed with *like* and *love* have been subject to a significant exposure on the part of teenagers in the last decade thanks to the iconic 2003 commercial *I’m Lovin’ it* created by the worldwide famous fast food company McDonald’s.⁹ This has been recently amplified thanks to the role of the Like button on which the global social network Facebook is based.¹⁰ Considering this evidence, the gap between CLU and MG concerning the *like/love* pattern might be worthy of investigation with more quantitative data in order to verify whether its frequency of occurrence has increased over time.

In the movies under analysis, Wolfson and Manes’ (1980) formulaic patterns tend to acquire distinctive features, due to the presence of informal and trendy vocabulary and expressions, as exemplified in (1) and (2).

⁹ There is a lively debate among grammarians on the frequency of use of dynamic forms of verbs generally considered to be of a stative nature. The specific case of McDonald’s slogan could be the creative flouting of a convention or the use of “love” in the progressive form with the meaning of “enjoying something”, the latter verb being normally used either statively or dynamically.

¹⁰ For example, “Just click ‘like’” is the title of a recent article appeared on *The Journal of Pragmatics* by Maiz-Arevalo (2013) who surveys the realization of Spanish compliments on Facebook.

Example 1. MG

JANIS	Why didn't they just keep home-schooling you?	Perché non hanno continuato a farti studiare a casa?
CADY	They wanted me to get socialized.	Volevano che socializzassi.
DAMIAN	Oh, you'll get socialized, all right. A little slice like you...	Oh, socializzerai eccome. Sei una tale strafica.
CADY	What are you talking about?	Di che stai parlando?
JANIS	You're a regulation hottie.	Sei un'attizzatrice certificata.
CADY	What?	Che?
DAMIAN	Own it.	Ammettilo.

Janis' second turn may be seen as a distinctive feature of the pattern "PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP". The predicative complement consists of a composite nominal where the head, *hottie*, is a deadjectival noun formed with the suffix *-ie*, meaning "a sexually attractive person" (derived from "hot", "sexually attractive"). The modifier, *regulation*, is a noun functioning as an adjective according to the expression "regulation hottie" which, as reported in the *Urban Dictionary*, indicates a girl who has the features to be attractive but nobody in her peer group has noticed her yet.¹¹

Another creative variation occurs in ex. 2. Here the addressee, Christian, is showing his car to the speaker, Cher, who gives him a compliment on it. The pattern used may be seen as a distinctive feature of the formula "NP is (really) ADJ". Here, the adjective is a converted noun (*killer*) with the meaning of "outstanding".

Example 2. CLU

CHER ((looking at his car))	It's so killer!	Che macchina! È uno sballo!
CHRISTIAN	Thank you. Your dad is pretty scary.	Grazie. Tuo padre è un tipaccio.

As far as semantics is concerned, a survey of adjectival choices reveals that 21 adjectives out of 45 correspond to the formulas identified by Wolfson and Manes (1980: 400-402), with *nice* and *good* being the predominant

¹¹ The *Urban Dictionary* is an online dictionary where the word entries and their definitions are entirely created by the users. It also has a section where the readers can rate the truthfulness of the definitions given by others. It is an interesting tool to collect newly-coined words and measure their diffusion, even if it cannot be considered as a definitive source of information.

ones. The rest of the adjectival compliments (24 out of 45, i.e. more than a half) contain other expressions, the majority of which are hapax legomena or are used only twice across the two movies. The most pertinent to teenage language are references to sex appeal, which is a typical subject among the young, i.e. the adjectives *hot* and *sexy*. Moreover, the adjective *cool*, which has long been acknowledged as an in-word among teenagers by scholars such as Danesi (1996), is present in CLU whereas it has no occurrences in MG. Vice versa, adjectives that occur in MG and not in CLU are *awesome* and *amazing*. A survey of the occurrences of *cool* in the speech acts other than compliments confirms the predominance of *cool* in CLU with respect to MG. This result may be worth investigating with more quantitative data in order to verify whether today the traditionally epitomized role of *cool* as the most popular word among teenagers should be disconfirmed.

In particular, among the adjectival choices used in MG, a newly-coined word is used, i.e. *fetch*. This is part of the idiolect of a character, Gretchen, who coins it as a shortening of the adjective “fetching” (“cool”). *Fetch* is also attested in the *Urban Dictionary* with a direct quotation from MG, and it receives almost 3,000 approving opinions in the section of the dictionary where readers can rate the entries. This leads to the hypothesis that *fetch* has entered as a new semantic formula among the top list adjectives used for complimenting.¹²

4.1.2 Creative Structures

As scholars such as Boyle (2000) observed, compliments can occur in patterns other than the nine formulaic patterns. As far as CLU and MG are concerned, the row “creative structures” in Table 2 indicates that the frequency of the total number of creative compliments is only 10 points inferior to the frequency of the total number of formulas (31.0 compared to 38.1).

Creative compliments are varied in typology. Some fit well into Boyles’ (2000) categories which we have mentioned in Section 2.1. The first group includes comparisons to someone who the addressee is thought to admire. For example, in CLU, the speaker praises her friends’ wide vocabulary by comparing them to adults (*You guys talk like grown-ups!*). The second group includes comments on a performance of which the addressee is proud. For example, in CLU the addressee manages to drive well on the highway and escape potential car crashes. Her interlocutor, who is sitting next to her, gives her a compliment by saying *You did it, Dee!*. Within this group where a performance is praised, an interesting case is the compliment exemplified in (3). Here, the speaker verbally reproduces and substitutes body language.

¹² See footnote 6.

Example 3. CLU

MR HALL	Any comments?	Ci sono commenti?
ELTON	My foot hurts. Can I go to the nurse?	Mi fa male un piede. Vado in infermeria?
TRAVIS	Two very enthusiastic thumbs up. Fine holiday fun.	Molta grande entusiasticazione congratulate. Buone vacanze felicitè.
AMBER	Hello? Was I the only one listening? I mean, I thought it reeked.	Oh, pronto? Visto che sono io l'unica che ascoltava, devo dire che l'ho trovato rivoltante.

In this scene, a girl has just finished delivering her speech in debate class. Travis praises her argument by uttering *Two very enthusiastic thumbs up*, followed by a good wish (*fine holiday fun*, meaning “have a nice holiday”) whose nonsense is due to the fact that the speaker is under the influence of marijuana. In this case, the compliment reproduces and substitutes the gesture of raising the thumb as a sign of approval.

The compliments mentioned so far pertain to one of the two sub-categories of implicit compliments identified by Boyle (2000), i.e. comparison, or performance. However, from a survey of compliments in CLU and MG, one does not fit well into either of Boyle's (2000) sub-categories. It is the case of *A little slice like you...* contained in ex. 1. This pattern is neither a comparison to a person admired, nor a comment on the addressee's performance. Its structure is made up of two components. The first is a noun phrase introduced with the indefinite article. The second is the adverb *like* followed by the pronoun *you* which refers to the addressee. This type of compliment is based on elipsis. The complete pattern would be *You are a little slice and for this reason you will get socialized*. Incomplete sentences of this type may be considered a sub-category of implicit compliments.

Other particular cases which do not fit well into Boyle's (2000) sub-categories are the compliments in the form of questions. The first example is in (4), where the addressee, Cady, suddenly shows up nicely dressed for a party. Her interlocutor wants to compliment her on her look. He initially opts for an explicit compliment (*You look*), but this is immediately reformulated into an implicit compliment due to embarrassment. The speaker poses a question that attempts to mask the compliment by means of a neutral content (*New clothes?*). The compliment is recognized as the addressee accepts by thanking.

Example 4. MG

AARON, ((on seeing her all dressed up))	You look... New clothes?	Cavolo! Come sei... vestito nuovo?
CADY	Thanks.	Grazie.

The other example of implicit compliments through questions is in (5). Here, the speaker's goal is not to mask the compliment, but rather to emphasize it. In her first turn, Regina states that she needs to lose weight. By uttering *What are you talking about?*, the interlocutor pretends not to understand Regina's self-criticism. The violation of the Relevance Maxim is simulated, which emphasizes that the negativity conveyed by self-criticism has no logical association with the speaker. Moreover, it can be noted that the implicit compliment by Gretchen and the explicit one by Karen are also examples of solicited compliments. As can be seen in the left column of the transcript, the addressee shows that she is expecting a compliment through her body language.

Example 5. MG

REGINA	I really wanna lose two pounds.	Voglio proprio perdere un chilo e mezzo.
((Everybody is silent. Regina lifts her eyebrows as if she were waiting for a positive comment))		
GRETCHEN	Oh my God, what are you talking about?	Oh mio Dio. Ma di che cosa parli?
KAREN	You're so skinny.	Sei così magra.
REGINA	Shut up.	Ah, ma smettetela.

4.2 Translation Issues

From a contrastive analysis of the English and the Italian versions, I identified several factors that were at stake in the translation process. The first is the reproduction of an Italian culture-specific verbal habit (4.2.1). The second is the occurrence of mistranslations and calques (4.2.2).

4.2.1 Intensification vs. Reduction Strategies

As mentioned in Section 2.2, Bruti (2009: 163) identifies the tendency for Italian translators to intensify the semantically positive load of compliments in the dubbed versions. This is consistent with a typically Italian habit of intensifying the positivity of the judgment in spontaneous conversation (Alfonzetti 2006). In MG this strategy is amply demonstrated by numerous examples. One of the most evident cases is exemplified in (6). In the English version, the compliment is expressed with a formulaic pattern (first type in Table 2) and a semantically vague adjective (*nice*). In Italian the positive load is intensified both quantitatively, through the addition of the interjection *accidenti* (pragmatically similar to “gee”), and qualitatively, through the use of a syntactically marked structure commonly used in Italian exclamations, *che bella* [*che è*] *casa tua* (literally, ‘how beautiful [is] the house of yours’).

Example 6. MG

CADY ((entering Regina's luxurious house))	Your house is really nice.	Accidenti. Che bella casa tua.
REGINA	I know, right?	Lo so, tesoro.

Interjections are the types of lexical items most frequently added for intensification in MG. The range is varied, from taboo words such as *cazzo* and its euphemistic substitute *cavolo*, to informal terms (*però*) to small items (*oh*). Several examples of this strategy also occur in CLU. One case is observed in ex. 2, where an exclamation conveyed with a marked structure (*che macchina!*, 'what a car!') is added to the original compliment.

However, in CLU opposite strategies are also used. Explicit compliments can be translated with understated praise. One example is found in (7), where the speaker is trying to confess his love to the addressee. Here the compliment (*you know you're gorgeous, all right?*) is replaced with a more ambiguous statement (*beh, sai, non te lo devo dire io, no?*, 'well, you know, it shouldn't be me the one who says that, right?').

Example 7. CLU

CHER	You think I'm beautiful?	Sono davvero bella?
JOSH	You know you're gorgeous, all right? And popular, and, uh, and... but this is not why I, you know, I come here. This is a good learning experience for me.	Beh, sai, non te lo devo dire io, no? Sei molto ambita e...ehm...però questo non c'entra niente. Io vengo qui ad imparare, a fare un po' d'esperienza. Capisci?

Another example is in (8), where one of the compliments (*handsome*) is substituted with a greeting (*benvenuto*, 'welcome').

Example 8. CLU

CHER ((showing up in a short dress))	Christian.	Christian.
CHRISTIAN	Doll face.	Angelo.
CHER	Handsome.	Benvenuto.
CHRISTIAN	Stunning.	Sei accecante.

The propensity for intensification in MG and reduction of explicitness in CLU is also observed if we focus on the translation of individual lexical items. In MG the positive load of words such as *gorgeous* tends to be reinforced by means of trendy expressions typical of teenagers, i.e. *You're gorgeous* becomes *Sei un fico da paura* (similar to 'You're damn hot'), and *It's gorgeous* (referring to the ad-

dressee's hair) becomes *Pazzeschi* (similar to 'crazy'). In CLU, instead, typical words used among teenagers such as *cool* tend to be normalized rather than compensated, i.e. *Cool picture* becomes the ordinary *Bella foto* ('Nice picture'), and *That's so cool* (referring to the addressee's drawings) becomes the softer *Fantastico* ('Fantastic').

From the observations made so far, it is not possible to identify strategies adopted on a regular basis. However, a significant trend to intensify the compliment emerges when translating in Italian. This tends to be predominant in the movie of recent production with respect to the one released in the past decade. This leads to the hypothesis that standardized forms rather than markedly creative forms are more frequent in teen movies released before 2000.

4.2.2 Mistranslation and Calques

In order to advocate for more inclusion of the teen movie genre in research on English/Italian dubbing, in this sub-section I point out some examples of mistranslation and calques. As mentioned in Section 1, one of the main features of audiovisual texts is the need for coherence between words and visuals. In some cases, however, the visuals may be misleading, as occurs in ex. 9. In this scene, Lawrence, a bald boy, is shaving Murray's head to make it look like his. Lawrence positively comments on this look by saying *It's the bomb*, 'it's exceptionally cool'. Murray agrees with Lawrence's positive comment by giving him a compliment (*You look good*), which is confirmed and returned (*As will you*).

In the Italian version, instead of an agreement, there is a clash between Lawrence's comment in his first turn and the following compliment-response pair. *It's the bomb* is rendered as *tipo palla da biliardo* ('like a billiard ball'). In this case, the positiveness of the original is completely lost in the Italian version and the comparison to a billiard ball may be even considered an insult. This clashes with the positiveness conveyed by the following compliment-response pair. *You look good* is rendered, via intensification (see 4.3.1), with *Sei arrapante* (literally, 'You're sexually arousing') and the addressee's response *As will you* is translated with its equivalent *Anche tu*. In light of this, the 'ball' translation seems to be incoherent. What is likely to have influenced the translator is the fact that, since Murray's head is in a close-up, its resemblance to the spherical shape of a billiard ball is extremely evident.

Example 9. CLU

DIONNE to CHER ((on seeing that Lawrence is shaving Murray's head))	Look! Look what he's done to his head! Can you believe this?	Cher, guarda. Guarda come si è combinato. Ti pare normale?
MURRAY ((pointing to Lawrence's shaved head))	Look at Lawrence's head. Alright?	Anche Lawrence. Hai visto?
LAWRENCE	It's the bomb!	Tipo palla da biliardo.

MURRAY to LAWRENCE	You know what I'm saying? You look good.	Sai che ti dico? Sei arrapante.
LAWRENCE	As will you.	Anche tu, amico.

Another case of a dubious translation is found in MG. The compliment in ex. 10 presents the pattern “That is (really) (a) ADJ”, which tops the syntactic preferences in spontaneous speech (Wolfson and Manes 1980: 402-404). In transferring deixis, the use of *questo* (‘this’) sounds quite unnatural to my intuition as a native speaker of Italian if compared to an alternative solution such as an adjective with no introducing items in ex. 11 (*Grande! Fantastico*, ‘[You’ve been great!] Fantastic’). The reason for the use of a demonstrative in one case and not in the other is probably linked to idiosyncratic choices of the translators, which are beyond the scope of this study.¹³

Example 10. MG

REGINA	Wait. What?	No, aspetta. Che cosa?
CADY	My mum taught me at home.	Mia madre mi insegnava in casa.
REGINA	No, no. I know what “home-school” is. I’m not retarded. So you’ve actually never been to a real school before? Shut up! Shut up!	Lo so che significa “studiare in casa”. Non sono ritardata. E non sei mai stata in una scuola vera prima d’ora? Ma dai! Ma dai! Ti prego!
CADY	I didn’t say anything.	Che ti devo dare?
REGINA	Home-schooled. That’s really interesting.	Studiare in casa. Questo è molto interessante.
CADY	Thanks.	Grazie.

Example 11. CLU

TAI ((handing him the book with her drawings))	Here.	Guarda.
TRAVIS	Oh, wow! That’s really cool.	Grande! Fantastico.
TAI	Thanks.	Grazie.

¹³ Obtaining information on the motivations behind the choices adopted in dubbing is quite challenging, because many figures can intervene in the dubbing process and modify the dialogues, i.e. the author/s of the first draft, the adaptor, the actors, and the dubbing director. For a detailed account of the dubbing cycle and quality control process see Chiaro (2008). For critical insights on demonstratives in the language of film dubbing, see Pavesi (2013).

5. Conclusion

This study has attempted to shed light on compliments in teenage speech in film dialogue and dubbing in Italian. While compliments in film dialogue have received some attention, previous research has not looked at their realization in teenage talk. More specifically, the study aimed to identify features of the realization of compliments in English as represented in two cult teen movies released in different decades, how the formulation of compliments varies diachronically, and how compliments are translated into Italian.

The results indicate that compliments tend to occur quite frequently, both as formulaic and creative patterns. Creativity was also observed in formulaic patterns themselves, because they tend to acquire distinctive features due to the presence of informal and trendy vocabulary. From a diachronic perspective between the two movies, an unequal distribution of patterns such as "I (really) like/love NP" and the adjective *cool* emerged as a potentially interesting starting point for further studies. Finally, the strategies adopted for translating compliments were surveyed, and cases of creativity and dubious solutions were highlighted.

This study is mainly exploratory in nature and the findings should be interpreted as indicative and clearly not conclusive. Potentially interesting trends were pointed out on which it would be important to conduct further research on a larger corpus of teen filmic dialogue, also focusing on other language areas, e.g. morphology. In turn, a broader view of filmic teen speech would provide data for further comparisons with teen speech in spontaneous conversation, allowing for the measurement of media influence on everyday language, especially in relation to the translational routines such as calques to which film viewers are exposed.

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Translation Techniques and Interpretative Phenomena in the Greek Version of the Hebrew Bible: A Study of the Figurative Use of the Noun שֶׁטַח 'Shadow'*

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Abstract:

The first part of this article explores the figurative exploitations of the word שֶׁטַח 'shadow' in Biblical Hebrew. Special attention is paid to the poetical language. Alongside the metonymy "shelter", the metaphorical usage of this word is centred on the ideas of protection and transitoriness. The second part of the article takes into account the renderings of שֶׁטַח in the Old Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. The data collected suggest that the translators refrain from using the equivalent σκιά in those contexts involving the abstract idea of protection and rather opt for the noun σκέπη. The discussion moves further by evaluating the motivations that could have led the translators to judge the term σκιά as unsuitable to express the idea of protection metaphorically. A first line of argument takes into account factors within the Hebrew biblical text; a second line of argument considers the usage of σκιά within Greek literary sources; finally, a third line of argument looks at those non-literary varieties of Greek found in documentary papyri of the Ptolemaic age.

Keywords: Ancient Hebrew Linguistics, Biblical Studies, Lexical Semantics, Septuagint

1. The Figurative Use of שֶׁטַח in Biblical Hebrew Poetry

The main aspects which the Biblical Hebrew poetic language draws from the idea of shadow that extends into the figurative usage of the noun שֶׁטַח are

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those of protection and transitoriness. On the one hand, the analogy between shadow and protection reveals how being defencelessly exposed to the heat of the sun was both common and experienced as dangerous in Palestinian life; such an idea is widespread in Ancient Near Eastern cultures.¹ On the other hand, mapping shadow as both lengthening and fleeting is rooted in the system of measuring the flow of time, more specifically the passing of the day, by the sun's shadow. In both cases, the notion and the values of shadow, as linguistically shaped in Biblical Hebrew poetry, have to be weighed against the notion of the sun, rather than against those of light or darkness.

1.1 Protection

Within Early Biblical Hebrew poetry, shadow evokes first and foremost the idea of benefit, particularly protection. Semantically speaking, this figurative use arises from the merging of two distinct processes: metonymy and metaphor. Firstly, shadow is conceived as a site² shielded from sunlight, in metonymical relation to the screen that cast it. Consequently, the screen is metaphorically equated with the idea of protective power, whereas the projected shadow is equated with the idea of a protected place where individuals or people can seek refuge (חסה) from dangers and threat in distressed circumstances of their life or live and flourish (ישב, חיה, שכן) in peacetime.

In a first group of occurrences, this semantic process appears to be more evident since this kind of a screen is mentioned. As will be shown in detail, within the imagery of Early Hebrew poetry (EBH 2, see Appendix 1), only God and, in a more questionable and unstable way, various human rulers, have the capacity to provide such protection. In the literary context of an Isaian oracle against those rulers of the Southern kingdom of Judah who turn to Egypt to form a defensive alliance against the advance of Assyria, the ex-

¹ Many Semitic languages mirror this cultural attitude in the semantic shift from 'shadow', towards 'shelter' and, figuratively, 'protection', see e.g. the Ugaritic derivation with a *mem* prefix *mzll* 'shield, roof, house' from the noun *zl* 'shadow' (*KTU* 1.3 v. 39 ff.), for which the closest cognates are Aram. *mlll* 'roof' (*TAD A* 4.7 r.11; *TAD A* 4.8 r.10), and Aram./Syr. *mllh*, *mllt*, *mllt'*, 'shelter' (*TgJ Is* 4:6; *P Jonah* 4:5), 'booth' (*TgJ Is* 1:8; *TN Lev* 23:42).

² It should be noticed that in 23 cases (out of the 52 occurrences of the term in the Hebrew Bible) the noun is found in adverbial phrases with the preposition *בְּ* denoting position in a place, or movement to a place to remain there. Examples of this usage are found also in early Hebrew narrative. In *Gen* 19:8, for instance, Lot begs the people of Sodom not to harm his foreign guests as they are *בְּצֵל קַרְתִּי* 'under the shelter (lit. shadow) of my roof'. This expression metaphorically indicates the protection provided by hospitality. The semantic load of such a metaphor, however, is shared by both components, namely the nouns *צֵל* and *קוֹרֶה* 'beam', and metonymically 'roof', 'house'. While the idea of protection appears to be a function performed by the shadow (more precisely, the shady place), the idea of hospitality is rather conveyed by the image of the house.

pression *וְלִחְסוֹת בְּצֵל מִצָּרִים* ‘to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt’³ (Isa 30:2), has to be read as “seeking shelter in the protection of the Pharaoh”, or “begging for Pharaoh’s assistance” against the Assyrian threat.⁴ In the book of Jeremiah, the Moabite refugees, fleeing from the invasion of their territories, are said to be standing without strength *בְּצֵל הַשְּׁבוֹן* ‘in the shadow of *Hešbôn*’ (Jer 48:45), indicating a large city in Moab’s Northern boundary on the king’s highway,⁵ capable of ensuring temporary security. Another oracle of Isaiah, on the other hand, portrays the Moabites as pleading with the king of Judah (allegorically referred to as *הַר בִּתְ-צִיּוֹן* ‘the mount of daughter Zion’, v. 1) to be a hiding place (*סֶתֶר*, v. 4) for them from the Assyrian invader: *שִׁיתִי כְלִיל צֶלֶה בְּתוֹךְ צִהָרִים* ‘make your shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday’ (Isa 16:3).⁶ Within an allegory which depicted the Northern Israelite kingdom as a vine,⁷ the expression *כָּסוּ הָרִים צֶלָה* ‘the mountains were covered with its shadow’ (Ps 80:11) designates figuratively the past extension of that kingdom’s power,⁸ by that time irredeemably lost because of the Assyrian invasion.

From the earliest poetic exploitation of צֶל, however, God is the only one who can effectively guarantee comprehensive and vital protection to those

³ English translations of reference have been: *The New Jewish Publication Society of America Tanakh* (TNK) and *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV), for the Hebrew Bible; and *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (NETS) for the Septuagint. When alternative translations are suggested, it will be emphasised in the text.

⁴ Further lexemes and expressions in this passage evoke a diplomatic framework, namely *שָׂר* ‘representative of the king’, and *מַלְאָךְ* ‘messenger’ (v. 4); *עֲצָה* ‘counsel’, ‘plan’ (v. 1); *נָסַח מִסֶּכֶה* ‘to enter into an alliance’ (v. 1) (cf. *HALOT* 605). The term *סֶתֶר*, on the other hand, should be regarded as a word retaining a particular expressive poignancy, as it occurs in early poetic language with reference to God (Ps 32:7), and designates metaphorically divine protection (Ps 91:1; remarkably, in parallel with צֶל). In this passage, therefore, the nature of Judah’s rebellion is harshly emphasized. It is not merely the making of a defensive alliance with a neighbouring country that is so odious; it is rather the repudiation of a relationship of affection and dependence upon their God. In fact, they had exchanged the shadow of the Almighty (Ps 91:1) for the shadow of a human being, the Pharaoh (cf. Oswalt 1986: 546).

⁵ See Lundbom (2004: 248); Fischer (2005: 525).

⁶ At this passage, the idea of protection seems to be built on a conceptualization of צֶל which points particularly at the notion of darkness: the shadow would thus represent the dark place where it is possible keeping oneself out of sight.

⁷ The mention of Israel and Joseph in v. 2, together with the mention of the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh in v. 3, support the thesis of a Northern origin of the composition, the Northern Kingdom was destroyed in 721 B.C.E. (see Dahood 1973a: 255).

⁸ Cf. Hossfeld and Zenger (2007: 463): “V. 9-12 beschreibt YHWHs heilvolle Zuwendung zu Israel, vom Exodus über die Landnahme bis zum Aufstieg zu einem mächtigen Staat inmitten der Staatenwelt des Vorderen Orients”.

who rely on him forced by circumstances, or alternatively promise prosperity to those who put themselves steadily under his beneficent influence. One of the earliest images evoking such ideas is found in the poetic language of Hosea (EBH 3)⁹:

(1) Hos 14:8

יָשְׁבוּ יַעֲשִׂי בְצֵלוֹ יְחִיּוֹ זֵיטָן וַיִּפְרְחוּ כַגֶּפֶן וְקָרוּ כִיין לְבָנוֹן

‘They that dwell under *my*¹⁰ shadow (i.e. YHWH’s shadow) shall again make corn to grow, and shall blossom as the vine’.

This passage is part of a broader allegory in which YHWH is compared to a tree, namely a luxuriant cypress (cf. v. 9: אֲנִי בְכָרוֹשׁ רֵעֵנָה),¹¹ that casts its beneficent shadow on those who are faithful to him; this allegory encompasses a wonderful promise of restoration of the people of Israel: if they relinquish foreign alliances and idolatry, then God himself will be their protector.

Elsewhere, the motif of YHWH’s shadow as protected place presupposes the combination with other possible metaphors for God as a screen providing shadow.

In early poetic language, the expression בָּצַל שְׂדֵי יְתִלּוֹן ‘he who *spends the night*¹² (TNK ‘abide’) in the shadow of the Almighty’ (Ps 91:1) suggests God portrayed as a house or some sort of dwelling place.¹³ A similar image might be envisaged in Isaiah: צֶל מַחֲרָב מַחֲסֶה מְצֹרָם צֶל מַחֲרָב ‘For you (YHWH) have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat’ (Isa 25:4), where צֶל is in parallel with other terms evoking some sort of stable structure, namely מְצֹרָה ‘stronghold’, ‘fortress’, מַחֲסֶה ‘refuge’, ‘shelter’.

Nevertheless, in the early Psalms, the image of YHWH as a great bird, casting his shadow on his faithful ones to protect them, largely prevails.¹⁴ The expression בָּצַל כְּנָפָיִךָ ‘in the shadow of your wings’ is commonly chosen to denote the place where every faithful person can find real refuge:

⁹ For a discussion of the peculiar linguistic features of the early language of Hosea, see Sáenz-Badillos (1997: 71).

¹⁰ After BHS, *bəšillô: fortasse legendum bšly* ‘in my shadow’.

¹¹ On the originality of this motif see Feuillet (1971: 392).

¹² Cf. HALOT 529, לִין II hitpol. ‘to be resident throughout the night’. Moreover the parallel term סָתַר ‘covering’, ‘place of security’ seems to suggest the idea of an architectural structure, even if rough (see Wagner, סָתַר, TDOT, 369-370; note the phrase בְּסָתַר ‘in a hiding place’, ‘under cover’, adverbially used as ‘secretly’).

¹³ See Hossfeld and Zenger (2007: 621).

¹⁴ For a discussion on the motif of the divine bird within Canaanite and biblical literature see Dahood (1973b: 108) and Riede (2000: 325-338).

(2) Ps 36:8

וּבְגִי אָדָם בְּצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ יִחְסִיּוּ

'All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings'.

(3) Ps 57:2

וּבְצֵל־כְּנָפֶיךָ אֶחְסֶה עַד יַעֲבֹר הָוֹת

'In the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, until the calamities pass by'.

In such a shadow God hides his faithful, protecting him from any opponent or threat:

(4) Ps 17:8-9

בְּצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ תַּסְתִּירֵנִי

מִפְּנֵי רָשָׁעִים זֶה שְׂדֹנִי אִי־בִי בְּנֹפֶשׁ יִקִּיפוּ עָלַי

'Hide me in the shadow of your wings // from the wicked who despoil me, my deadly enemies who surround me'.

And finally, having escaped the danger, in such a place those who trust in him rejoice:

(5) Ps 63:8

כִּי־הָיִיתָ עֲזָרָתִי לִי וּבְצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ אֶרְצֶנָּה

'For you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I do rejoice'.

In these examples, the metaphor of shadow blends with the metaphor of divine wings, producing a baffling imagery, which has been explained in different ways by commentators. On the one hand, the so called Temple-Asylum theory (Heiligtumsasyl-Theorie) draws a parallel between the wings of God and the wings of the cherubim surrounding the ark placed in the holy of holies of the Jerusalem temple (cf. 1 Kgs 6:23; 1 Kgs 8:6-8), demarcating an impenetrable and inviolable area.¹⁵ On the other hand, the expressions found in the Psalms have been regarded as an echo of motifs that originated elsewhere within Ancient Near Eastern culture, especially in Egyptian iconography. Particularly, the outstretched wings of bird-deities, encompassing the Egyptian king, form a well-known symbol for representing the divine protection bestowed on him.¹⁶

¹⁵ Nevertheless, strong arguments have been put forward that the theory of the Temple as asylum-area as an explanation of such metaphor should be abandoned (see Riede 2000: 330). It is worth mentioning, here, that the cell containing the ark (דְּבִיר) where the winged cherubs were placed, never represented in the Bible an asylum area; this function was rather performed by the altar area (cf. Exod 21:14; 1 Kgs 1:50), as witnessed also by the expression וַיִּחְזַק בְּקַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ 'he grasps the horns of the altar', denoting the attitude of supplication (1 Kgs 1:50; 2:28).

¹⁶ For a discussion on the rich imagery of the wing in Ancient Near Eastern iconography, especially in Egypt, see Keel (1997: 190-192); Riede (2000: 325-338, in particular 326-327); Hossfeld and Zenger (2007: 123-127).

1.2 Expression for Measuring the Period of Day

Both in early and in late poetic language, the image of shadow (more specifically the shadows) either lengthening or fleeting has been exploited in expressions of time. While in early poetic language, the phrase *בְּיַפְנוֹת הַיּוֹם כִּי יָנֻסוּ צִלְי־עֶרֶב* (Jer 6:4) ‘for the day declines, the shadows of evening lengthen’ denotes the close of day,¹⁷ almost equal to *עֶרֶב*; in later poetry, the expression *עַד שְׁיִפּוֹת הַיּוֹם וְנָסוּ הַצִּלְלִים* (Cant 2:17; 4:6) ‘until the day breathes and the shadows flee’ may refer to a more extended time-span, equal to the afternoon.¹⁸ Such uses clearly derive from the practice of measuring time against the regular progress of shadow;¹⁹ any vertical body could be used indeed as a natural device for this purpose, even though more sophisticated sundials may be presupposed elsewhere in the Bible.²⁰

1.3 The Transience of Human Life

The comparison between a shadow and the human life span (*יָמִים*) arises in early poetic language; it is fully exploited, however, only later in the late language of Job (LBH 3), and, mostly, in the wisdom tradition.²¹ The basis for this simile appears to be the conception that human life is transient,

¹⁷ It is worth recalling here that in Biblical Hebrew the basic lexemes denoting the measurable parts of the day are *בֹּקֶר* ‘morning’, *צָהָרִים* ‘midday’, *עֶרֶב* ‘evening’, *לַיְלָה* ‘night’, and *הָצִי הַלַּיְלָה* ‘the middle of the night’ (this lexical system is differently organized depending on the functional language); see Niehr *עֶרֶב TDOT*: 336, and also Miano (2010: 13).

¹⁸ Cf. Keel (1986: 110): “Das *Wehen des Tages* spielt auf den täglichen Wind an (vgl. 1. Mose 3,8), der im Laufe des Nachmittags vom Meer her zu wehen beginnt. Das Fliehen der Schatten meint ihr Längerwerden (vgl. Jer 6,4). Für den biblischen Menschen, der früh aufzustehen pflegte, begann der Tag schon mitten im Nachmittag schlaff zu werden und sich dem Abend zuzuneigen (Ri. 19,9), also zu einem Zeitpunkt, den wir als Mitt-Nachmittag bezeichnen würden”.

¹⁹ Cf. Schwab, *צל*, *TDOT*, 378.

²⁰ See Isa 25:4-5; 2 Kgs 20:9-11.

²¹ Cf. Schwab, *צל*, *TDOT*, 381; the image of shadow pointing to the brevity of life is found also in late historical-narrative Hebrew (LBH 1), cf. 1 Chr 29:15, Qoh 6:12, 7:12, 8:13. Especially in the second book, we find the image of the shadow intertwined with the theme of inconsistency (cf. Qoh 6:12). At 8:13, on the other hand, a further development appears: the life of the wicked will not be long; he will not live enough as to see the shadow lengthening: *וְטוֹב לֹא יִהְיֶה לְרָשָׁע וְלֹא יֵאָרִיד יָמָיו כַּצֵּל אֲשֶׁר אֵינוֹ יֵרָא מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהִים* ‘but it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not stand in fear before God’. However, the interpretation of the simile here remains problematic; cf. Krüger (2004): 161: “According to 6:12a, namely, a person’s life is in any case short and fleeting ‘like a shadow’. Similarly, v. 13 can be understood as an ironic commentary on v. 12a: even if the sinner or the wicked man ‘lives a long time’, his life is still ‘short as a shadow’. Injustice can preserve a person from contingency and transitoriness no better than righteousness and piety”.

it runs forward without stopping and quickly passes, just like a shadow which lengthens after midday and then vanishes when night comes.

The salient feature drawn from the meaning of צֶל to build the simile is thus essentially transience. The shadow stretches out and becomes long (נטה):

- (6) Ps 102:12

יָמֵי כְצֶל נֹטִי וְאֲנִי כְעֵשֶׂב אֵיבֹשׁ

‘My days are like a lengthening (NRSV *evening*) shadow; I wither away like grass’.

- (7) Ps 109:23

כְּצֶל-כְּנֻטוֹתַי נִהְלַכְתִּי בְּנִעְרָתִי כְּאַרְבֶּה

‘I am gone like a shadow when it lengthened (NSRV *at evening*); I am shaken off as the locust’.

It does not persist (לא עמד):

- (8) Job 14:1-2

אָדָם יֵלֹד אִשָּׁה קָצָר יָמָיו וְשׁוֹכֵע־רִגְזוֹ

כְּצִיץ יִצָּא וְיִמָּל וְיִכְרַח כְּצֶל וְלֹא יַעֲמֹד

‘A mortal, born of woman, few of days and full of trouble, comes up like a flower and withers, flees like a shadow, and does not last’.

Finally, it disperses (עבר):²²

- (9) Ps 144:4

אָדָם לְהִבָּל דָּמָה יָמָיו כְּצֶל עוֹבֵר

‘Man is like a breath // his days like a shadow that passes away’.

As already observed in the case of expressions of time, this figurative use of צֶל may also be based on the common experience of measuring time from the progress of a shadow.

In sum, the term צֶל is seen to be mainly exploited figuratively to produce allegories, metaphors and similes, in both prose and poetry. It is rarely used literally (see Appendix, Table 1). Accordingly, the noun can be legitimately regarded as a poetic word, associated with highly expressive power. Its figurative use exhibits a diachronic development. The *positive* meaning of protection, especially royal and divine, is largely dominant in early poetic language; later, a new meaning appears, associated with the *negative* idea of the brevity and transitory nature of life, which gradually prevails in late poetic language.²³

²² For the figurative meaning ‘to scatter’, ‘to disperse’ of the verb עבר see Fuhs עֵבֶר *TDOT*, 415-416.

²³ It should be stressed, however, that *negative* figurative uses appear already in early poetic language (see Appendix 1), whereas *positive* uses never disappear completely, see e.g. the late language of Ben Sira (see Sir 14:27), and possibly late poetic language (cf. Cant 2:3).

2. Pattern of Use of Equivalents in the Greek Versions

In the *Greek translation*²⁴ of the Hebrew Bible, the equivalent σκιά ‘shadow’ is predominant; the noun is found 30 times out of the 52 occurrences of the term לִצֵּל.²⁵

The Greek noun matches the contexts in which the term לִצֵּל literally indicates the shadow made by any type of screen:

(10) a. Isa 38:8 LXX

τὴν σκιὰν τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν, οὓς κατέβη ὁ ἥλιος, τοὺς δέκα ἀναβαθμοὺς τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρὸς σου, ἀποστρέψω τὸν ἥλιον τοὺς δέκα ἀναβαθμοὺς. The shadow of the steps on which the sun has gone down – ten steps of the house of your father (i.e. Aḥaz) – I will turn back the sun those ten steps.

b. MT לִצֵּל־תֵּלֶךְ

(11) a. Jonah 4:5 LXX

καὶ ἐποίησεν ἑαυτῷ ἐκεῖ σκηνὴν καὶ ἐκάθητο ὑποκάτω αὐτῆς ἐν σκιᾷ And he (Jonas) made a tent for himself there, and he sat under it in the shade.

b. MT לִצֵּל־בִּנְיָן

The Greek noun fits equally well those semantic extensions of לִצֵּל denoting expressions of time:

²⁴ The expression needs some clarification. By *Greek translation* we refer here to the so-called Septuagint, i.e. the first translation of the Bible, often called the *Old Greek* (translation), and the collection of Jewish-Greek Scripture, containing *inter alia* this translation (cf. Tov 1988: 161). The project of the Old Greek translation originated within the Jewish community of Alexandria in the 3rd cent. B.C.E.; initially conceived as a Greek version of the תנ"ך (according to the Letter of Aristeas), later on, the translation was extended to include all the books that came to be part of the Hebrew canon (i.e. the נביאים 'Prophets', and the כתובים 'Writings'), and also to further non-canonical Hebrew texts (e.g. Ben Sira, Tobit). After nearly three centuries of work, this process had been completed in approximately the 1st cent. B.C.E. (see Harl, Dorival, and Munnich 1994, in particular 83-110). The Septuagint text that has come down to us is thus a collection of writings of different ages and origins that cannot be treated as homogeneous, either linguistically or stylistically. Already by the 1st cent. B.C.E., the Old Greek translation underwent a process of revision (commonly referred to as the *κατ'ε* revision); its basic aim was to make the Greek version as close as possible to the Masoretic text which, by that time, had been almost definitively established as canonical. These revisions had an impact on the textual transmission of the Septuagint, to the point that entire revised sections were incorporated in the manuscript of the Old Greek, making the text and the language available to us even more heterogeneous and multifaceted. For the identification and the study of these sections, see Barthélemy (1963, especially 91-143).

²⁵ It should be said that for a few passages (namely Isa 32:2; Jer 48:45; Job 17:7) significant divergences between the Greek text and the Masoretic text prevent making a clear equivalence.

- (12) a. Jer 6:4 LXX
 οὐαὶ ἡμῖν, ὅτι κέκλικεν ἡ ἡμέρα, ὅτι ἐκλείπουσιν αἱ σκιαὶ τῆς ἐσπέρας.
 ‘Woe to us, for the day has declined, because the shadows of evening fail’.
 b. MT וְלֵילֵינוּ יָצַל
- (13) a. Cant 2:17; 4:6 LXX
 ἕως οὗ διαπνεύσῃ ἡ ἡμέρα καὶ κινήθῳσιν αἱ σκιάι
 ‘Until the day breathes and the shadows stir’.
 b. MT וְלֵילֵינוּ יָצַל
- (14) a. Ps 101(102):12 LXX²⁶
 αἱ ἡμέραι μου ὥσει σκιά ἐκλίθησαν
 ‘My days faded like a shadow’.
 b. MT יָמֵי כְצֵל יָנֻסִי
- (15) a. Job 8:9 LXX
 σκιά γάρ ἐστιν ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ὁ βίος
 ‘For our life is a shadow on the earth’.
 b. MT כִּי צֵל יִמִּינוּ וְלֵילֵינוּ יָצַל

With regard to the renderings of the positive imagery of protection and security evoked by the metaphorical use of the Hebrew term, however, the picture turns out to be far more intriguing.

On the one hand, the books labelled by Thackeray as *translations in literal or unintelligent Greek*²⁷ follow the practice of stereotyped equivalence, extending the choice of σκιά to each occurrence of לָצַל.

On the other hand, a group of books deviates from this trend, by manifesting a marked preference for the noun σκέπη ‘shelter’ or the cognate verb σκεπάζω ‘to cover’, ‘to shelter’ in these contexts.

Among these, the most striking cases are in the book of Isaiah, the A text of Judges²⁸, and the book of Psalms. Within this corpus of texts, the

²⁶ The number in brackets refers to the numbering of the Masoretic text.

²⁷ For the purposes of the present investigation, these books are Lamentations and Song of Solomon; see Table 1. For a complete list see Thackeray (1909: 6-16). According to his grouping, the following texts belong to this category: Jeremiah 29-51; Judges (B text); Song of Solomon; Lamentations; Qohelet.

²⁸ Remarkably, Ralphs identified two separate traditions, which he believed were so diverse that they amounted to separate recensions of the book. Accordingly, he printed two separate texts in his edition: A and B. The A-text goes back to Codex Alexandrinus, whereas the B-text represents the one witnessed by Codex Vaticanus. Recent research on this topic has shown that both A and B should be regarded as quite literal translations which moved

term לָצֹר occurs 22 times, displaying each of the uses already described, i.e. literal,²⁹ as well as figurative (ranging from metaphor to allegory and simile), associated with the imagery of divine or royal protection³⁰ and, on the other hand, with the idea of the transitory nature of life.³¹ This enables us to weigh the distribution of σκιά and σκέπη against the whole semantic range of the Hebrew noun. From this exploration, one expects to understand whether this lexical pair is linguistically functional or not. The Septuagint evidence seems to support an affirmative answer. Firstly, the instances of σκέπη are found exclusively in agreement with those occurrences of לָצֹר involving the idea of protection. This can be illustrated by the following example:

- (16) a. Judg A 9:15 LXX³²

πεποιθατε ἐν τῇ σκέπῃ μου
‘Trust in my protection’.

- b. MT לִצְרֹתִי יִצְחָק; Judg B ὑπόστητε ἐν τῇ σκιᾷ μου subsist in my shade.³³

- (17) a. Isa 30:2-3 LXX

(v. 2) οἱ πορευόμενοι καταβῆναι εἰς Αἴγυπτον (...) τοῦ βοηθηθῆναι ὑπὸ Φαραῶ καὶ σκεπασθῆναι ὑπὸ Αἰγυπτίων. (v. 3) ἔσται γὰρ ὑμῖν ἡ σκέπη Φαραῶ εἰς αἰσχύνην καὶ τοῖς πεποιθόσιν ἐπ’ Αἴγυπτον ὄνειδος
‘Those who walk to go down to Egypt (...) to be helped by Pharaoh and to be sheltered by Egyptians. For the shelter of Pharaoh shall become a shame to you and to those who trust in Egypt, a reproach’.

away from a freer original version (the Old Greek), whose text is retrievable on the basis of the following criteria: a) the A-text is very influenced by the Origen recension; b) the B-text exhibits many καίγε features; c) the Lucianic text (i.e. the Antiochene tradition) can preserve very ancient readings (probably the Old Greek version) especially when it agrees with Vetus Latina; d) Vetus Latina is an important pre-Hexaplaric witness, in some cases to be preferred to the rest of the Greek witnesses; cf. Fernández Marcos (2011: 6-10).

²⁹ Judg 9:36; Isa 38:8.

³⁰ Judg 9:15; Isa 4:6; 16:3; 25:4-5; 30:2-3; 32:2; 49:2; 51:16; Ps 16(17):8; 35(36):8; 56(57):2; 62(63):8; 79(80):11; 90(91):1; 120(121):5.

³¹ Pss 101(102):12; 108(109):23; 143(144):4.

³² In Jotham’s fable (Judg 9:8-15) the trees crowned the buckthorn (τρυφῶ, LXX ῥάμνος, v. 14) as a king over them. In this passage, its shadow metaphorically represents the function of the protective power performed by the king towards his people. Such imagery presupposes a royal ideology that viewed the ruler as the “tree of the world”; see Schwab, לָצֹר, *TDOT* (379); Boling (1975: 171-173); and Harlé (1999: 167).

³³ In this passage, the A-reading agrees with the Vetus Latina (*in protectione mea*; see Field 1875: 432); moreover, the term σκέπη occurs in the Lucianic reading (ὑπὸ τὴν σκέπην μου); on the other hand we have the reading ἐν τῇ σκιᾷ μου, shared by B, the fifth column of the Hexapla, and the revisions of Theodotion and Aquila. On the basis of the criteria mentioned above (see note 28), the A-reading can be plausibly regarded as a good representative of the Old Greek text.

- b. MT מִצֵּל מִצֵּל מִצֵּל מִצֵּל
to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt.
לְעוֹז בְּמַעוֹז פֶּרַע הַלְחָסוֹת בְּצֵל מִצְרַיִם
‘Therefore the protection of Pharaoh shall become your shame, and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt your humiliation’.
- (18) a. Isa 49:2 LXX
καὶ ὑπὸ τὴν σκέπην τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ ἔκρυψέν με
‘Under the shelter of his (YHWH’s) hand he hid me’.
b. MT יָדִי בְצֵל
- (19) a. Ps 16(17):8 LXX
ἐν σκέπῃ τῶν πτερύγων σου σκεπάσεις με
‘With the shelter of your wings you will shelter me’.
b. MT כַּנְפֵי בְצֵל
- (20) a. Ps 90(91):1 LXX
ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν βοηθείᾳ τοῦ ὑψίστου ἐν σκέπῃ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
ἀλλισθήσεται
‘He who lives by the help of the Most High, in a shelter of the God of the sky he will lodge’.
b. MT שְׁדֵי בְצֵל

The analysis of the few exceptions³⁴ proves to be of additional interest. In two cases, an alternative reading σκέπη does actually appear among the major manuscripts of the Greek text, arousing the suspicion that the reading σκιά was at least questionable in the eyes of the translators or the copyists. At Ps 56(57):2, a variant ἐν τῇ σκέπῃ τῶν πτερύγων σου is witnessed by the Verona Psalter.³⁵ At Isa 51:16, Ziegler follows Codex Alexandrinus and reads καὶ ὑπὸ τὴν σκιάν τῆς χειρὸς μου σκεπάσω σε.³⁶ Interestingly, a variant σκέπην makes its appearance in Codex Sinaiticus; actually, it is found overwritten by a corrector, before a third hand restored the original reading.³⁷

The remaining two exceptions, namely Isa 4:6 and Ps 79(80):11, deserve a separate discussion. Strictly speaking, here the term לָצֶלֶת is used allegorically, rather than metaphorically, indicating respectively the shadow of a cloud and the shadow cast by a vine. Although both involve a transfer of meaning, metaphor and allegory should be kept distinct. On the one hand, the allegory is a rhetorical device, whose purpose is to construct a narrative in which each

³⁴ Namely 4 out of 22 occurrences of לָצֶלֶת: Isa 4:6; 51:16; Ps 56(57):2; Ps 79(80):11.

³⁵ i.e. Codex Veronensis, 6th cent. C.E.

³⁶ Cf. Ziegler (1983).

³⁷ The overwriting is visible on the website of the Codex Sinaiticus Project: <<http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en>> (09/2015).

element (characters, setting, and other types of symbols) retains simultaneously its literal and its potential figurative meaning. In other words, the figurative meaning is a function of the narrative as a rhetorical unit. Metaphor, on the other hand, is a linguistic device; in this case the transfer of meaning is a function of the lexeme, and can be produced by the use of a single lexical item³⁸. At Isa 4:6, for instance, a cloud (νεφέλη v. 5) is portrayed as being over Mount Zion εἰς σκιὰν ἀπὸ καύματος ‘as a shade from the heat’.³⁹ Commenting on the Hebrew source text לְצִל־יְיָ מִחֹרֶב, Williamson points out that the expression was understood as metaphorical from early times, referred to God, who guards his people and protects them;⁴⁰ nevertheless, the word לִצֵּל as well as its equivalent σκιὰ retain their full literal meaning within the scope of the allegory. The same applies to Ps 79(80):11, where Israel is allegorically referred to as a vine (ἄμπελος v. 9), whose shadow (ἡ σκιὰ αὐτῆς) covers mountains; indicating through this imagery the extent of its kingdom’s power. Since in these cases the transfer of meaning is rhetorically expressed by allegory, the expressive load of each lexical item turns out to be lightened.

The discussion of these examples leads us to the conclusion that those translation units which show greater attention to the grammatical and lexical rules of the target language (namely Isaiah, Judges A), clearly hesitated to use σκιὰ in those contexts in which לִצֵּל indicates figuratively the protection of someone powerful. This approach can be ascribed to the translator of Psalms as well. This book has been regarded as a literal translation, inclined to follow its Hebrew source text slavishly,⁴¹ as well as a specimen of “indifferent Greek” from the point of view of the language.⁴² However, recent studies have shown that on closer examination, the Greek Psalter proves to be more creative than a mere word-for-word rendering,⁴³ especially in lexical terms,⁴⁴ and even shows

³⁸ For the distinction between metaphor and allegory, see Prandi (2004: 476): “while a metaphor opposes a conflictual focus to a coherent frame, an allegory is a whole sentence whose non-conflictual meaning taken as a whole enters into conflict with a co-textual or contextual information, and therefore receives an analogical interpretation”.

³⁹ After Williamson (see Williamson 2006: 301); in this case the metaphor also affects the parallel terms “as a refuge (מִחֹרֶב, LXX σκέπη) and shelter (רִצְחוֹן, LXX τὸ ἀπόκρυφος) from the storm and the rain”.

⁴⁰ Cf. Williamson (2006: 315).

⁴¹ This book has been understood also as an early representative of the καίτε tradition (see Olofsson 1997: 189-230).

⁴² Thackeray (1909: 13).

⁴³ See Aejmelaeus (2007: 223-240, especially 238-239).

⁴⁴ The translators of Psalter prove to be careful on the choice of the equivalents and many of these choices clearly reveal cultural motivations, as in the case of divine epithets, cf. Muraoka (2001, in particular 40-43); see also Siegert (2001: 311): “Der Psalter ist reich an behutsamen ‚Interpretamenten‘, die jedoch nie den Charakter von Glossen oder Erweiterungen haben, sondern den einer interpretierenden Wortwahl”; for a comprehensive dis-

some concern for the stylistic demands of the target language.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, as pointed out by Aejmelaeus, the translator of the Psalter first and foremost focused on content, i.e. he “concentrated his efforts on the qualitative aspect”⁴⁶ of the translation and the choice of the equivalents can be legitimately regarded as an integral part of this aspect.

3. Discussion

The data collected through examination of the Greek renderings of צֶלַם raise a question: what kind of motivations could have led the translators to consider the term σκιά as unsuitable to express the idea of protection metaphorically? Answering such a question goes beyond the purposes of the present article; nevertheless, some lines of argument can still be sketched out.

A first line of argument relies on factors within the Hebrew biblical text. In early poetic Hebrew and in the late language of Job we find the poetic term צֶלְמֹת ‘gloom’,⁴⁷ an abstract construction deriving from the verb צָלַם II, ‘be dark’.⁴⁸ The Masoretic pointing resulted from a popular folk etymology that understood it as “shadow of death”.⁴⁹ This reading is also witnessed by the Septuagint version, which almost exclusively translates the term with the phrase σκιά θανάτου – in fact, this is a clear-cut equivalence in the books of Isaiah and Psalms.⁵⁰ In the Hebrew Bible the term צֶלְמֹת bears a strong negative nuance, denoting a gloom deeper than חֹשֶׁךְ,⁵¹ associated with the underworld, and death. It is worth mentioning that in one example the term σκιά on its own is chosen by the Greek translator to convey such a strong negative meaning:

(21) a. Job 16:16

פָּנִי חֲמַרְמָרוּ מִצִּיָּבֹכִי וְעַל עֵפְעָפִי צֶלְמֹת

‘My face is red with weeping, and deep darkness is on my eyelids’.

cussion see Austermann (2003: 104–106), who draws the conclusion that “PsLXX verfügt besonders über ausgeprägte semantische und stilistische Kompetenzen, die sich vor allem in seiner kontext- und stilorientierten Verwendung von Äquivalenten niederschlägt”.

⁴⁵ For an examination of the rhetorical features of the Greek Psalter that cannot be explained by adherence to the source text, see Bons (2011, in particular 72–79), where the lexical stylistic devices are treated.

⁴⁶ Cf. Aejmelaeus (2001: 73).

⁴⁷ Gesenius 1120 ‘Dunkelheit’, ‘Finsternis’; HALOT 1029 ‘gloom’, ‘an impenetrable gloom, pitch, darkness’; see also Barr (1974: 52).

⁴⁸ See Niehr, צֶלְמֹת, TDOT (396).

⁴⁹ Niehr points out that: “one must consider that the (in part) positively understood lexeme צֶלַם bears a negative connotation here”; Niehr צֶלְמֹת (397).

⁵⁰ See Isa 9:1; Ps 23(22):4; 44(43):19; 106(105):10.14.

⁵¹ See HALOT 361–362 ‘darkness’, and metaphorically ‘sorry state’, ‘disaster’.

b. LXX

ἡ γαστήρ μου συγκέκασται ἀπὸ κλαυθμοῦ ἐπὶ δὲ βλεφάροις μου σκιά
 'My belly is aflame from weeping, and there is a shadow on my eyelids'.

This example supports the idea that a significant negative nuance was somehow already available in the semantic range of σκιά, as documented by the earliest occurrences of the noun in Greek poetry.⁵²

Therefore, it is not unfounded to assume that the negative value associated to the fixed rendering σκιά θανάτου could have played some role on the usage of σκιά, especially within the books of Psalm. The effect of this interference may be the tendency to avoid the word in those contexts involving the positive concept of protection, especially divine protection.

A second line of argument takes into consideration the uses of σκιά within Greek literary sources. As a result of a comprehensive search of the vocabulary and the imagery of shadow in Greek poetry,⁵³ Ciani points out that from Homer up to Hellenistic poetry, this concept, and its lexical representation did not undergo a significant development; in particular, the semantic range of σκιά, throughout Greek poetry, retains steadily the following meanings and *denotata*: 1) shadow of the dead;⁵⁴ 2) shadow cast by a body; 3) shadow as relative darkness caused by shelter from sunlight; 4) shadow as shelter; 5) shadow as a metaphor of precariousness and lack of consistency – mainly in respect of human existence; 6) shadow as complete obscurity – synonymous with σκότος 'darkness', 'gloom'; 7) shadow as a sketch.⁵⁵ It is worth here drawing attention to the fact that meanings 3 and 4 must be regarded as instances of metonymy rather than as metaphors, inasmuch as they involve

⁵² Cf. the usage of σκιά in Homer; see note 55.

⁵³ It must be said that the occurrences of σκιά are limited in epic poetry (because of the dactylic hexameter metre), whereas the noun is extensively attested in tragedy.

⁵⁴ In fact, the earliest occurrences of the term in Homer bear witness to this meaning, see *Od.* 10.494-5 τῷ καὶ τεθνηῶτι νόον πόρε Περσεφόνη // οἶω πεπνῦσθαι τοὶ δὲ σκιαί αἰσσοῦσιν 'to him (the seer Teiresias) in death Persephone has granted reason, so that he alone has understanding; while the others are shadows that flit'; and 11:204-8 ἐγὼ γ' ἔθελον φρεσὶ μερμηρίζας // μητρὸς ἐμῆς ψυχὴν ἐλέειν κατατεθνηυῖας. // τρίς μὲν ἐφορμήθην· ἐλέειν τέ με θυμὸς ἀνώγει // τρίς δέ μοι ἐκ χειρῶν σκιῇ εἵκελον καὶ ὄνειρῳ // ἔπτατο 'I pondered in heart, and was fain to clasp the spirit of my dead mother. Three times I sprang towards her, and my heart bade me clasp her, and thrice she flitted from my arms like a shadow or a dream'. In these contexts, the notion of shadow is clearly related to the idea of εἰδωλὸν 'phantom', 'ghost' (see *LSJ*, σκιά; cf. *Il.* 5.451; *Od.* 4.796). The shadow is thus conceived as a weakened reproduction of the body that casts it, as faithful, just as inconsistent.

⁵⁵ Cf. Ciani (1970: 363-372).

contiguity⁵⁶ between the source (the shadow cast) and the target concepts (the screen that casts it, or the darkness that is thus produced). Meanings 1 and 5, on the other hand, are really metaphors, as they imply analogy and transfer between disjoint concepts. Moreover, Ciani explains that metonymies 3 and 4 are always exploited “puramente in senso materiale”,⁵⁷ as the following examples clearly show:

- (22) Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 967

ρίζης γὰρ οὐσης φυλλὰς ἵκετ' ἐς δόμους,
σκιὰν ὑπερτεínaσα σειρίου κυνός

‘For if the root still lives, leaves come again to the house and spread their over-reaching shade against the scorching Dog Star’.

- (23) Euripides, *Bacchae*, 458

λευκήν δὲ χροιάν ἐκ παρασκευῆς ἔχεις
οὐχ ἡλίου βολαῖσιν, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ σκιᾷς
τὴν Ἀφροδίτην καλλονῇ θηρώμενος

‘You have a white skin from careful preparation, hunting after Aphrodite by your beauty not exposed to strokes of the sun, but beneath the shade’.

- (24) Euripides *Heracles*, 971

οἱ δὲ ταρβοῦντες φόβῳ
ῥουρον ἄλλος ἄλλος', ἐς πέπλους ὁ μὲν
μητρὸς ταλαίνης, ὁ δ' ὑπὸ κίονος σκιάν,
ἄλλος δὲ βωμὸς ὄρνις ὡς ἐπηξ' ὑπο.

‘And they in wild fright darted here and there, one to his hapless mother’s skirts, another to the shadow of a pillar, while a third cowered beneath the altar like a bird’.

In other words, the meaning ‘shelter’, actually rather peripheral within Greek poetry,⁵⁸ did not originate an additional metaphorical shift towards the

⁵⁶ Cognitively speaking, “contiguity is to be taken in a very broad sense, comprising not only spatial contact, but also temporal proximity, causal relations, part-whole relation, and so on”; cf. Koch (2004: 7).

⁵⁷ Cf. Ciani (1970: 395).

⁵⁸ It is worth pointing out that the semantic shift from ‘shadow’ to ‘shelter’ was to some extent regarded as ambiguous also with respect to the cognate terms of σκιά. In Hesiod, for example, the adjective κατάσκιος is used with the passive meaning ‘being covered, being shielded’; in *Op.* 512-514 the skin of animals is said λάχνη κατάσκιον ‘sheltered by fur’; a scholium glosses the expression as follows: σκεπόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν τριχῶν; see Pertusi (1955: 172). Something very similar occurs with the adjective ἐπίσκιος, found in Sophocles with the active meaning ‘covering’, ‘sheltering’, *Oed. Col.* 1650 ἄνακτα δ' αὐτὸν ὀμμάτων ἐπίσκιον χεῖρ' ἀντέχοντα κρατὸς ‘holding his hand in front of his face to screen his eyes’; once again the verb σκέπω is chosen to explain the ambiguous term: ὃ ἐστι, τῇ χειρὶ σκέποντα τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς; see Papageorgiou 1888, ad *Oed. Col.* 1650.

abstract notions of protection and security, as in the case of the Hebrew noun **צֶלַע**. This lexical information may have been available to the translators, who avoided accordingly the term **σκιᾶ** where the context demanded this semantic shift.

A further line of argument looks at those non-literary varieties of Greek found in documentary papyri of the Ptolemaic age. From the works of Deissmann⁵⁹ onwards, this perspective has proved to be very fruitful in research on the language of the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, as “the vocabulary, the grammar and the syntax of the Septuagint are not representative of classical Greek, nor of the literary koinè used by Hellenistic authors (...) but stand closer to the non-literary language of contemporary documentary papyri”.⁶⁰

Examination of these sources reveals extremely few occurrences of **σκιᾶ**, proving that the noun does not belong to the current language. It should be emphasised, as Ciani correctly does, that not only the word ‘shadow’, but also the notion of shadow itself is eminently poetic.⁶¹

On the other hand, the word **σκέπη**, chosen 10 times by the translators of Isaiah, Judges and Psalms as an equivalent for **צֶלַע**,⁶² proves to be the opposite, at least in literature. Indeed, the noun occurs almost exclusively in prose,⁶³ with the rather concrete meaning ‘covering’⁶⁴ or ‘shelter’.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, a

⁵⁹ E.g. Deissmann (1895, 1897, and 1910).

⁶⁰ Joosten (2015: 211). In this regard, one should mention also the conclusions drawn by the linguist Vít Bubeník on the status of the Septuagint Greek among the varieties of Hellenistic koinè. He speaks of Hellenistic koinè in terms of “an educated supra-dialectal variety, which represent an intermediate level between high and low level varieties of the same language”, describing a continuum ranging from purely koinè, to predominantly koinè (*dialectizing koinè*), predominantly dialectal (*koinèizing dialect*), up to purely dialectal variety. According to Bubeník, the language of the Greek version of the Bible constitutes a specimen of dialectizing koinè. He goes even further, stating that the language of this document may reflect some features of a “Jewish-Greek” language, spoken at that time by the Jewish community of Alexandria; see Bubeník (1989: 10 and 67).

⁶¹ See Ciani (1970: 331): “Il concetto di ombra, in una vasta gamma di immagini, di metafore, di sfumature semantiche, è motivo sempre presente in tutti i generi di poesia e nella poesia di tutti i tempi. Possiamo dire che «ombra» è parola poetica per eccellenza”.

⁶² Actually, 11 times, if one takes into account the variant **σκέπη** in Ps 56(57):2 witnessed by the Verona Psalter, disregarding the correction **σκέπη** in Isa 51:16 Sinaiticus. It must be mentioned here that the noun appears also as equivalent of **צֶלַע**, and **צֶלַע**; cf. *Hatch/Redpath*, **σκέπη**.

⁶³ In poetic language, we find the form **σκέπας** ‘shelter’ (always literal) in the Homeric formula **ἐπὶ σκέπας ἦν ἀνέμοιο** (*Od.* 5.443, 6.210, 7:282, 12:336).

⁶⁴ E.g. clothes as covering the body (Hippocrates, *De aere aquis et locis*, 8); or hair as covering the head (Aristotle, *De partibus animalium*, 658A18).

⁶⁵ E.g. from the winds (Hippocrates, *De aere aquis et locis*, 3); a similar use of **σκέπη** has been already noticed above in the scholia on Hesiod and Sophocles.

shift towards a more abstract idea is traceable already in Herodotus,⁶⁶ and, later on, in the works of Polybius. Here, we find the term σκέπη in reference to the protection guaranteed by the Romans,⁶⁷ denoting a kind of protection comparable to the one expressed by לָצֶלֶק in early poetic Hebrew.

Remarkably, the metaphorical extension is very well documented by the papyri. The use of σκέπη indicating ‘protection’, ‘refuge’, and also ‘patronage’ is well attested in non-literary koinè Greek, in both technical (legal) and common language.⁶⁸ Accounting comprehensively for the uses of σκέπη in Hellenistic documentary sources goes beyond the purposes of the present article; nevertheless, a few examples will be mentioned to acknowledge some similarity with the metaphors and the wordings found in the Septuagint. The formula ἐν τῷ ἐμφανεῖ ἔξω ἱεροῦ καὶ βωμοῦ καὶ τεμένους καὶ πάσης σκέπης, and its variant ἐνφανῇ ... ἐκτὸς παντὸς ἀσύλου τόπου καὶ σκέπης πάσης, are quite significant in this regard.⁶⁹ Such expressions, widely attested from the 3rd cent. B.C.E. onwards, occur within oath declarations in respect of offices, contracts and payments. By using them, the contractor agrees to comply with the obligations, and adds a pledge to refrain from seeking sanctuary from justice, promising to remain available (ἐμφανής ‘visible’) outside any kind of protection or safe guard. These examples suggest a metaphorical reading of σκέπη, quite comparable with the one observed in the Septuagint.⁷⁰

4. Conclusion

Close study of the Greek renderings of לָצֶלֶק in the Old Greek translation of the Bible, suggests that the translators who were more concerned about the linguistic structures of the target language, considered the Greek equivalent σκιά, although highly similar in meaning and use, as unsuitable to express metaphorically the concept of protection. Evidence from Greek literature supports this view. These translators, thus, correctly identified the meaning and the

⁶⁶ Herodotus, *Historiae*, 1.143.1: οἱ Μιλήσιοι μὲν ἦσαν ἐν σκέπῃ τοῦ φόβου, ὅρκιον ποιησάμενοι ‘the Milesians were safe from the danger for they had made a treaty’.

⁶⁷ See Polybius, *Historiae*, 1.16.10: ὑποστείλας ἑαυτὸν ὑπὸ τὴν Ῥωμαίων σκέπην ‘having placed himself under the protection of the Romans’.

⁶⁸ For a thorough examination of the technical-legal usage of the term σκέπη in documentary sources see Piątkowska (1964 and 1975).

⁶⁹ See P. Hib. 1.93 ll. 4-5 (Egypt, circa 250 B.C.E.); SB 1.5680 = P. Grad 3 (Heracleopolis, 229 B.C.E.); SB 3.6301 ll. 12-13 (Egypt, 227/226 B.C.E.); see also Piątkowska (1975: 49); Geraci (2003: 53).

⁷⁰ Remarkably, the locative constructions with the antonymic prepositions ἔξω/ἐκτός and ἐν highlight this similarity even more. It is worth recalling that σκέπη can also be found as equivalent of ἡδῆ ‘hiding place’, referring to comparable notions (see Ps 61(60):4 “inaccessible place”; Isa 16:4 “refuge”).

reference of the metaphors they dealt with in the source text, and in determining the equivalent in the target language, they chose to map the semantic domain of protection/security with a word different from σκιά, namely σκέπη, which would have achieved this goal, based on their lexical competence in Greek.

The choice fell on a lexeme drawn from a variety of Greek which stands close to prose (Polybius, scholia), specialised prose (as the medical language of Hippocrates) and even the non-literary legal language of papyri. Possibly, this word would have been regarded as quite unusual in Greek poetry, whereas the metaphorical use of לָצַח is rather typical of Hebrew poetic language (see Table 1).

On a semantic level, therefore, the resulting translation can be assessed as faithful to the source-text and attentive to the target language. On a stylistic level however, the outcome can be correctly considered rather peculiar.

Appendix 1

Table 1. Distribution of the Noun לָצַח in Biblical Hebrew, by Functional Language⁷¹

Early Historical Narrative Hebrew (EBH 1)

	Literal use	Figurative use
Gen 19:8		Protection provided by hospitality (M)
Num 14:9		Protection of a foreign god (M)
Judg 9:15		Protection of the king (A)
Judg 9:36	Shadow cast by mountains	
2 Kgs 20:9-11	Shadow cast by a sundial	

Early Poetic Hebrew (EBH 2)

	Literal use	Figurative use
Isa 4:6		Protection of YHWH (A)
Isa 16:3		Protection of the king (A)
Isa 25:4-5		Protection of YHWH (M)
Isa 30:2-3		Protection of Pharaoh (M)
Isa 32:2		Protection of the king (S)
Isa 38:8	Shadow cast by a sundial	
Isa 49:2		Protection of YHWH, through his hand (M)
Isa 51:16		Protection of YHWH, through his hand (M)

⁷¹ For a comprehensive account of Hebrew functional languages see Zatelli 2004.

Jer 6:4		Expression of time
Jer 48:45		Protection of a city (M)
Lam 4:20		Protection of the <i>māšīah</i> YHWH (M)
Ezek 17:23		Protection of the <i>māšīah</i> YHWH (A)
Ezek 31:6.12.17		Protection of Pharaoh (M)
Ps 17:8		Protection of YHWH, through his wings (M)
Ps 36:8		Protection of YHWH, through his wings (M)
Ps 57:2		Protection of YHWH, through his wings (M)
Ps 63:8		Protection of YHWH, through his wings (M)
Ps 80:11		Protection of the king (A)
Ps 91:1		Protection of <i>šadday</i> (M)
Ps 102:12		Transitoriness of life (S)
Ps 109:23		Transitoriness of life (S)
Ps 121:5-6		Protection of YHWH (M)

Language of Hosea (EBH 3)

	Literal use	Figurative use
Hos 4:13	The shadow cast by a tree	
Hos 14:8		Protection of YHWH (M)

Late Historical-Narrative Hebrew (LBH 1)

	Literal use	Figurative use
Qoh 6:12		Transitoriness of life (S)
Qoh 7:12 ⁷²		Transitoriness of wisdom (M)
Qoh 7:12		Transitoriness of money (M)
Qoh 8:13		Transitoriness of life (S)
Jonah 4:5-6	The shadow cast by a tree	
1 Chr 29:15		Transitoriness of life (S)

⁷² Following Seow (1997), “wisdom is as a shadow, money is as a shadow”; this interpretation is strongly supported by the data emerging from the present investigation into the figurative use of זָלַל in Late Hebrew. In this passage, the unreliability and ephemeral nature of wisdom and money seem to be emphasised (possibly in opposition to הֲנִיחָה ‘inheritance’, v. 11) rather than their protective power; cf. also Schoors (2013: 527).

Poetic Language (LBH 2)

	Literal use	Figurative use
Ps 144:4		Transitoriness of life (S)
Cant 2:3		Protection of the beloved one (M)
Cant 2:17		Expression of time
Cant 4:6		Expression of time

Late Language of Job (LBH 3)

	Literal use	Figurative use
Job 7:2	Place of refreshment	
Job 8:9		Transitoriness of life (M)
Job 14:2		Transitoriness of life (S)
Job 17:7		Transitoriness of life (S)
Job 40:22	Shadow cast by a tree	

Late Hebrew of Ben Sira (BSH)

	Literal use	Figurative use
Sir 14:27 ⁷³		Protection of wisdom (M)

Appendix 2

Table 2. Renderings of צל in the Septuagint according to Thackeray's Classification

Good Koinè Greek

12 x	Literal / Figurative use	σκιὰ /σκέπη = 3/5
Gen 19:8	Protection provided by hospitality (M)	σκέπη
Num 14:9	Protection of a foreign god (M)	καίρος
Isa 4:6	Protection of YHWH (A)	σκιὰ

⁷³ The text of Ben Sira is not part of the Masoretic tradition or of the Hebrew canonical books. Nevertheless, the Hebrew Vorlage of this text is known from the Dead Sea Scrolls; for an edition of all extant Hebrew Ben Sira manuscripts, see Beentjes (1997). In this passage, Manuscript A (f. 6 r.) witnesses וחוסה בצלה מחרב (Beentjes 1997: 43). The subject of the sentence is “the man who meditates on wisdom”, mentioned in v. 20 (אנוש בחכמה יהיה), and the feminine suffix in the phrase המכח בצלה refers to the חכמה.

Isa 16:3	Protection of the king (M)	σκέπη
Isa 25:4-5 ^{x2}	Protection of YHWH (M)	σκέπη, <i>minus</i>
Isa 30:2-3 ^{x2}	Protection of Pharaoh (M)	σκέπη, <i>minus</i>
Isa 32:2	Protection of the king (S)	≠
Isa 38:8	Shadow cast by a sundial	σκιά
Isa 49:2	Protection of YHWH, through his hand (M)	σκέπη
Isa 51:16	Protection of YHWH, through his hand (M)	σκιά (S σκέπη)

Indifferent Greek

20 x ⁷⁴	Literal / Figurative use	σκιά /σκέπη = 11/9
Jer 6:4	Expression of time	σκιά
Ezek 17:23	Protection of the <i>māšîaḥ</i> YHWH (A)	σκιά
Ezek 31:6.12.17 ^{x3}	Protection of Pharaoh (M)	σκιά, σκέπη, σκέπη
Hos 4:13	The shadow cast by a tree	σκέπη
Hos 14:8	Protection of YHWH (M)	σκέπη
Jonah 4:5-6 ^{x2}	The shadow cast by a tree	σκιά, σκιά
1 Chr 29:15	Transitoriness of life (S)	σκιά
Ps 16[17]:8	Protection of YHWH, through his wings (M)	σκέπη
Ps 35[36]:8	Protection of YHWH, through his wings (M)	σκέπη
Ps 56[57]:2	Protection of YHWH, through his wings (M)	σκιά (R σκέπη) ⁷⁵
Ps 62[63]:8	Protection of YHWH, through his wings (M)	σκέπη
Ps 79[80]:11	Protection of the king (A)	σκιά
Ps 90[91]:1	Protection of <i>Šadday</i> (M)	σκέπη
Ps 101[102]:12	Transitoriness of life (S)	σκιά
Ps 108[109]:23	Transitoriness of life (S)	σκιά
Ps 120[121]:5	Protection of YHWH (M)	σκέπη
Ps 143[144]:4	Transitoriness of life (S)	σκιά

⁷⁴ To this number must be added one occurrence in Sir 14:26 θήσει τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ σκέπῃ αὐτῆς (i.e. σοφία v. 20), metaphorically denoting the protection of wisdom (M).

⁷⁵ R = Codex Veronensis 6th cent.

Literal or Unintelligent Greek

15 x	Literal / Figurative use	σκιά /σκέπη = 13/0
Judg 9:15	Protection of the king (A)	Β σκιά (Α σκέπη)
Judg 9:36	Shadow cast by mountains	Β σκία (Α σκία)
4 Kgdms 20:9-11 ^{x4}	Shadow cast by a sundial	σκιά, σκία, σκία, <i>minus</i>
Jer 48:45	Protection of a city (M)	<i>minus</i>
Lam 4:20	Protection of the <i>māšîaḥ</i> YHWH (M)	σκία
Cant 2:3	Protection of the beloved one (M)	σκία
Cant 2:17	Expression of time	σκία
Cant 4:6	Expression of time	σκία
Eccl 6:12	Transitoriness of life (S)	σκία
Eccl 7:12	Transitoriness of wisdom (M)	σκία
Eccl 7:12	Transitoriness of money (M)	σκία
Eccl 8:13	Transitoriness of life (S)	σκία

Paraphrases and Free Renderings

5 x	Literal / Figurative use	σκιά /σκέπη = 3/0
Job 7:2	Literal: Place of refreshment	σκία
Job 8:9	Transitoriness of life (M)	σκία
Job 14:2	Transitoriness of life (S)	σκία
Job 17:7	Transitoriness of life (S)	≠
Job 40:22	Shadow cast by a tree	σκιάζομαι

Abbreviations: (A) = allegory; (M) = metaphor; (S) = simile.

Abbreviations

BHS = Elliger, Kurt, and Wilhelm Rudolph, *et al.* (eds). 1997⁵. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

HALOT = Koehler, Ludwig, and Walter Baumgartner (eds). 1994-2000. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: The New Koehler-Baumgartner in English*. Subsequently revised by Walter Baumgartner and Johann J. Stam. Trans. by M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill.

Hatch/Redpath = Hatch, Edwin, and Henry A. Redpath (eds). 1998². *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the other Greek Versions of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker.

KTU = Dietrich, Manfred, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín (eds). 2013³. *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places*. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.

- LSJ* = Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. 1940⁹. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- NETS* = Pietersma, Albert, and Benjamin G. Wright (eds). 2009². *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title*. New York-Oxford: Oxford UP.
- NRSV* = *The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*. 1989. Division of Christian education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA.
- TAD* = Porten, Bezalel, and Ada Yardeni. 1986. *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt* 1. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- TDOT* = Botterweck, Gerhard Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry (eds). 1977-2004. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Translated by David E. Green. 14 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- TNK* = *Tanakh. The Holy Scriptures*. 1985. The New Jewish Publication Society of America.

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Chinese Students' Development of Textual Competence in L2 Italian: A Corpus-Based Study

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Abstract:

The majority of studies conducted about Chinese students' acquisition of L2 Italian since the 1990s have mainly focused on the analysis of learners' phonological and morphosyntactic competences, usually adopting contrastive methods (Valentini 1992 and Banfi 2003, *inter alia*). More recent studies have been carried out from the point of view of applied linguistics (Rastelli 2010) and input processing (Rastelli 2013). However, textual and meta-textual competences of this category of learners have not yet been deeply investigated, even though the importance of such competences has already been acknowledged within important documents of language policy, e.g. the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR 2001). This article is divided into two main sections. After preliminary theoretical considerations about some key-concepts, I will first emphasize, according to a theoretical background (Scalise and Ceccagno 2005; Diadori and Di Toro 2009 *inter alia*), the role played by some factors in slowing down, as well as in causing difficulties to Chinese students' development of textual competence in L2 Italian. Secondly, I will analyze the results of a corpus-based cross-sectional study, the purpose of which was to investigate some aspects involved in the development of Chinese University students' textual skills in Italian as a Second Language.

Keywords: L2 Italian, Textual Competence, Text Coherence and Cohesion

1. Introduction

The number of Chinese people residing in Italy has constantly increased since the end of the nineteen eighties (ISTAT 2013). The Chinese population in Italy was composed of about 70.000 people in 2002 (ISTAT 2003), about

180.000 people in 2010 (ISTAT 2010) and about 223.000 people at the beginning of 2013 (ISTAT 2013). This rising number, as well as the fact that the Chinese have represented for several years one of the top five nationalities among migrants in Italy from EU and non-EU countries, confirms that Italy is one of the most chosen European destinations by Chinese migrants (Ceccagno 2009).

The Italian areas characterized by massive presence of Chinese overseas are the region of Lombardy (especially the city of Milan and its surroundings), the region of Tuscany (in particular the provinces of Prato and Florence), the city of Rome and the Vesuvian area near Naples (ISTAT 2013).

From the perspective of Italian as a Second Language teaching a new, heterogeneous category of learners with specific communicative needs has become increasingly significant.

Among Chinese learners of Italian as a Second Language, university students constitute a considerable group. Thanks to international agreements signed between Italian and Chinese universities, and particularly thanks to the “Marco Polo Program” started in 2006 (about which more detailed information will be given in the following Section), the number of university students as well as exchange students from China has sharply risen in the past few years.

From a social point of view this phenomenon has considerably contributed to changing some diffused social representations and negative social stereotypes systematically attributed to Chinese migrants by the hosting society and by Italian media.

From the point of view of the research about Italian as a Second Language teaching and the production of specific teaching materials, this phenomenon has likewise had a strong impact.

The first research studies about Chinese learners of Italian as a Second Language (ISL) were published starting from the early 1990s (the most relevant ones were Valentini 1992 and Banfi 2003), focusing in particular on learners’ development of morphosyntactic abilities both in class and spontaneous contexts, usually through contrastive methods.

Afterwards, some innovative studies were conducted from the point of view of Second Language Acquisition in its different dimensions (Diadori and Di Toro 2009), of applied linguistics (Rastelli 2010) and of cognitive linguistics, with particular regard to the analysis of the input processing (Rastelli 2013).

However, relevant works on the textual dimension (as well as on socio-pragmatics and intercultural pragmatics) in Chinese learners’ acquisition process of ISL have not been conducted yet. With regard to other languages, on the contrary, considerable studies have already been carried out: among all, as regards this learning dimension of Chinese students of English as a Foreign Language, the study by Deng, Chen and Zhang (2014) is worthy of mention.

The current work describes the main results of a cross-sectional and corpus-based research study about Chinese students’ development of textual

competence in L2 Italian conducted in 2014 within “Marco Polo – Turandot” courses at the University for Foreigners of Siena, Italy, and taking into consideration also the “GranVALICO” and “VALICO” learners’ corpora (about which further information will be provided in the next section). The study is mainly divided into two parts: one is about the analysis of a corpus of texts, the other one is about the evaluation of Chinese ISL students’ perceptions of the importance of the dimension of text production in their acquisition pathways.

1.1 The “Marco Polo – Turandot Program” and the “VALICO” Learners’ Corpus

The “Marco Polo Program” (*Make Boluo jihua* 马可波罗计划) is the result of a bi-lateral agreement between Italian and Chinese governments signed in 2006, then modified in 2009 adding the “Turandot Program” (*Tulanduo jihua* 图兰朵计划). The main aim of this program is to allow Chinese students to spend a period of at least six months within an Italian university in order to attend L2 Italian intensive courses, with the purpose of consequently starting a degree course in their disciplines in Italy. The difference between the “Marco Polo” and “Turandot” programs is that the former is mainly addressed to students who would like to specialize in scientific subjects, while the latter is mainly addressed to students who would like to specialize in arts and music.

Since the beginning of this project the University for Foreigners of Siena has always attracted a high number of “Marco Polo - Turandot” students (see Table 1): from 2007, the year of beginning of the project, to 2014 the total number has sharply increased, reaching 945 learners.

*Table 1. The increasing presence of Chinese students in Siena since the year of inauguration of the “Marco Polo – Turandot Program” (source: statistical data of the CLUSS centre, University for Foreigners of Siena)

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014
<i>Chinese students in Siena</i>	110	98	202	204	459	753	945

The relevant presence of these “temporary migrants” in Siena and in small towns in its neighbourhood has transformed the province from a territory where Chinese presence was one of the lowest in Tuscany to a place with a considerable presence of Chinese people,¹ as well as a place of innovation with regard to Chinese migration to Italy, in just several years.

¹ For further information about Chinese presence in Tuscany, especially in the district of Prato, see Ceccagno (1997, 2003, and 2004); Dei Ottati (2009 and 2013); Berti, Pedone and Valzania (2013).

“GranVALICO” and “VALICO” (“Varietà Apprendimento Lingua Italiana Corpus Online”, or “Online Corpus of the Learning Varieties of the Italian Language”) are on-line learners’ corpora containing a relevant number of written performances carried out by ISL students with different nationalities, belonging to different age groups, and with different levels of language and communicative competence. Such corpora, gathered and put online by researchers of the University of Turin starting from 2003, and already consulted and investigated for several studies about ISL learners, represent a precious resource both for teachers who want to reflect about how to use electronic corpora in their L2 Italian courses and for researchers who want to conduct corpus-driven and corpus-based studies.

2. *Theoretical Remarks about some Key-Concepts*

Before describing the adopted methodologies and the main findings of this study, it is particularly important to focus on theoretical considerations about some key-concepts that are strictly related to the investigated dimension of Chinese students’ ISL learning, that is, their textual competence.

First, since one of the purposes of this study is to measure some specific aspects of the observed learners’ textual competence, a brief account of some definitions and connotations of the concepts of “text” and “textual competence” will be introduced.

Afterwards, taking into consideration the importance of the role played by “common ground construction” in the development of textual competence in an L2, a short section will be dedicated to the differences between written and oral communication in terms of common ground construction. Finally, some remarks about the notions of “topic accessibility” and “topic continuity” will be also provided.

2.1 *The Concepts of “Text” and “Textual Competence in a Second Language”*

Among the numerous, different connotations that have been given about the concept of “text” in linguistics (Werlich 1975; Givón 1983, *inter alia*), I agree with Palermo (2013) who defines such a concept as follows:

qualsiasi enunciato o insieme di enunciati – realizzato in forma orale, scritta o trasmessa – dotato di senso, che, collocato all’interno di opportune coordinate contestuali, realizza una funzione comunicativa [...] Qualsiasi espressione linguistica, effettivamente avvenuta e contestualizzata, è un testo, anche se formata da una sola parola.

(Palermo 2013: 22)²

² English translation by the author: “any meaningful expression or set of expressions – realized orally, through writing or transmitted –, which, collocated within an appropriate context, realizes a communicative function [...]. Any linguistic expression, concretely happened and contextualized, even if composed by one single word, is a text”.

Although in this work I will take into consideration only written productions, I agree that under the label “text” there must be both orally-produced and written texts, regardless of their duration or length.

With regard to the notion “textual competence”, it is useful to take into account two main connotations:

- it is the ability to identify and distinguish different textual types and genres and, consequently, to have a series of expectations according to each type or genre in the process of interpretation of a text (Palermo 2013);
- it is the ability to compose, as well as to comprehend a text, with all its characterizations, according to its type or genre.

It is important to differentiate between textual competence in the L1 and textual competence in the L2. In order to describe textual competence in the L1, two key-concepts, used by Kecskes (2014) in his definition of “pragmatic competence”, must be taken into account: “language socialization” and “conceptual socialization”, the latter developing through the relationship between the language knowledge and the knowledge of the socio-cultural norms of a specific language community. I argue that the interplay between “language socialization”, “conceptual socialization” and socialization with the norms of text planning, building and comprehension according to different text types and genres within a language community and a mainstream culture plays a crucial role in the connotation of the concept of textual competence in the L1.

Textual competence in an L2 has been increasingly investigated in the last decades, both in international documents of language policy and in Second Language acquisition research. The *Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages* (2001), in particular, emphasizes three fundamental competences in the process of a Second Language Acquisition, namely linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence, including in the latter abilities related to text planning, building and comprehension.

As far as Second Language Acquisition research is concerned, the central role of texts in the L2 learning process has been emphasized by many scholars: among all, the concept of “text-based learning unit” of Vedovelli (2010) is worthy of mention.

The substantial difference between the development of textual competence in the L1 and textual competence in an L2 is that in the former the above-mentioned socializations take place from the very beginning of an individual's life, while in the latter they take place later and generally in a more limited space of time.

Furthermore, various scholars focus on the fact that the main difference between text types and text genres is that the former are basically universal, while the latter are historically and culturally determined (Palermo 2013). For this reason, a further difference between textual competence in the L1 and in

an L2 lies in the fact that a Second Language learners must familiarize with various text genres that can be characterized by relevant differences compared to those in his/her language community.

2.2 *Spoken vs. Written Communication and Common Ground Construction*

Scholars associated with different disciplines point out that spoken communication is usually more successful than written communication (see Traxler and Gernsbacher in Gernsbacher and Givón 1995). The main reason supporting this hypothesis is that “conversation is collaborative: speakers and listeners actively interact – they collaborate – to establish mutual representations” (*ibidem*: 218), while “written communication requires that writers build mental representations” (*ibidem*) of how their readers will comprehend their texts. In building such mental representations, “if writers know what their readers do and do not know about the world, then they will most likely make reference to concepts to which their readers have ready access, and explain in more detail those concepts to which their readers do not have ready access” (*ibidem*: 218-219). Givón (in Gernsbacher and Givón 1995), who seems to share the same opinion, assumes that “during writing, revision and editing, the negotiation occurs cognitively between the writer’s own mental representation and his mental representation of what he/she assumes the reader knows” (*ibidem*: VII).

In other words, one of the main differences between these two ways of communication lies in the construction of common ground between the speaker/writer and the addressee.

While in oral communication common ground can be co-constructed by the interactants, in written communication common ground can be only postulated by the writer. The writer must hypothesize to what extent (s)he can share her/his background with the addressee, in terms of encyclopedic knowledge, “conceptual socialization” and cultural models.

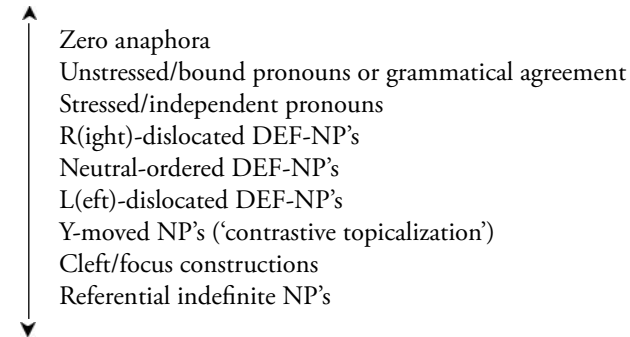
Therefore, among other aspects, the dimensions of “culture” and “interculturality” gain also importance in the development of an L2 learner’s textual competence.

2.3 *Topic Accessibility and Continuity: the Interplay between Coherence and Cohesion*

Two further concepts that play a crucial role in this work are “topic accessibility” and “topic continuity”. Such notions are strictly related both with text coherence and cohesion. Givón (1983), who deeply investigated these concepts in relation with the structure of anaphorical chains, argues that some grammatical devices commonly used as anaphoras can be collocated on a scale for the coding of topic accessibility and continuity in texts. Givón’s scale (*ibidem*:

17), that illustrates the grammatical devices used from the most continuous/accessible and less marked topic to the most discontinuous/inaccessible and most marked topic, can be considered as applicable to all languages (even if with necessary variations according to the typological characteristics of the selected language).

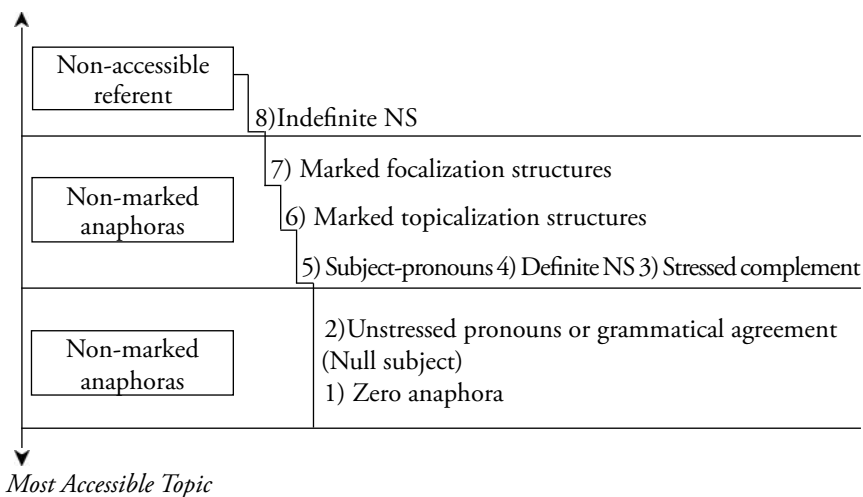
Most Continuous/Accessible Topic



Most Discontinuous/Inaccessible Topic

The scale below represents the adjustment of Givón's scale for the coding of topic accessibility and continuity according to the typological characteristics of Italian (Palermo 2013: 170). Such scale can be a precious tool in order to analyze the structures of ISL students' anaphorical chains in their written productions.

Least accessible topic



3. *Some Textual Phenomena in Italian and Chinese: A Brief Comparison*

Substantial differences between Italian and Chinese³ with regard to various linguistic aspects are clearly visible. The most important research studies conducted until now about Chinese learners of L2 Italian have usually emphasized almost exclusively typological differences (Italian is a basically inflected language, while Chinese is a basically isolating language), as well as genealogical differences (Italian is an Indo-European language, while Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family) between these two languages. With particular regard to Chinese learners' acquisition process of ISL, the "distance" between Chinese and Indo-European languages contributed to focus the attention on difficulties in the use of verbal conjugation, adjective-substantive agreement and those related with other aspects of the morphosyntax. However, differences between Italian and Chinese rely with their whole language systems, from graphic symbolization to text structure.

In particular, two graphic differences between Italian and Chinese writing systems are worthy of mention: the former has an alphabetic writing system, while the latter has a logographic writing system based on characters.⁴ In addition, in Italian texts words are commonly separated by blank spaces, while Chinese characters in Chinese texts follow one another and they are separated only by punctuation. In order to better describe such graphic difference, compare the section of a Chinese text reported below and its translation into Italian:

(1) 风吹起来的时候, 房屋和大地一起黑暗中漂浮。在很远的地方, 也许就在榆睡的这间旧瓦房里, 有一种看不见的物质在咯吱咯吱地响着。

'Quando il vento comincia a soffiare, le case e la terra fluttuano insieme in mezzo alle tenebre. In un posto molto lontano, forse in quella vecchia casa col tetto in tegole dove Yu dormiva, c'era qualcosa che non si riusciva a vedere che continuava a far rumore cigolando'.⁵

(Su Tong in Castorina & Romagnoli 2008: 97)

It can be perceived that in the Chinese Section, except the intervals in correspondence with punctuation marks, there are little blank spaces between single characters (even though they are not as clear as those between words in the Italian version).

³ Whenever this work talks about "Italian" (language), it refers to standard Italian. Similarly, whenever in this work "Chinese" (language) is mentioned, such expression is referred to the standard and official language in People's Republic of China, also known as *Putonghua* 普通话, or 'Mandarin Chinese'.

⁴ In order to analyze more deeply the various sub-categories of Chinese characters, see Norman (1988).

⁵ Personal translation by the author.

In fact, as reported in Arcodia (2010), the intuitive notion of “word” in written Italian does not find a correspondence in written Chinese: according to common perceptual criteria and according to Chinese linguistic tradition, such intuitive notion in Chinese corresponds to the *zi* 字, or ‘character’, and not to the *ciyu* 词语, or ‘word’ (as it is commonly conceived and perceived by members belonging to the Italian language community). In other words, Chinese texts are considered as “containers of *zi* 字” and not as “containers of *ciyu* 词语” (the latter expression belonging most of all to the terminology used in dictionaries and in grammar books).⁶

As far as punctuation is concerned, it was introduced in the Chinese writing system at the beginning of the 20th Century and consequently to the intensification of the relationships with Western countries. The first process of standardization of the use of punctuation in Italian, instead, developed between the mid-15th Century and the mid-16th Century, as a consequence of the “invention” of printing.⁷

The marks that characterize punctuation in Chinese and in Italian are rather similar; however, there are some remarkable differences.

First, in written Chinese there are two kinds of comma, the *douhao* 逗号, graphically represented by the mark “,” and commonly used in order to separate two juxtaposed clauses (either through paratactic or through hypotactic connections), and the *dunhao* 顿号, graphically represented by the mark “、”, a kind of comma that appears almost exclusively in order to separate lexical items in lists (commonly known as “enumeration comma”). In written Italian there is only one kind of comma that is usually represented by the mark “,”.

A further element of Chinese punctuation that does not find its equivalent in Italian punctuation is the *jiangehao* 间隔号, a mark used in order to separate foreign proper nouns transcribed in Chinese characters. Such mark is usually collocated at mid-height of the characters’ total height: an example can be *Balake•Aobama* 巴拉克•奥巴马, the transcription in Chinese characters of the name Barack Obama.

Furthermore, substantial differences concern the frequency of use of the semicolon. In Chinese it is rather uncommon, except in academic texts; in Italian, although it is not frequently used, it seems to be more common than in Chinese. In any case, as far as punctuation is concerned, it is always necessary to take into account the crucial role played by individual choices.

⁶ From a phonetic point of view, every Chinese character always corresponds to one and only one syllable; from a semantic point of view, it is not true that every single character has its own meaning. Chinese words, in fact, are prevalently bi-syllabic, although monosyllabic words represent a good percentage compared with the total number.

⁷ For further information about punctuation in Chinese see Norman (1988). With regard to the process of standardization and development of the use of punctuation in written Italian, see Coluccia (2008) and Richardson (2008).

Considerable differences concern also the use of parataxis and hypotaxis, and particularly of paratactic and hypotactic connections. Written Chinese is characterized by a broad use of long periods, often with several coordinate and subordinate clauses, according to the logic of *zhuanwan mojiao* 转弯抹角: such expression could be translated '(to write/to speak) in a roundabout way' and it is strongly related not only with written communication, but also, and most of all, with spoken communication.

To mention an example, see the period below and its literal translation:

(2) 你是知道, 有很多罪犯, 前脚出监狱, 后脚就进枪店, 买枪就到处杀人。枪店也查买枪的是么人, 管他是不是杀过人放过火, 脑子正常正常, 只要给钱, 他们就卖。

(Lit. translation) You – not – to be – not – to know –, – there is / there are – *quantifier* – many – criminal –, – forward foot – to go out – *particle that emphasizes the perfective aspect of a verb* – prison –, – rearfoot – *particle that emphasizes the immediateness of an action* – to enter – gun shop –, – to buy – *particle that emphasizes the perfective aspect of a verb* – gun – *particle that emphasizes the immediateness of an action* – everywhere – to kill – person –, – Gun shop – also – not – to check – to buy – gun – *particle for nominal constructions* – (person) – to be – which (kind of) – person –, – regardless – he – to be – not – to be – to kill – *particle for verbal experiential aspect* – person – to set – *particle for verbal experiential aspect* – fire –, – brain – normal – not – normal –, – if only – to give – money –, – they – *particle that emphasizes the immediateness of an action* – to sell –,
(Liu et al. 1997: 328)

As it can be perceived from the literal translation of the extract above, some sentences do not have any connectors, yet they are connected through the mechanism of juxtaposition. In fact, it is rather frequent that paratactic and hypotactic connections are not explicitly expressed in Chinese (it could be said that they are not grammaticalized), and, therefore, that the clauses of a period are simply juxtaposed. In this way the interpretation of such connections is left to the readers' inferential abilities. For example, look at the sentence below:

(3) 我吃饭了, (我)就走。 *Wo chifan le, (wo) jiu zou.*

(Lit. translation) I – to eat – *particle that emphasizes the perfective aspect of a verb* –, – (I)⁸ – *particle that emphasizes the immediateness of an action* – to go.

There can be several translations for the sentence above and all of them may be equally correct. For instance: 'After having eaten I will go' or 'I have (already) eaten, so I'm going'. In this case, like in many other cases, context plays a key-role in the interpretation of an expression.

⁸ The null subject is a diffused phenomenon in Chinese.

However, Chinese periods are not always long: one kind of short and concise period is represented by the *chengyu* 成语, idiomatic expressions or proverbs necessarily constituted by a sequence of four characters. Such expressions are characterized by a considerable informative density and often convey a meaning for the interpretation of which good inferential abilities are required.⁹ Although *chengyu* originate from and belong to oral tradition, they appear in a wide range of written text genres.¹⁰

(4) 入乡随俗 *ru xiang sui su*.

(Lit. translation) to enter – village – to follow – custom/habit.

(Possible idiomatic translation) 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do'.

A further important aspect that characterizes Chinese written language is the use of archaic lexical and grammatical items: this characteristic is shared by a considerably wide range of different text genres (from scientific essays to advertisements) and a significant number of the archaic characters used is composed by inter-phrasal connectors or by the ancient versions of personal pronouns and possessive adjectives.¹¹ An example worthy of mention is the coordinative conjunction *er* 而, that can have both a copulative and an adversative function. Italian does not seem to be characterized by such a marked and broad use of conjunctions typical of previous historical periods.

Another difference between Italian and Chinese writing styles concerns the use of nominalizations. Nominalizations, in particular deverbal nouns, are becoming broadly used in contemporary standard Italian, while in Chinese they represent a rarely used mechanism. Various Chinese characters, most of which already have their own lexical meanings, are used as suffixes in order to build deverbal nouns. Two common examples are represented by the suffixes *xing* 性 and *hua* 化, generally used in order to build abstract nouns (*gan* 感 = 'to perceive' forming *ganxing* 感性 = 'perception'; *jiandan* 简单 = 'simple/to be simple' forming *jiandanhua* 简单化 = 'simplification').¹² Although the use

⁹ The above-mentioned expression *zhuanwan mojiao* is also a *chengyu*.

¹⁰ Besides the *chengyu*, there are also other kinds of idiomatic expressions that originate from the oral tradition. Very diffused, for example, are the *suyu* 俗语, usually characterized by a bigger number of characters compared with the four characters of the *chengyu*.

¹¹ In Chinese the same character can have the function of both personal pronoun and possessive adjective. For example, *wo* 我 means both 'I/me' and 'my'. The syntactic position is the fundamental criterion for the correct interpretation of the character. In some cases, however, in order to give to that character the function of possessive adjective it is necessary to add the element of nominal determination *de* 的 on the right of the pronoun.

¹² In Chinese adjectives also have the function of nominal predicates. In fact, words like the above – mentioned *jiandan* are generally defined "verbal adjectives" or "adjectival verbs" in grammar books, and they must be considered both adjectives and verbs at the same time. For this reason the above – mentioned *jiandanhua* can be also considered as a deverbal noun.

of such deverbal nouns in Chinese has risen in the past decades, if compared with Italian it still constitutes a minor phenomenon.

A rather relevant difference between Italian and Chinese from the point of view of syntax must be also mentioned: although both languages basically belong to the syntactic typology SVO, Chinese sentences are often constructed through a topic-comment sequence. Such kind of constructions is usually perceived as marked in Italian, while in Chinese it is not. For example, see the statement below:

(5) 美国, 我没去过 *Meiguo, wo mei qu guo.*

(Lit. translation) United States –, – I – *negative particle for the perfective verbal aspect* – to go – *particle for experienced actions.*

(Translation) ‘I have never been to the United States’.

A final difference analyzed in this Section concerns pragmatic particles. Chinese learners of L2 Italian have generalized difficulties in using such particles, even at advanced levels. These difficulties could be partly related with the different dislocation of the particles within the sentences: in Italian they are usually dislocated on the left, while in Chinese, which makes wide use of them, especially in spoken interaction, they are dislocated on the right. In order to give a better idea of this fundamental difference, consider the position of the pragmatic particle in the following utterance (a compliment addressed to a child) in the Italian version and in the Chinese version:

(6) **Ma** com'è carino questo bambino!

这个孩子这么可爱啊! *Zhe ge haizi zheme ke'ai a!*

The attitude to search for or to collocate pragmatic particles in the final part instead of in the initial part of a sentence/utterance could constitute a factor of delay for Chinese ISL students' development of this pragmatic skill at different levels.

Those listed and briefly analyzed above are some structural differences that could lead to the slowing down of or to difficulties in the development of Chinese students' textual competence in L2 Italian. However, the individual dimension of the observed subjects must be always taken into consideration: in particular, their cultural and educational background (in this study the analyzed group is apparently homogeneous in terms of educational background, even though the different places of origin of the “Marco Polo – Turandot” students could have an influence on this factor), personal writing styles and the “communicative spaces”¹³ lived by single learners in the L2 context can play a

¹³ In order to better analyze the concept of “communicative space(s)”, see Krefeld (2004 and 2010).

relevant role. It could be useful to deepen the knowledge about the interplay between the individual “communicative spaces” and the development of the learners’ communicative, as well as textual and meta-textual competence.

Further questions that could be investigated in relation with the observation of Chinese ISL learners’ development of textual competence may be related with the following topics:

- The influence that the norms of politeness in contemporary Chinese language have on the structure of some text genres (especially those where the relation with the addressee can be perceived as stronger, i.e. in letters).¹⁴

- The role played by the key-concept of “face” (usually translated in Chinese with the words 面子 *mianzi* and 脸 *lian*), as well as by all the discourse strategies known as “face performing strategies”, in Chinese ISL textual performances.¹⁵

- The influence of the readers’ (with particular regard to ISL teachers in class) predominant mental representations and perceptual patterns of textual basic categories, like, for instance, coherence and cohesion, on L2 students’ success in text building and comprehension.¹⁶

4. Methodology and Data Analysis

The data analyzed in this work was gathered in part during a study conducted in 2014 at the University for Foreigners of Siena, in part consulting the “GranVALICO” and “VALICO” learners’ corpora. I carried out empirical, non-participant observations of a selected corpus composed by four groups of A2-B1 level “Marco Polo – Turandot” students during an initial period of two months. The reason why learners of different levels were in the same classes is that in that part of their intensive courses they were grouped according to their disciplines of specialization, and not according to their language and communicative competence in the L2. Afterwards I totally analyzed 92 text productions, characterized by an average length that varies between 150 and 200 words. Fifty of these texts were written by the observed learners’ and were

¹⁴ For further information about the history of politeness in Chinese, and in particular about the radical changes between politeness in historical Chinese and politeness in contemporary Chinese, see Pan and Kàdàr (2011), and Kàdàr and Mills (2011).

¹⁵ Many scholars have investigated the concept of “face” in Chinese, often with different opinions (Mao 1994, *inter alia*).

¹⁶ With particular regard to the category of coherence, Givón (1995) distinguishes between two different approaches: coherence in text and coherence in mind. According to his opinion, coherence has to be considered as a mental entity; it is “not an inherent property of a written or spoken text. [...] Coherence is a property of what emerges during speech production and comprehension – the mentally represented text, and in particular the mental processes that partake in constructing that mental representation” (VII).

about different topics belonging to different text genres. However, most of them were short narrations of past and present personal experiences. The other forty-two texts of ISL Chinese students were selected from the “GranVALICO” and “VALICO” learners’ corpora, with the purpose of gathering a larger corpus. In order to guarantee a good reliability of the analysis, I tried to select these texts according to criteria (age groups, language and communicative competence, period of ISL learning) that were as similar to the characteristics of the observed “Marco Polo – Turandot” students as possible. In fact, the texts from the “GranVALICO” and “VALICO” learners’ corpora belong to A2-B1 level students with an average age between 18 and 30 years-old.

The analysis of the gathered materials mainly focused on some mechanisms of text cohesion (connectives and anaphoric chains) and text building (punctuation). I tried to investigate some of the most common irregularities and to hypothesize some reasons at the basis of these phenomena. However, it is rather complicated to provide exact explanations for the diffusion and the persistence of certain difficulties. The individual writing style is a relevant variable that must be taken into consideration; furthermore, it is often difficult to understand whether an irregularity is due to the lack of text cohesion and text building skills or whether it is due to the lack of acquisition/lack of mastery of particular syntactic and inter-phrasal structures. A representative example can be Chinese ISL learners’ “deafness” towards Italian relative clauses (even at very high levels of L2 competence) and their generalized strategies in order to substitute this kind of clauses through different structures. This rather diffused phenomenon often leads to standard-deviations, with a considerable influence also on the textual dimension.¹⁷

In addition, it is important to emphasize that some common difficulties (like those analyzed in Section 4.2) characterize also ISL learners’ with different mother tongues. It is rather complicated to attribute a kind of irregularity specifically to Chinese ISL learners: in any case, common characteristics and generalized phenomena emerging from text performances of this specific category of learners can be identified and investigated.

A further part of the study consisted in a statistical survey carried out gathering data from a questionnaire filled in by 470 “Marco Polo – Turandot” students, among which 406 studied at the University for Foreigners of Siena

¹⁷ For more detailed information about this phenomenon, see Banfi (2003). Banfi (2003) introduces in his volume a detailed analysis of the strategies adopted by Chinese ISL students at different levels in order to avoid to use relative clauses with relative pronouns. In particular, Banfi explains that since relative clauses in Chinese are formed by nominal determination – constructions, or even through simple juxtaposition phenomena, Chinese ISL learners seem to re-produce the same structures also in their Italian relative clauses.

and 64 studied at the school of the “Fondazione Italia – Cina” in Milan, a collaborative Institution with Siena.

The main purpose of the questionnaire was to identify the observed students' most diffused perceptions of the role played by different abilities in their ISL acquisition process.

This survey also aimed at investigating the importance of “Marco Polo – Turandot” students' perceptions of the acquisition of ISL, trying to identify which kinds of relationships there can be between some perceptual patterns and the success/failure, motivation/lack of motivation, acceleration/slowing down in their L2 Italian acquisition pathways.

The questionnaire (in the Appendix of this work) was composed of eleven questions, among which eight were not open questions. With regard to the other three questions, one asked to write three words related to the personal impressions and feelings about Italian, and two questions asked to briefly explain the reasons for the choices taken in the previous part of the questionnaire.

4.1 Perceptions of the Textual Dimension: Some Statistical Data

The data gathered through the statistical survey partially de-construct some diffused language-based prejudices and common feelings, both among students themselves and among ISL teachers. Some of the most relevant data is introduced below.

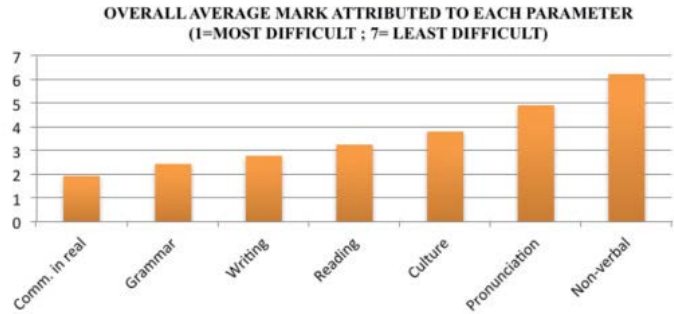
First of all, the analysis of the answers to a question about the perceptions related to the importance of different abilities involved in L2 Italian acquisition emphasizes that students perceive “writing” (this expression was included in the questionnaire and explained to the students as “the ability to write texts in Italian”) as particularly difficult.

The question asked respondents to order the abilities “pronunciation”, “grammar”, “reading comprehension”, “writing”, “communication in real situations”, “to study and to comprehend ‘Italian culture’”, “non-verbal languages”, from the one perceived as the most difficult (1) to the one perceived as the least difficult (7).

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the dimension of text writing is clearly perceived as one of the most difficult ones, with an overall average mark of 2,79.¹⁸

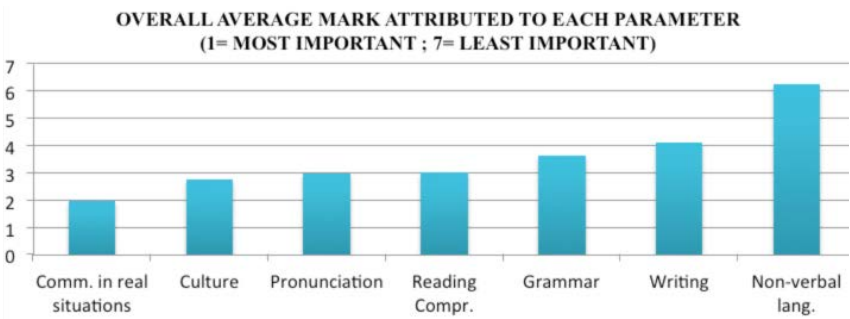
¹⁸ “Overall average mark” refers to the result obtained adding together all the marks (1 to 7) attributed to each ability and dividing the total sum by the number of students who answered the questions.

Figure 1. Statistical data about the answers to the question on “difficulty attributed to different aspects of Italian” contained in the questionnaire



A further question shows that, besides being perceived as difficult, at the same time the ability of text writing is also perceived as not particularly important. This question asked to put in order the same abilities of the question shown above from the one perceived as “the most important” (1) to the one perceived as “the least important” (7). As shown in Fig. 2, text writing occupies only the sixth place out of seven, with an average mark of 4,14.

Figure 2. Statistical data about the answers to the question on “importance attributed to different aspects of Italian” contained in the questionnaire



This data seems to be partly contrary to a common point of view, that appears to be shared by both Chinese students and ISL teachers,¹⁹ according to which writing is commonly perceived as a very important skill in Chinese learners’ L2 acquisition process, since it is supposed to be one of the key-

¹⁹ A further statistical survey about ISL teachers’ perceptions of Chinese students’ abilities in L2 Italian is being carried out by the author of this work.

activities of the most diffused Foreign Language teaching methodologies in China. However, the situation of Foreign Language teaching in China is undergoing quick changes and in the last few years new, innovative methodologies based on communication and with different approaches to the textual dimension have been adopted, not only in universities but also in middle and high schools (Jun 2008; Leung and Ruan 2012).

4.2 Brief Analysis of some Common Characteristics Observed in the Gathered Texts

According to the analysis of the 50 text productions of “Marco Polo – Turandot” students and the 42 texts from the “GranVALICO” and “VALICO” learners’ corpora, some of the common characteristics observed, with regard to elements of cohesion and text building, will be briefly described. Some examples of texts will be also shown. Such texts were selected as the most representative ones with regard to the analyzed common characteristics and irregularities.

Once again, it must be emphasized that such phenomena are not exclusively specific of ISL Chinese learners, yet they can also belong to different typologies of L2 Italian students.

Prevalence of short periods. A phenomenon that commonly characterizes the most part of the analyzed texts is the prevalence of short periods, composed by simple connections, rarely gramaticalized hypotaxis (sometimes almost absent), prevalence of parataxis and juxtaposition of sentences. For example, see the following texts, the first one of a B1 level “Marco Polo – Turandot” student, and the second one from the corpus “GranVALICO”, of a Chinese ISL student with a similar competence, whose age is between 26 and 30 years old (Italian standard deviations are marked in *italic* and the corresponding regular expressions are reported in bold in brackets).

Nella questa festa scorsa (**‘Durante la scorsa festa’**), sono andata a Bologna e Carrara con la mia amica Maristella. Quella mattina, ***ci abbiamo veduto*** (**‘ci siamo incontrate’**) alla stazione di Siena. Prima della partenza avevamo fatto due carte sconto per autobus quindi i prezzi dei biglietti erano molto più economici. Quando siamo arrivati (**‘arrivate’**) a Bologna era già mezzogiorno. Abbiamo visitato l’accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna in cui Maristella vuole studiare la pittura. Dopo, mi ha consigliato un ristorante giapponese che era vicino all’accademia. Abbiamo mangiato un pranzo gustoso e ***mi sono piaciuto molto*** (**‘mi è piaciuto molto’**). Poi siamo andati ***agli*** (**‘alle’**) attrazioni turistiche diverse. Il giorno dopo siamo andati a Carrara ***che era una città avevo visto*** (**‘che è una città che avevo già visto’**). ***Maristella piaceva molto Carrara*** (**‘A Maristella piaceva molto Carrara’**) e anch’io. Sono tornati a casa il pomeriggio successivo. Abbiamo dormito sul treno perché ***siamo*** (**‘eravamo’**) stanchi. ***Nei prossimi giorni*** (**‘Nei giorni successivi’**),

mi sono riposata a casa e ho guardato la TV o i film sul computer. Penso che la vacanza *sia* ('*sia stata*') significativo e divertente.²⁰

L'altro giorno due uomini camminavano sul marciapiede. Tutte e due *avevano portavano* ('*portavano*') molte cose. Un uomo magro, alla sinistra, aveva bottiglie latte, una anguria. Portava *un* ('*uno*') zaino e andava *il la* ('*in*') bicicletta con un cane piccolo. Invece alle ('*alla*') destra, un uomo grasso portava anche molte cose. *Sembra che aveva già appena viaggiato* ('*sembrava che avesse viaggiato da poco*'). Camminava con un cane grande che è molto *fierce* ('*?feroce?*'). Quando *hanno venuti* ('*sono arrivati*') *al corno* ('*all'angolo*') della strada, *hanno incontrato essi sono andati a contri cozzare insieme* ('*si sono scontrati*'). Tutte le cose sono cadute *nella* ('*per la*') strada. Anche se una donna e un gatto che abitano nel primo piano *hanno riuscita* ('*sono riusciti*') a prendere le cose nella aria. Tutte e due uomini si hanno sentiti *imbarazzanti* ('*imbarazzati*'). I loro cane ('*cani*') hanno mangiato i cibi e se ne sono andati. *I* ('*Gli*') uomini *hanno spendito a lungo* ('*ci hanno messo molto*') a riprendere tutte le cose.²¹

²⁰ Literal translation in English: In – this – holiday – last –, – (I) *auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions* – gone – to – Bologna – and – Carrara – with – my – friend – Maristella – . – That – morning –, – (we) *auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions* – met ourselves – at the – station- of – Siena – . – Before – of the – departure – (we) had – made – two – cards – discount – for – autobus – so – the – prices – were – much – more – cheap – . – When – (we) *auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions* – arrived – to – Bologna – it was – already – noon – . – (We) have – visited – the – academy – of – Fine Arts – of – Bologna – in which – Maristella – wants – study – the – painting – . – Afterwards –, – (she) – to me – has – suggested – a – restaurant- Japanese – that – was – next to – of the – academy –, – (We) have – eaten – a – lunch – delicious – and – me – to be – liked – very much – . – Then – (we) *auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions* – gone – to the – attractions – touristic – various – . – The – day – after – (we) – *auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions* – gone – to – Carrara – that – was – a – city – (I) had – seen – . – Maristella – liked – very much – Carrara – and – also – I – . – (They) *auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions* – gone back – to – home – the – afternoon – following – . – (We) have – slept – on the – train – because – (we) are – tired – . – In the – following – days – myself – (I) *auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions* – relaxed – and – (I) have – watched – the – TV – or – the – films – on the – computer – . – (I) think – that – the – holiday – is – significant – and – funny – . – .

²¹ Literal translation in English: The – other – day – two – men – walked – on the – sidewalk – . – Both – had – brought – lots of – things – . – A – thin – man –, – on the – left –, – had – bottles – milk –, – one – watermelon – . – (He) brought – a – bag – and – went – the – the – bicycle – with – a – dog – little – . – Instead – on the – right –, – a – man – fat – brought – lots of – things – . – It seems – that – (he) had – just – already – travelled – . – (He) walked – with – a – dog – big – that – is – very – ?fierce? – . – When – (they) – had – come – to the – horn – of the – street –, – (they) had – met – and – themselves – (they) went – to – collide – together – . – All – the – things – *auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions* – fallen – in the – road – . – Even – if – a – woman – and – a – cat – that – live – in the – first – floor – have – managed – to – take – the – things – in the air – . – Both – men – themselves – (they) have – felt – embarrassing – . – Their – dog – have – eaten – the – foods – and – (they) went away – . – The – men – have – spent – long – to – take back – all – the – things – . – .

Periods are prevalently short and the use of subordinate clauses is rather limited in both texts. However, there are two well-composed relative clauses in the first example (*abbiamo visitato l'Accademia di Belle Arti in cui Maristella vuole studiare pittura* and *mi ha consigliato un ristorante giapponese che era vicino all'accademia*),²² even though the most prevalently used mechanism in order to avoid this kind of clause at this level of competence is still the juxtaposition, and a temporal clause and a concessive clause in the second example (*Quando hanno venuti al corno della strada* and *Anche se una donna e un gatto che abitano nel primo piano hanno riuscita prendere le cose nella aria*,²³ respectively), even if the auxiliary verbs used in both clauses are wrong.

Prevalence of repetition phenomena instead of substitution phenomena in anaphoric chains. A generalized characteristic of the analyzed texts is the wide use of non-marked anaphoras and the restricted use of marked anaphoras (in particular zero anaphoras and unstressed pronouns, corresponding to the first stages of the adjustment of Givón's scale for the coding of topic accessibility and continuity according to the typological characteristics of Italian, illustrated in Section 2.3). The most diffused phenomena consist in partial and/or total repetition. On the other hand, partial and/or total substitutions seem to be much less used, sometimes absent. For example, see the anaphoric chains in the "thematic paragraphs"²⁴ of the texts below. The first text belongs to an A2 level "Marco Polo – Turandot" student, the second one comes from the "VALICO" corpus and was written by a Chinese learner whose age is between 18 and 25 years old and whose level of competence is B1 (Italian standard deviations are marked in *italic* and the corresponding regular expressions are reported in bold in brackets).

Durante vacanza io e *miei* ('mie') amiche *sono andati* ('siamo andate') a Parigi perché questa città *mi molto piace* ('mi piace molto'). *Il Parigi* ('Parigi') ha molti monumenti come Torre Eiffel, Arco di Trionfo, etc.

Il primo giorno *abbiamo* ('abbiamo') visto Arco di Trionfo allora *abbiamo andato* ('siamo andate') a casa. Il secondo giorno *abbiamo vista* ('abbiamo visto') Torre Eiffel e Louvre. Secondo me, Torre Eiffel è molto grande e *maestoso* ('maestosa'), ma sfortunatamente, *non andare* ('non siamo andate') alla torre. Allora, noi siamo andate Galeries Lafayette, poi io e compagno di stanza *abbiamo andate* ('siamo andate')

²² English translation: 'We visited the Academy of fine arts in Milan where Maristella wants to study painting' and 'She suggested me a Japanese restaurant that was near the Academy'.

²³ English translation: 'When they came to the street crossing' and 'Although a woman and a cat that live on the first floor managed to catch things in the air'.

²⁴ Such expression is used in Givón (1983: 7).

al ristorante di Cina per mangiare cibo di Cina. Allora siamo andate *il* ('al') Blocco Ponte. Il Blocco Ponte è molto famoso fra *?valentine?*. *Il* ('L') ultimo giorno siamo andate Disneyland in Parigi. *Il Disneyland* ('Disneyland') è molto grande, bella e interessante per me. Ho guardato il topolino, paperino, dinosauro e astronauta, ma sfortunatamente, a causa della mancanza di tempo, io ho visto solo una paradiso.

Miei amiche e me ('Io e le mie amiche') *molto felice* ('eravamo molto felici') durante questa vacanza.²⁵

Sogno

L'altro giorno al lavoro il Signor Rossi stette per timbrare su un documento *che l'aveva dato la sua direttrice* ('dato dalla sua direttrice'). *Perché* ('Poiché') l'estate era vicina, il Signor Rossi cominciò a sognare a occhi aperti. Immaginò che lui fosse il capitano di una barca sul mare blu e una bellissima donna l'accompagnasse. Il Signor Rossi guidava la barca parlando con la bionda donna da costume. *Come bella* ('Come era bella!')! Il cielo era sereno, il sole era splendido... Faceva bel tempo e i gabbiani stavano volando. Anche il sorriso della donna e i suoi capelli lunghi svolazzanti fecero una parte della bella scena... All'improvviso la donna diventò arrabbiata e cominciò a sgridarlo ad alta voce. Il Signor Rossi fu molto sorpreso e confuso *della* ('dell') improvviso cambiamento dell'atmosfera. Non credé che avesse fatto qualcosa di sbagliato. "Timbrare sul documento può costarti molto tempo?" La bionda donna diventò la direttrice e la sua domanda lo fece ritornare alla realtà. Riconosciuto che lui era ancora nell'ufficio, seppe che il bel viaggio d'estate *fu* ('era stato') un sogno.²⁶

²⁵ Lit. translation in English: During – holiday – I – and – my – friends – *auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions* – gone – to – Paris – because – this – city – to me – very – like – . – The – Paris – has – lots of – monuments – like – Eiffel Tower – , – Arch of Triumph – , – etc. – . – The – first – day – (we) have – seen – Arch of Triumph – so – (we) have – gone – to – home – . – The – second – day – (we) have – seen – Tower – Eiffel – and – Louvre – . – In my opinion – Tower – Eiffel – is – very – big – and – majestic – , – but – unfortunately – , – not – go – to the – tower – . – So – , – we – went – Galleries Lafayette – , – then – I – and – mate – of – room – have – gone – to the – restaurant – of – China – for – to eat – food – of – China – . – So – (we) went – to the – Pont des Arts – . – The – Pont des Arts – is – very – famous – among – the – ?valentine? – . – The – last – day – (we) *auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions* – gone – Disneyland – in – Paris – . – The – Disneyland – is – very – big – , – beautiful – and – interesting – for – me – . – (I) have – seen – the – mickey mouse – , – donald duck – , – dinosaur – and – astronaut – , – but – unfortunately – due to – the – lack – of the – time – , – (I) have – seen – only – one – heaven – . – My – friends – and – me – very – happy – during – this – holiday – . – .

²⁶ Lit. translation in English: Dream – . – The – other – day – at the – work – the – Mr. – Rossi – was about – to – stamp – on – a – document – that – it – had – given – his – director – . – Because – the – summer – was – near – , – the – Mr. – Rossi – began – to – dream – with open eyes – . – (He) imagined – that – (he) was – the – captain – of – a – boat – on the – sea – blue – and – a – wonderful – woman – him – accompanies – . – The – Mr. – Rossi – drove – the – boat – talking – with – the – blond – woman – by – costume – . – How – beautiful – ! – The – sky – was – clear – , – the – sun – was – splendid – ... – It was good weather – and – the – seagulls – were flying – . – Also – the – smile – of the – woman – and – her – hair – long – fluttering – made a part – of the – beautiful – scene – ... – Suddenly

In the first text only one example of substitution through a nominal syntagma can be observed (*Durante vacanza io e miei amiche sono andati **Parigi** perché **questa città** mi molto piace*).²⁷ More diffused, instead, are repetition phenomena, both partial and total (*Il secondo giorno abbiamo visto **Torre Eiffel** e Louvre. Secondo me, **Torre Eiffel** è molto grande e maestoso, ma sfortunatamente, non andare alla **torre***).²⁸

The analysis of the above-shown texts emphasizes the fact that zero-anaphoras and/or unstressed pronouns are rarely used in the learners' anaphoric chains. In other words, looking at the adjustment of Givón's scale for the coding of topic accessibility and continuity according to the typological characteristics of Italian, level 1 and level 2 are usually ignored in the anaphoric chains activated in the observed learners' texts.

Defective use of punctuation. First, it is important to take into consideration the fact that punctuation can be strongly influenced by individual choices. Despite that, a generalized defective use of full stops and commas can be observed when analyzing the gathered texts. For example, see the following texts, one from a B1 level "Marco Polo – Turandot" student, the following one from the corpus "VALICO", written by a learner whose age is between 18 and 25 years old and who is also at a B1 level (Italian standard deviations are marked in *italic* and the corresponding regular expressions are reported in bold in brackets).

La settimana fa ('**La settimana scorsa**'), sono andata a Milano con la mia amica. Abbiamo preso il treno da Siena a Firenze. Poi, abbiamo cambiato il treno alla stazione di Firenze. Dopo due ore, siamo andati a Milano. Stazione di Milano è **bellissimo** ('**bellissima**'), sono stato molto impressionato. **Edificio della stazione è grandissimi** ('**Gli edifici della stazione sono grandissimi**').

Abbiamo visitato la chiesa di Milano. Si chiama il Duomo di Milano. È il più grande edificio gotico del mondo. Siamo anche andati all'università **che ci accingiamo a entrare per frequentare** ('**che ci accingiamo a frequentare**'). L'università ha un museo, **mi piace l'opera d'arte molto all'interno** ('**mi piacciono molto le opere d'arte all'interno**').

– the – woman – became – angry – and – (she) began – to – scold him – with loud voice – .
– The – Mr. – Rossi – was – very – surprised – and – confused – of the – sudden – change
– of the – atmosphere – . – (He) did not believe – that – (he) had – made – something – of
– wrong – . – ' – To stamp – on the- document – can – cost – to you – a lot of – time – ? – '
– The – blonde – woman – became – the – director – and – her – question – made him –
get back – to the – reality – . – Realized – that – he – was – still – in the – office – , – (he)
knew – the – good – trip – of – summer – was – a – dream – . – .

²⁷ English translation: 'During our holidays my friend and I went to Paris because we like this city very much'.

²⁸ English translation: 'The second day we saw the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre. In my opinion, the Eiffel Tower is very big and majestic, but, unfortunately, we didn't go to the Tower'.

Siamo giocati ('Abbiamo giocato') a Milano molto felici. Abbiamo comprato un sacco di cose, e abbiamo trovato un ristorante *nel* ('del') sud-est asiatico. Il cibo del ristorante era delizioso.²⁹

Ci sono un impiegato sui 30 anni e una ragazza molto giovane, molto bella e prosperosa, la quale è la superiore dell'uomo. Lui è innamorato *dalla* ('della') bella ragazza. Un giorno circa *ale* ('alle') 3 e mezzo, come il solito, *quelli due lavorano insieme* ('i due lavoravano insieme'). Negli occhi dell'uomo, la ragazza gli sembra lo stesso bella ogni giorno, *e ogni è molto più bella* ('ogni giorno è sempre più bella'). Quindi, lavorando, si distrae nel sognare una *sceneta* ('scenetta') molto romantica. Loro si sono sposati. Con il tempo molto sereno e i gabbiani *volando* ('che volano') liberi e spensierati, loro *stanno in un viaggio di nozze* ('sono in viaggio di nozze') con il piroscalo. La ragazza dai capelli biondi galleggiando nel vento, con il costume, è piuttosto affascinante. Lui, guidando il piroscalo, ne è innamoratissimo. Si parlano, *si ridono* ('ridono'). Ma all'improvviso, lui *si sente gridare* ('sente gridare') la ragazza: "Cosa stai facendo?" Essendo confuso, lui dice: "Ma perché? sto guidando benissimo". E alla fine ritorna dal sogno. Si accorge che è la ragazza che gli stava chiedendo con tono *riprovatore* ('?di rimprovero?').³⁰

²⁹ Lit. translation in English: "The – week – ago – , – (I) auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions – gone – to – Milan – with – my – friend – . – (We) have – taken – the – train – from – Siena – to – Florence – . – Then – , – (we) have – changed – the – train – at the – station – of – Florence – . – After – two – hours – , – (we) auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions – gone – to – Milan – . – Station – of – Milan – is – wonderful – , – I – have been – very – impressed – . – Building – of the – station – is – very big – . – (We) have – visited – the – church – of – Milan – . – It is called – the – ' Duomo di Milano ' – . – (It) is – the biggest – building – gothic – of the – world – . – (We) auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions – also – gone – to the – university – that – (we) prepare ourselves – to – enter – for – to attend – . – The – university – has – a – museum – , – I like – the – work of art – a lot – inside – . – (We) auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions – played – in – Milan – very – happy – . – (We) have – bought – lots of – things – , – and – (we) have – found – a – more – restaurant – in the – south-east – Asian – . – The – food – of the – restaurant – was – delicious – .

³⁰ Lit. translation in English: "There are – a – clerk – about 30 years (old) – and – a – girl – very – young – , – very – beautiful – and – curvy – , – who – is – the – boss – of the – man – . – He – is – fond – of the – beautiful – girl – . – One day – about – at – three and a half – , – as usual – , – those – two – work – together – . – in the – eyes – of the – man – , – the – girl – to him – seems – the same – beautiful – every – day – , – and – every – is – much – more – beautiful – . – So – , – working – , – (he) distracts himself – in – dreaming – a – scene – very – romantic – . – They – clitic - auxiliary verb 'to be' for past tense constructions – married – . – With – the – weather – very – clear – and – the – seagulls – flying – free – and – carefree – , – they – are – in – a – honeymoon – with – the – steamship – . – The – girl – with – hair – blonde – floating – in the – wind – , – with – the – costume – , – is – rather – fascinating – . – He – , – driving – the – steamship – , – clitic – is – very fond – . – (They) talk each other – , – (they) laugh each other – . – But – suddenly – , – he – clitic – feels – shouting – the – girl – : – ' – What – are (you) – doing – ? – ' – Being – confused – ,

An excessive use of commas (*La settimana fa, sono andata a Milano con la mia amica; Poi, abbiamo cambiato il treno alla stazione di Firenze; Dopo due ore, siamo andati a Milano*)³¹ as well as an excessive use of full stops (*Abbiamo visitato la chiesa di Milano. Si chiama il Duomo di Milano. È il più grande edificio gotico del mondo.; Lui è innamorato dalla bella ragazza. Un giorno circa alle 3 e mezzo, come il solito, quelli due lavorano insieme. Negli occhi dell'uomo, la ragazza gli sembra lo stesso bella ogni giorno, e ogni è molto più bella.*)³² are clearly visible.

Transfer phenomena from the L1 could be identified. For instance, in the text of the “Marco Polo – Turandot” student above, even if it can be rather complicated to understand to what extent some phenomena can be related with personal attitudes, some parallels between the following sentences and the corresponding ones in Chinese could be identified:

Stazione di Milano è bellissimo, sono stato molto impressionato.

(EN. ‘The railway station of Milan is really nice, I was really amazed’).

米兰的火车站很美丽, 我真惊讶。 *Milan de huochezhan hen meili, wo hen jingya.*

Lit translation: Milan – *particle for nominal constructions* – railway station – very – nice – , – I – really – amazed.

L'università ha un museo, mi piace l'opera d'arte molto all'interno.

(EN. ‘The university has a museum, I like the works of art inside very much’).

大学有一个博物馆, 我很喜欢里面的作品。 *Daxue you yi ge bowuguan, wo hen xihuan limian de zuopin.*

Lit. translation: University – to have – one – *measure word* – museum – , – I – really – to like – inside – *particle for nominal constructions* – work (of art).

In addition, the semicolon never appeared in the observed texts, while the use of the ellipsis (“...”), which is becoming increasingly diffused in chat conversations and in text messages, was a rather generalized phenomenon.

– he – says – : – ‘ But – why – ? – (I) am driving – very well – ’ – And – finally – (he) comes back – from the – dream – . – (He) realizes – that – is – the – girl – who – to him – was asking – with – tone – ? of scolding? –.

³¹ English translation: ‘The week ago, I went to Milan with my friend; afterwards, we changed the train at the railway station of Florence; after two hours, we went to Milan’.

³² English translation: ‘We visited the church of Milan. Its name is Duomo of Milan. It is the highest gothic building in the world; He is in love with the beautiful girlfriend. One day at about half past three, as usual, those two (people) were working together. In the man’s eyes, the girl seems beautiful in the same way every day, and today she is much more beautiful’.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of some of the common characteristics in the 92 texts of Chinese ISL learners emphasizes the diffusion and the persistence of some difficulties in text cohesion and text building skills of this category of learners.

The reasons at the basis of such difficulties can be heterogeneous. Some transfer phenomena from the L1 could be identified: however, it is rather complicated to differentiate between transfers and individual writing styles and attitudes.

Furthermore, as reported above, the level of competence in L2 Italian of the analyzed subjects is a variable that has to be taken into consideration. For instance, in the analysis of the anaphoric chains, the fact that A2 and B1 learners' vocabulary skills could be poor in order to activate anaphoras through substitution with a wide range of nominal syntagmas must be taken into account; the same could happen when learners have difficulties using zero anaphoras and/or unstressed pronouns, probably because of the lack of morphosyntactic skills.

In any case, what emerges is the necessity to pay more attention to the importance of the textual dimension in the process of L2 Italian teaching to Chinese students. Such necessity becomes even more urgent because "Marco Polo – Turandot" students have the purpose of attending Italian universities or academies and, therefore, they require awareness of the rules of text building and comprehension of a wide range of text genres in Italian.

Appendix

Questionnaire about "Marco Polo – Turandot" students' perceptions of Italian

1. Da quanto tempo studi italiano?

A - Meno di 6 mesi **B** - 6 mesi / un anno **C** - Un anno / due anni **D** - Più di due anni

2. Qual è il tuo livello di conoscenza della lingua italiana?

A1 A2 B1 B2 C1 C2

3. Perché hai iniziato a studiare la lingua italiana? (Puoi scegliere anche più di una risposta)

A - Per il piacere di imparare una lingua nuova

B - Per un lavoro futuro

C - Per dovere

D - Per la curiosità di conoscere una lingua difficile

E - Per conoscere ed apprezzare meglio la cultura italiana

F - Per comunicare in modo efficace con le persone italiane

G - Altro: _____

4. Prova a descrivere la lingua italiana, secondo le tue impressioni e sensazioni, in tre parole

- 1 _____
 2 _____
 3 _____

5. Fra i seguenti aspetti della lingua italiana quali sono i più DIFFICILI per te? Prova a metterli in ordine (1= PIÙ DIFFICILE - 7= MENO DIFFICILE).

- La pronuncia (发音)
- La grammatica (语法)
- La comprensione alla lettura (阅读)
- La scrittura (写作)
- Sapere usare la lingua nelle varie situazioni reali (在不同情况下的语用)
- Studiare e comprendere la "cultura italiana" (学习, 了解意大利文化)
- I linguaggi non-verbali (肢体语言)
- ALTRO (其他): _____

6. Fra i seguenti aspetti della lingua italiana quali sono i più IMPORTANTI per te? Prova a metterli in ordine (1= PIÙ IMPORTANTE - 7= MENO IMPORTANTE).

- La pronuncia (发音)
- La grammatica (语法)
- La comprensione alla lettura (阅读)
- La scrittura (写作)
- Sapere usare la lingua nelle varie situazioni reali (在不同情况下的语用)
- Studiare e comprendere la "cultura italiana" (学习, 了解意大利文化)
- I linguaggi non-verbali (肢体语言)
- ALTRO (其他): _____

7. Fra gli aspetti della lingua italiana qui sopra, quale hai scelto come IL PIÙ importante? Perché?

Secondo me l'aspetto più importante

è _____ perché _____

8. Fra gli aspetti della lingua italiana sopra, quale hai scelto come IL MENO importante? Perché?

Secondo me l'aspetto meno importante

è _____ perché _____

9. Fra i seguenti aspetti della lingua italiana, in quali pensi di essere più bravo? E in quali pensi di essere meno bravo? Prova a metterli in ordine (1= PIÙ BRAVO - 5 = MENO BRAVO)

- La pronuncia (发音)
- La grammatica (语法)

- La comprensione alla lettura (阅读)
- La scrittura (写作)
- Sapere usare la lingua nelle varie situazioni reali (在不同情况下的语用)

10. Secondo te, quanto è importante conoscere la “cultura italiana” per imparare a usare la lingua italiana nelle varie situazioni reali?

(1= non è importante 10= è importantissimo)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. Secondo te, studiare l'italiano in Italia ti aiuta ad imparare più velocemente a usare la lingua italiana nelle varie situazioni reali? (1= non mi aiuta per niente 10= mi aiuta moltissimo)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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The Role of *kunten* Materials in the Process of Sino-Japanese Hybridization*

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Abstract:

The history of the Japanese written language can be seen as a main frame of different registers of the native language – *buntai* 文体 – intersecting at various levels with a foreign one, namely classical Chinese. Although these diatypes are different, they are all part of the same lexico-syntactic repertoire shared by the community and whose use is determined by context. Hence, the type of code in use depends on the field and purpose of the message. In recent years the field has been enriched by a number of thought-provoking theories. However, *buntai* studies still constitute a complex and intricate discipline within which numerous questions remain to be answered. This paper will a) provide a review of existing scholarship on the role played by *kunten* materials in defining the formation process of Sino-Japanese hybrid writing – *wakan konkōbun*; b) outline, for the first time, the main differences between the two most controversial forms of written language, Japanized written Chinese – *waka kanbun* – and Sino-Japanese hybrid writing, and redefine their role within the history of the Japanese written language; c) survey textual evidence to show how an embryonic form of Sino-Japanese hybrid writing existed before the twelfth century, proving that the evolution of *wakan konkōbun* is not directly linked to the formation of middle Japanese.

Keywords: Kanbun kundoku, Kunten Materials, Sino-Japanese Hybridization, Wakan konkōbun

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1. Sino-Japanese Hybridization

1.1 Sino-Japanese Hybrid Writing and its Relation with *kunten* Materials

The history of the Japanese written language can be seen as a main frame of different registers of the native language – *buntai* 文体 – intersecting at various levels with a foreign one, namely classical Chinese. Although these diatypes are different, they are all part of the same lexico-syntactic repertoire shared by the community and whose use is determined by context. Hence, the type of code in use depends on the field and purpose of the message.¹

In recent years the field has been enriched by a number of thought-provoking theories. However, *buntai* studies still constitute a complex and intricate discipline within which numerous questions remain to be answered. The issue of classification is one of them and, along with the lack of an established scholarly vocabulary in the field, probably one of the most urgent.

This is particularly true for what is probably one of the most controversial issues in the history of the Japanese language: *wakan konkōbun* 和漢混淆文 – the Sino-Japanese hybrid writing. The highly hybridized nature of this written form has made it difficult to classify and has spurred a lively debate.

The term has been used to indicate any style combining classical Chinese with Japanese in one way or another.

The vast array of terms used to indicate this type of written language is in and of itself testament to the complexity of the task involved with defining its characteristics. To name but a few, such terms include *kojikitai* 古事記體, *wakan kōzatsubun* 和漢交雜文, *wakan majiribun* 和漢交り文, *konkōtai* 混交體 (Konakamura 1879: 289-298), *wakan konwabun* 和漢混和文 (Mikami and Takatsu 1890: 27-28), *zatsubuntai* 雜文体 (Yano 1886: 245), *wakankon'yōbun* 和漢混用文 (Yamamoto 1965: 355), *gazoku setcchūtai* 雅俗折衷體 (Tsubouchi 1981: 140-159), and, more recently, *wakan yūgō* 和漢融合 (Ogawa 2008: 119).

Terminological issues aside, the most common explanation considers *wakan konkōbun* as an independent form of the written language which developed since the twelfth century. Scholars argue that *wakan konkōbun* is based on the syntaxes of both native and Sinicized forms of the written language from the tenth century which integrate a vernacular lexicon – i.e. *zokugo* 俗語 – with non-orthodox Chinese features, both lexical and syntactic. As such, the Sino-Japanese hybrid would be on a par with such traditional forms of the Japanese written language as *wabun* 和文, *kanbun* 漢文 and *waka kanbun* 和化漢文. The general trend among scholars has been to consider *wakan konkōbun* as an independent type of written language. However, since the

¹ In linguistics, a diatype is a type of language defined by its purpose, identified by peculiar choices in vocabulary and grammatical constructions, etc. (Gregory 1967: 177-197).

1980s others have challenged its role as an independent form of the Japanese language (Yamada 1979: 257-277).

Be that as it may, as a practice of textual decodification *kanbun kundoku* 漢文訓読 undeniably represents a fundamental step in the assimilation of the native language within a Sinicized context. By means of an autochthonous register, the Chinese characters of the original text were given a corresponding Japanese reading whenever necessary. This was achieved by way of the so-called *kanaten* 仮名点, small gloss phonograms inserted to the right of the main characters in the text. By glossing the inflectional morphemes associated with Japanese verbs and adjectives, the same technique also allowed to reconcile the differences between an isolating language, Chinese, and an agglutinative one, Japanese.

Japanese scholars currently acknowledge the significance of these glossed materials – *kunten shiryō* 訓点資料 – for synchronic and diachronic studies of the Japanese language. However, the results achieved in this field by of a small group of specialists who began their research in the early twentieth century are still relatively new.

Moreover, while recent theories have been of great interest, one cannot deny that the study of *kunten* materials is still a narrow field not only in the West but also in Japan, and carries almost no practical application in the humanities, especially the history of language and literature. The difficulty in establishing a common basic knowledge of *kunten* materials among specialists may also be attributable to the fact that most scholars consider *kundoku* as an expedient devised by and for those who cannot read a Chinese text in the original, which de facto places *kundoku* in a lower “didactic” place within the studies of Chinese and its reception among foreign cultures.

There is no denying that one must tread lightly in using these sources as evidence for the historical evolution of the Japanese language, not only because the glosses were provisional notations jotted down quickly in the interlinear spaces of the main text, but also because they reflected the proficiency (or lack thereof) of the glossator, and as such errors were bound to occur. Nevertheless, the study of *kunten* materials still brings to light a highly refined system with a long tradition, a system that has played a key role in the evolution and formation of the Japanese language and that, over the centuries, has sustained an array of intellectual activities many of which are worthy of scholarly consideration.

Aside from the distinctive traits of the language – *kuntengo* 訓点語 – revealed in *kunten* materials, the usefulness of these sources extends to other forms of pre-modern writing as well. Therefore, the language of *kunten* materials plays a fundamental role in defining the features of almost all forms of written Japanese that show a contamination between Sino-Japanese and autochthonous writings, forms such as *waka kanbun* or the aforementioned *wakan konkōbun*.

In the pages that follow, I will:

a) provide a review of existing scholarship on the role played by *kunten* materials in defining the formation process of Sino-Japanese hybrid writing – *wakan konkōbun* – in order to expand our understanding of the field and to stimulate future inquiries;

b) outline, for the first time, the main differences between the two most controversial forms of written language, Japanized written Chinese – *waka kanbun* – and Sino-Japanese hybrid writing, and redefine their role within the history of the Japanese written language;

c) survey textual evidence to show how an embryonic form of Sino-Japanese hybrid writing existed before the twelfth century, proving that the evolution of *wakan konkōbun* is not directly linked to the formation of middle Japanese.

1.2 Wakan konkōbun, a Brief History

A brief history of the evolution of the Japanese written language would set its beginning in the eighth century. At that time, a flourishing interest in Chinese culture resulted in the development of a written language highly indebted to continental models. This was followed, in the tenth century, by the emergence of a new native style codified in the refined literary prose of the period. Later on, the turbulent years of the late twelfth century brought great change not only in society but also in language: with the spread of Buddhism among commoners, *literati* monks and scholars began to create of a new, hybrid form of expression, merging the rational Sinicized variety of the eighth century with the tenth-century lyrical native style, and paving the way for pre-modern Japanese.

This historical junction is usually identified with the emergence of the Sino-Japanese hybrid writing. For example, *The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature* reads:

Wakan konkōbun 和漢混淆文. A style mingling Japanese and Sinified readings of characters, words, and elements, as opposed to *wabun*, which uses more or less exclusively Japanese readings and diction. The mixed style is represented most beautifully in classical literature by the Heike Monogatari, but in effect this mixed style is the basis of much classical writing and of modern Japanese.

(Miner *et al.* 1985: 303)

In a reference work on medieval history and culture Deal offers a similar yet more accurate definition:

Japanese-Chinese mixed style (*wakan konkōbun*) is, strictly speaking, a form of classical Japanese. It is a hybrid writing style that intermingles Japanese and Chinese character readings, grammar, and lexical items. Japanese-Chinese mixed style evolved

out of the practice of adding marks to Chinese texts in order that they could be read more easily by Japanese readers. This style developed in the medieval period and was used into the Edo period. Classic examples of compositions in this style are two Kamakura-period texts, *Heike monogatari* (*Tale of the Heike*) and *Hojoki* (*An Account of My Hut*).

(Deal 2006: 246)

These definitions clearly rely on Japanese sources and are based on theories that are well accepted among Japanese scholars. The works that Japanese scholars more often tend to associate with the formation and evolution of the Sino-Japanese hybrid writing are war tales – *gunki monogatari* 軍記物語 – random jottings – *zuihitsu* 随筆 –, travel diaries – *kikō* 紀行 – and anecdotal literature – *setsuwa* 説話 – literary genres that emerged in, or flourished since the twelfth century.

Among the best known twelfth-century texts are the war tales of *Hōgen monogatari* 保元物語 and *Heiji monogatari* 平治物語, anecdotal literature in the league of *Uchigikishū* 打聞集 and *Konjaku monogatari* 今昔物語集, and the transcribed sermons of *Hokkeshuhō* 法華修法一百座聞書抄. Thirteenth-century works include *Heike monogatari* 平家物語, the most famous and most poetic of all war tales, but also the random jottings of *Hōjoki* 方丈記 and travel diaries such as *Kaidōki* 海道記 and *Tōkan kikō* 東関紀行. Finally, the war tales of *Taiheiki* 太平記 and *Gikeiki* 義経記 and *zuihitsu* such as *Tsurezuregusa* 徒然草 are examples of fourteenth-century literary works written in late Sino-Japanese hybrid.

Yamada Yoshio's 山田孝雄 (1873-1958) path-breaking works on *Heike monogatari* played a pivotal role in strengthening the connection between the epic account of the struggle between the Taira and Minamoto clans and *wakan konkōbun* as its representative literary style. In *Heike monogatari* 平家物語考 (Reflections on *Heike monogatari*, 1911) as well as in the monumental *Heike monogatari no gohō* 平家物語の語法 (The language of *Heike monogatari*, 1914) Yamada praises the text of *Heike monogatari* as the most elegant form of Sino-Japanese hybrid writing.

This form of written language, he contends, perfectly harmonizes Chinese vocabulary – *kango* 漢語 – and the native syntactical structure in one single context, bringing the development of Sino-Japanese to fruition and making it into a full-fledged form of expression. Also distinctive to the *Heike monogatari*, Yamada argues, are a highly refined prose consisting of antithetical constructions based on alternating seven-five syllables (characters) as well as the use of vernacular. Following a thorough examination of all extant copies of the manuscript conducted on behalf of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Yamada concluded that the most accurate text was the copy of an early manuscript from the second and third years of Enkyō 延慶 (1309-1310) known as *Enkyōbon Heike monogatari* 延慶本平家物語 (Yamada 1915: 24-25).

Coincidental as it may be, one cannot help but notice the similarity between Yamada's descriptions and the main features of *wakan konkōbun* as outlined earlier. Especially influential to later theories may have been Yamada's thesis on the role played by alternate prose, a style reminiscent of the Six Dynasties (220-589 AD) parallel prose – i.e. *pianwen* 駢文. Most twentieth-century works identify this elaborate style, which makes extensive use of such poetic techniques as parallelism, sound patterns, and allusion, as one of the distinguishing traits of the Sino-Japanese hybrid prose. The best-known examples thereof are the opening Sections of *Heike monogatari* and *Hojōki*. Let us take a closer look at the *Heike*:

祇園精舎の鐘の聲、諸行無常の響あり。娑羅雙樹の花の色、盛者必衰のことはりをあらはす。おごれる人も久しからず。只春の夜の夢のごとし。たけき者も遂にはほろびぬ、偏に風の前の塵に同じ。

'The sound of the Gion Shōja bells echoes the impermanence of all things; the color of the śāla flowers reveals the truth that the prosperous must decline. The proud do not endure, they are like a dream on a spring night; the mighty fall at last, they are as dust before the wind.'

(Kindaichi *et al.* 1959: 83; Engl. trans. by McCullough 1988: 23)

A quick look at the structure of these famous lines reveals certain features that a Japanese reader would have perceived as new and different in tone with respect to existing literature. First, as Yamada points out (1915: 24-25), we have four distinct couplets that parallel each other in structure: *Gion shōja no kane no koe / shogyō mujō no hibiki ari; Shara sōju no hana no iro / jōsha hissui no kotowari wo arawasu; Ogoreru hito mo hisashikarazu / tada haru no yume no gotoshi; Takeki mono mo tsui ni wa horobinu / hitoe ni kaze no mae no chiri ni onaji*. Numerous quotations from religious works contribute to the creation of a highly Sinicized tone: *shogyō mujō* 諸行無常 is a direct quotation from the first verse of a *gāthā* – *ge* 偈 – a poetic composition included in the *Mahāparinirvāna sūtra* – *Nehangyō* 涅槃經.² The corresponding phrase in the following couplet, *jōsha hissui* 盛者必衰, is taken from *Ninō kyō* 仁王經, an apocryphal *sūtra*. Finally, the second phrase in each of the last two couplets is a free adaptation from *Ōjō kōshiki* 往生講式, Eikan's 永觀 (1033-1111) treatise on the proper rituals to be observed during the ceremonies of Pure Land Buddhism.³ At the same time, the syntactical structure and the word

² 諸行無常、是生滅法、生滅滅已、寂滅為樂 (諸行は無常なり、是生滅の法なり、生滅滅し已って、寂滅を樂と為). 'All things are in a state of incessant change, this is the law of birth and death. When birth and death come to the end one can enjoy the perfect enlightenment'. Cf. Takakusu (1930: 1, 204).

³ 一生は是風前之燭。萬事皆春夜之夢。(一生は是風前之燭、萬事は皆春の夜の夢). 'One life is like a light in front of wind, all things are like a dream in a spring night'. Cf. Takakusu (1930: 84, 880).

order are clearly Japanese, and as such they offset the strong continental nuances of the text.

Lexical choices should also be considered. In the opening lines of the *Heike monogatari* Chinese vocabulary is limited to eight words, all of which come from the religious works cited in the first two couplets. Their presence is offset by the juxtaposition of native vocabulary – *wago* 和語 – based on this parallel pattern:

祇園精舎の鐘の聲、諸行無常の響あり。娑羅雙樹の花の色、盛者必衰のことはりをあらはす。

☐☐ gen ☐ gen ☐, ☐☐ gen ☐ verb. ☐☐ gen ☐ gen ☐, ☐☐ gen ☐ verb.

☐ = Chinese vocabulary (*kango*); ☐ = Japanese vocabulary (*wago*)

The second pair of couplets, however, features native vocabulary only, with the single exception of the word *gotoshi*. This comparative auxiliary is extensively featured in *kunten* materials but never appears in the ornate native prose of the tenth and eleventh centuries which uses the expression *yō nari* やうなり to convey the same concept. Here we have the juxtaposition of two expressions pertaining to two different linguistic registers, one Sinicized (*gotoshi*) and one native (*onaji*). Though not identical, they carry virtually the same meaning.

おごれる人も久しからず。只春の夜の夢のごとし。
たけき者も遂にはほろびぬ、偏に風の前の塵に同じ。

☐☐ etop ☐. ☐☐ gen ☐ gen ☐ gen ☐.

☐☐ etop ☐☐. ☐☐ gen ☐ gen ☐ abl ☐.

☐ = Chinese vocabulary (*kango*); ☐ = Japanese vocabulary (*wago*)

The skilled use of these techniques is what Yamada and other scholars praised as the well-balanced literary quality of the Sino-Japanese hybrid prose.

Unfortunately, most definitions of *wakan konkōbun* rely solely on the opening paragraphs of these famous works of literature and fail to investigate the linguistic features of this written form as they appear throughout the entirety of the texts.

1.3 Wakan konkōbun *Features and waka kanbun*

As pointed out in 1.1, in its literal meaning of “mixed Sino-Japanese writing”, *wakan konkōbun* indicates any linguistic form that combines classical Chinese and Japanese in a variety of ways. A proper definition of *wakan konkōbun* and other hybrid forms is key to the formulation of a basic taxonomy of the Japanese written language in historical perspective, and as such it tends to be a contentious issue.

With the exception of a cluster consisting of utterances in Chinese that conformed to the lexical, syntactical, and orthographical conventions of

continental prose – *kanbun* – and of their Japanese equivalent – *wabun* –, it is difficult to categorize all Sino-Japanese hybrid forms produced over the centuries.

The main problems one encounters in the analysis of these texts include their large numbers as well as the variety of syntactic and lexical irregularities within each work. These inconsistencies stem, among other things, from such factors as convenience in practical use and varying levels of proficiency (or lack thereof) in writing in Chinese. Still, the increased reliance on these diatypes helped strengthen the features of the native Japanese language against the background of a Sinicized context.

A more balanced and comprehensive approach to the issue of taxonomy would give proper relevance to the two so-called “pure” forms of writing, Chinese and native, while considering *waka kanbun* as a third, independent entity, one that played a pivotal role in the development of the written language by enabling the exchange of linguistic features between the other two.

As a written form which preserved the visual outline of a Chinese text but was very different from it in lexicon and syntax (particularly in word order), *waka kanbun* has found a place in most modern taxonomies of the Japanese language, for it showcases the orthographical features of a Chinese script but is closer to the native language in phrase structure. Unfortunately the same is not true for *wakan konkōbun*, which has always been considered a linguistic riddle to be used at a scholar’s convenience in the formulation of various theories.

As Table 1 shows, a comparison of the main features of these two written languages highlights common traits as well as obvious differences.

Table 1. Main Features of *waka kanbun* and *wakan konkōbun*

	<i>Waka kanbun</i>	<i>Wakan konkōbun</i>
Syntax	Word order is mainly based on <i>kanbun kundoku</i> with the exception of some passages where the word order follows the Japanese syntax	Word order is mainly based on Early Middle Japanese with the exception of some passages where it follows Sinicized forms of writing
Vocabulary	Vocabulary is mainly based on Sinicized forms of writing	Vocabulary is based both on native and Sinicized forms of writing, with a slight prominence of the latter
	Use of Sino-Japanese vocabulary created in Japan (<i>wasei kango</i> 和製漢語)	Use of Sino-Japanese vocabulary created in Japan (<i>wasei kango</i> 和製漢語)
	Use of formal nouns (<i>keishiki meishi</i> 形式名詞)	Use of formal nouns (<i>keishiki meishi</i> 形式名詞)
	Use of honorific language (<i>keigo</i> 敬語)	Use of honorific language (<i>keigo</i> 敬語)
		Use of vernacular expressions

Writing systems	Pure logographic script	Composite logographic and phonogrammatic script
	Some characters are used with functions that are different from old and middle Chinese	Some characters are used with functions that are different from old and middle Chinese
	Honorific auxiliary verbs and other elements usually rendered in the text by means of a Chinese character	Honorific auxiliary verbs and other elements usually rendered in the text by means of Chinese characters or phonograms
	Japanese lexicon is written in Chinese characters	Japanese lexicon is written both in Chinese characters and phonograms
	Use of phonograms to record words other than people, place names or proper names	

Compared to the strongly Sinicized tone of *waka kanbun*, this blend of native and continental expressions was certainly easier to read in private as well as before an audience. At the same time, as Table 1 shows, Japanized written Chinese and Sino-Japanese hybrid writing share more than one feature, which may have made it difficult to tell one from the other.

One may say that *wakan konkōbun* resulted from a native reader's interpretation of a text in Japanized written Chinese. This interpretation was then integrated with a growing number of syntactical, lexical, and orthographic Japanese features. Because the Sinicized traits of both forms share as a common basis the language mirrored in the *kunten* materials, it becomes difficult to tell one from the other. For this reason, the study of *kunten* materials is fundamental in determining the characteristics of Sino-Japanese hybrid writing, as the following pages will illustrate.

2. The Contribution of *kunten* Materials to the Studies of *wakan konkōbun*

2.1 Vocabulary and its Use

As shown in Table 1, the vocabulary of Sino-Japanese hybrid writing is based both on native and Sinicized forms.

Ki no Tsurayuki's 紀貫之 (868-945) preface to the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (905) provides a case in point. Entirely written in *hiragana* 平仮名, this text is often referred to as the first complete document in pure Early Middle Japanese, the one that marks the beginning of Japanese poetic criticism in the literary circles of the time as distinct from the otherwise prominent Chinese poetic forms. However, Japanese scholars have demonstrated that

the preface is not an original composition, but a sort of adaptation inspired by the foreword to the *Classic of songs – Shijing* 詩經. A closer analysis does indeed reveal the presence of a vocabulary used exclusively in the glossed readings of Chinese manuscripts.

こゝに、いにしへのことをも、哥のころをも、しれる人、わづかにひとり、ふたり也き。しかあれど、これかれ、えたるどころ、えぬどころ、たがひになむある。
‘After that there were one or two poets who knew the ancient songs and understood the heart of poetry. However, each had strengths and weaknesses’.

(Saeki 1958: 99; Engl. trans. by Rodd 1996: 43)

そのほかに、ちかき世に、その名きこえたる人は、すなはち僧正遍昭は、哥のさまはえたれども、まことすくなし。たとへばゑにかけるをむなを見ていたづらに心をうごかすがごとし。

‘Among the others, one of the best known of recent times was Archbishop Henjō, whose style is good but who lacks sincerity. His poetry is like a painting of a woman which stirs one’s heart in vain’.

(*Ibidem*: 100 and 43)

大伴のくろぬしは、そのさまいやし。いはどたきどおへる山人の花のかげにやすめるがごとし。

‘Ōtomo no Kuronushi’s songs are rustic in form; they are like a mountaineer with a bundle of firewood on his back resting in the shade of the blossoms’.

(*Ibidem*: 101 and 46)

たとひときうつりことさり、たのしびかなしびゆきかふともこのうたのもじあるをや。

‘Times may change, joy and sorrow come and go, but the words of these poems are eternal’.

(*Ibidem*: 103 and 47)

Adverbs, connectives, and auxiliaries such as *tagahi ni* たがひに, *tatoheba* たとへば, *ga gotoshi* がごとし, *ihaba* いはば, and *tatohi* たとひ are generally absent from the court literature of the Heian period, but are frequently used in the glossed readings of Chinese texts. While it is difficult to prove that their presence in the preface is directly linked to vernacular readings of the *The Classic of Songs*, one may argue that such a vocabulary was at least known to the author, who used it almost naturally.

The same introduction features other unique traits, for instance old Japanese words with glossed text vocabulary that reveal a close relationship between the author and official documents that used a diatype uncommon in everyday parlance.

Tsurayuki is also the author of the *Tōsa nikki* 土左日記 (935), a pioneering work written in a genuine native style that uses *hiragana* as its main orthographic outline. Even this work, however, is in many ways different from

the great classics of court literature and shows a strong influence of Sinicized diatypes both in terms of vocabulary and contents.

といふあひだにかちとりもののあはれもしらで、おのれしさをくらひつれば、はやくいなんとて、「しほみちぬ。かぜもふきぬべし。」とさわげば、ふねにのりなんとす。

‘[...] while he was reciting the poem, the captain of the boat, a rude man who did not know the *aware* of things, having being paid enough to drink as much as he wanted, was anxious to leave immediately. “The tide has risen! The wind is blowing!”, he shouted, going on board’.

(Suzuki 1957: 30)

ころざしあるにたり。

‘He seemed to be a well-mannered and kind man’.

(*Ibidem*: 31)

あるひとのこのわらはなる、ひそかにいふ

‘The child of one of the passengers bashfully said ...’

(*Ibidem*: 33)

そもそもいかによんだるといふかしがりてとふ。

‘Tell me, then, what was your poem going to be?’, asked a person eager to hear [the child’s poem]’.

(*Ibidem*: 34)

Much in the same way as the preface to the *Kokinshū*, we see here a number of adverbs and connectives that were not generally used in tenth- and eleventh-century Japanese literary prose. Instead of *tagahi ni* or *hisoka ni* ひそかに, a text in pure Japanese would make use of such expressions as *katami ni* かたみに, *shinobiyaka ni* しのびやかに, or *shinobite* しのびて. These words all share the same semantic value, but the last three are better contextualized within a native written form. This choice cannot be simply explained in terms of a close relationship between the author and the world of orthodox Chinese. Moreover, the *Tosa nikki* features traits such as *kakari musubi* 係り結び that pertain to the vocabulary of Early Middle Japanese. A comparison with the *waka kanbun* diaries of noblemen and court officials led some scholars to postulate that Tsurayuki attempted to realize a *kana* version of this written diatype, a diatype with which he must have been well acquainted (Tsukishima 1981: 389-401). This theory would explain the presence of elements of different origins within the same context. After being properly polished, this prose paved the way for the refined, “pure” native written language of a later age.

2.1.1 Contrastive Dimorphic Expressions

The aforementioned passages from Tsurayuki's writings combine a vocabulary frequently adopted in *kunten* materials with a text written in compliance with a Japanese syntax rich in native expressions.

In 1963 Tsukishima Hiroshi 築島裕 (1925-2011), one of the leading scholars in the research on the language of *kunten* materials, identified two groups of words specific to a written language form and organized them in a systematic taxonomy. Tsukishima conducted a detailed survey on *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 and *Daijionji Sanzōhōshiden* 大慈恩寺三蔵法師伝, two works that epitomized the native and the Sinicized style respectively. *Daijionji Sanzōhōshiden* is a document with glosses dating back to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. By comparing the lexicons of these works, Tsukishima concluded that the vocabulary of *kunten* materials and the vocabulary of Early Middle Japanese documents can each be categorized in two subgroups. The first consists of “characteristic language” – *tokuyūgo* 特有語, which indicates expressions belonging exclusively to either a Sinicized or a native written form. The second subgroup, “deployable language” or *yōgo* 用語, includes expressions which are usually associated with one of the two diatypes but can also be deployed in different contexts.

Of course, while the presence of native and Sinicized words in the same context may attest to a mixed lexical inventory, it does not tell us anything about the intentions of the author. It would be interesting to know whether the combination of native and Sinicized words was completely random or whether the choice of words followed a certain logic.

A comparison between expressions that, despite being unique to one of these written forms, share the same semantic area, would more effectively bring to light the differences between a Sinicized and a Japanese context. The coexistence of such expressions within the same text would not only attest to the existence of a Sino-Japanese hybrid writing but would also provide insights as to the intent of the text itself.

Once again Tsukishima's research provides us with valuable data. As part of his survey, Tsukishima identified one hundred and twenty-two expressions, all with the same meaning, which are characteristic of Sinicized or native diatypes. He named them “contrastive dimorphic expressions” – *nikei tairitsu hyōgen* 二形対立表現. Both Tsukishima (in his later works) and other scholars have since cast doubt on the reliability of some of these elements. Nevertheless, this group of words is still considered an important starting point for researchers.

Adverbs are a grammatical category that well epitomizes the use of contrastive dimorphic expressions in context. These words provide information about the manner, degree, place, or circumstances of the activity denoted by the element with predicative function. There exists a remarkable difference in

the use of adverbs of state (*jōtai fukushi* 情態副詞) used to indicate swiftness such as *sumiyaka ni* スミヤカニ (a word typical of *kunten* materials) and the use of the native pair *toshi* とく and *hayashi* はやく. The same goes for degree adverbs (*teido fukushi* 程度副詞) that denote a rapidly accelerating process such as the Sinicized *masumasu* マスマス and *iyoiyo* いよいよ vis-à-vis the Japanese *itodo* いとど.

Let us take a closer look at the former as used in the *Heike monogatari*.

Throughout the *Heike monogatari*, *sumiyaka ni* is used nine times: two examples are found in Mongaku's 文覚 subscription list and in the *Heike sanmon rensho* 平家山門連署, the written petition addressed by the Heike to Enryakuji 延暦寺.

殊には、聖靈幽儀先後大小、すみやかに一佛眞門の臺にいたり、必ず三真万徳の月をもてあそばん。

‘And in particular, I ask that the spirits of all who die, whether early or late, high or low, may go immediately to lotus pedestals in the true Pure Land of which the Lotus Sutra tells, and that they may be assuredly bask in the moonlight of the myriad merits of the three bodies’.

(Kindaichi *et al.* 1959: 358; Engl. trans. by McCullough 1988: 180)

これによて或は累代勳功の跡をおひ、或は當時弓馬の藝にまかせて、速に賊徒を追討し、凶黨を降伏すべきよし、いやしくも勅命をふくんで頻に征罰を企つ。
‘Consequently, we have been honored by an imperial command to emulate the illustrious deeds of our forebears and make use of our present martial skills in order to swiftly conquer the rebels and bring the evil faction to his knees’.

(*Ibidem*: 90 and 239)

The other sentences containing *sumiyaka ni* are the following:

一院の御淀に速に追出しまいらせよと候。

‘[...] I have been ordered by the retired emperor to expel you immediately’.

(*Ibidem*: 132 and 264)

こはいかに、昔はむかし今は今、其義ならば速かに追出したてまつれとて

‘“Nonsense!” Koreyoshi said. “The past is the past; the present is the present. If that is their attitude, we’ll chase them right away now”’.

(*Ibidem*: 133 and 265)

堂衆等師主の命をそむいて合戦を企、すみやかに誅罰 (ちうばつ) せらるべきよし、
‘The worker-monks are preparing to give battle again in defiance of instructions from their teachers and masters. They must suffer swift punishment’.

(*Ibidem*: 195 and 86)

昔より、此所は國方の者入部する事なし。すみやかに先例にまかせて、入部の押妨をとめよとぞ申ける。

‘Provincial officials have never invaded these precincts in the past,’ the angry monks protested. ‘Follow the precedents! End this violent trespass at once!’

(*Ibidem*: 127 and 49)

たとひ報謝の心をこそ存ぜず共、豈障碍をなすべきや。速にまかり退き候へ。

‘Even if you feel no gratitude, how can it be right for you to obstruct this birth? Leave immediately!’

(*Ibidem*: 219 and 102)

In the aforementioned examples, the adverb is used to express swift and stern orders and we can also assume that its pronunciation was associated with a particular tone of voice. In the remaining two examples, *sumiyaka ni* is adopted to portray almost identical situations: when Yorimasa 頼政 hastens his son Nakatsuna 仲綱 to yield his own horse to Munemori 宗盛, who demanded it insistently; and when Emperor Nijō 二条天皇 orders the wife of the retired emperor Konoe 近衛天皇 to enter his court – in this case *sumiyaka ni* is used by her father, the Minister of the Right Kin’yoshi 公能, to persuade her.

たとひこがねをまろめたる馬なり共、それほどに人のこわう物をおしむべき様やある。すみやかにその馬六波羅へつかはせとこそ給ひけれ。

‘Even if the horse were made of gold, you could not hold onto him in the face of such demands. Send him to Rokuhara at once,’ he said’.

(*Ibidem*: 291 and 143)

既に詔命を下さる。子細を申にところなし。たゞすみやかにまいらせ給べきなり。‘Argument is out of the question, now that the edict has already been handed down; you must just go as soon as possible’.

(*Ibidem*: 109 and 38)

In both cases, *sumiyaka ni* is used to emphasize feelings rooted in the speaker’s heart, as with Yorimasa’s indignation, which will eventually bring him to betray Munemori, or with Kin’yoshi’s regret for the unfortunate fate of his beloved daughter.

In other words, in the *Heike monogatari sumiyaka ni* indicates not only swiftness but also a strong resolution usually associated with grudge, grievance, orders, and commands. In this case, pronunciation played a pivotal role.

These words were especially necessary in war tales such as the *Heike monogatari*, a literary genre developed primarily to be recited aloud with the accompaniment of music. A particular intonation was probably linked to *sumiyaka ni*, and used to evoke empathy for the characters’ personal stories. This is probably one of the distinguishing features that best epitomize the so-called “literary quality” of *wakan konkōbun*.

To express swiftness in letters and correspondence the *Heike monogatari* exclusively deploys the adverb *hayaku* はやく, which belongs to a native register of the language. *Hayaku* is used only six times: in the letter with which Kiyomori 清盛 grants pardon to the Kikai ga shima 鬼界が島 exiles; in the *sanmon chōjō* 山門牒鏐, the petition to Enryakuji penned by the Miidera 三井寺 monks; in Mongaku's subscription list; in the Fukuhara imperial edict (the *Fukuhara inzen* 福原院宣); and in the reply sent to the Retired Emperor by Munemori 宗盛 on the twenty-eight day of the second month of the third year of Juei 壽永. The last example is the complaint against Tadamori 忠盛 presented by the nobles to Emperor Toba 鳥羽天皇. Since it is reasonable to assume that the formal act consisted of a written document, we can conclude that *hayaku* in the *Heike Monogatari* is purposely used as a specific word in the formal written epistolary language.

The other native word conveying almost exactly the same meaning as *sumiyaka ni* is *toku*, the adverbial form of the adjective *toshi*.

In the *Heike monogatari* as well as in other medieval works this adverb is used both in its basic form – *toku* – and its reduplicated one – *tokutoku* – together with *tō* (*toku* → *to* + *u* → *tō*) and *tōtō*, the euphonic variants generated by deleting the consonant /k/. A perusal of *toku*'s and *tō*'s correspondence reveals that they appear seven and four times respectively, while *tokutoku* is used twelve times and *tōtō* thirty-two. The striking difference in use between the basic and the reduplicated forms can be explained in the light of the ability of words to convey rhythm and musicality in texts intended to be recited aloud. For example, in the entire text of the *Genji monogatari tokutoku* is used only once; it appears all but four times in the *Makura no sōshi* 枕草子.

Glosses testifying to the use of *toku* as a modifier of the variable parts of the speech in *kunten* materials are common, but there are no attested cases of the use of the corresponding euphonic variant, *tō*.

The difference between the seven sentences using *toku* and the four containing *tō* is too small to make a case for a clear distinction in their respective uses, although one can say that the former is associated with slightly more formal contexts than the latter. The correspondence of *tokutoku* and *tōtō*, on the other hand, offers an excellent case study for comparison.

Tokutoku is used three times as an epistolary term associated with emotional involvement and the transience of human life: in the letters to Koremori 維盛 from his sons, in the missive for Yorimori 頼盛 from Kamakura, and in Nōen's 能円 message to his wife. In passages adopting direct speech, the function of *tokutoku* as a male expression used in extremely tense and grave situations does not change.

とく々頸をとれとぞの給ひける。

'Just take my head and be quick about it'.

(Kindaichi *et al.* 1960: 221; Engl. trans. by McCullough 1988: 317)

たゞ芳恩には、とく々かうべをはねらるべしとて。

‘I ask only that you cut off my head with as little delay as possible’.

(*Ibidem*: 262 and 338)

たゞ御恩にはとく々頸をめされ候へ。

‘The only favor I want from you is a swift execution’.

(*Ibidem*: 389 and 407)

The remaining five examples capture similar situations: the words of the *kanpaku* Motofusa 基房 to the Emperor Takakura 高倉天皇, infatuated with Aoi no mae 葵前; Yoshitsune’s 義経 incitement to the crew upon setting sail during a storm; the words of Tsuginobu 嗣信 and Yoshimori 義盛 to motivate the sailors; Kiyomune’s 清宗 words upon seeing Munemori 宗盛 parting from his eight-year old boy, Yoshimune 義宗; and the words Rokudai 六代 uttered as he was parting from his mother.

Tōtō, on the other hand, is used in relatively ordinary situations, and in ten out of thirty-two examples it is used without the modified element.

「とう々。御房は事あやまつまじき人なれば。」とてゆるされけり。

‘“You are not the kind of man who creates problems. Go along,” he said’.

(*Ibidem*: 263 and 127)

「こゝにぶゑんのひらたけあり、とう々」といそがす。

‘We have some “unsalted” finger mushrooms. Hurry up and fix them’.

(*Ibidem*: 140 and 269)

There is only one exception when *tō* is used in lieu of *tokutoku*. Kiyomune’s last words before being beheaded contrast sharply with his father’s, who died chanting Amida’s name. This infuses the scene with a remarkably emotional aura.

「今はおもふ事なし。さらばとう」とぞの給ひける。

‘There is nothing left to worry me now. Be quick about it’.

(*Ibidem*: 371 and 396)

As the aforementioned examples indicate, adverbs of state in the *Heike monogatari* were not only selected for their specific linguistic functions but also for their musicality.

One can thus postulate that the so-called literary quality of *wakan konkōbun* was characterized by the intentional use of a relatively new group of expressions that served a dual function: one merely lexical, and one “contextual” and related to the rhythm with which they infused the narration.

2.2 Syntax

The coexistence of native and Sinicized vocabulary within the same document does not, in and of itself, establish the Sino-Japanese hybrid as a mature and complete form of the written language. As mentioned earlier, merging a Sinicized context with a Japanese one is an elaborate process that involves different degrees of complexity and obeys rules that cannot always be easily identified.

To be on a par with such traditional forms of the Japanese written language as *wabun*, *kanbun* and *waka kanbun*, *wakan konkōbun* must feature specific syntactical traits. Once again, research on *kunten* materials is of great help.

The identification of these traits could be pursued through two different channels: one would look at the coexistence, within the same text, of syntactical structures characteristic of both diatypes. The other would look for new structures born out of the natural merger of the two separate ways of expression, structures never before detected in the so-called “pure” forms of the written language.

Examples of the latter first appear in literary works produced around the early twelfth century such as *Uchigikishū* and other examples of anecdotal literature. The identification of these structures was made possible by research conducted on “predicative adverbs” (*chinjutsu fukushi* 陳述副詞). This adverbial category, related to the modal characteristic of the utterance, is used to establish a strong, unchangeable agreement with the predicate of the sentence to which it is connected and involves the adoption of a fixed grammatical pattern – *bunkei* 文型.

If a native text features a certain grammatical pattern [A ... B] and a Sinicized text is defined by a fixed correspondence [C ... D], then a document in Sino-Japanese should feature a concordance between [A ... D] and [C ... B]. When these crossed patterns are present in the same text they testify to the high level of completion reached by this written form.

To offer one example, *imada* イマダ is an adverb pertaining to a Sinicized context that introduces a negative clause ending with the negative suffix *zu*, meaning ‘not... yet...’. Such use is related to the interpretation of the character 未 found in the vernacular reading of a Classical Chinese text. The function of 未 cannot be expressed only with one word, but needs to be rearranged in two separate parts of the text. The character is thus read twice: first as an adverb, and second as a negative suffix in the sentence. For this reason scholars name this group of characters ‘twice-read characters’ or *saidokuji* 再読字. To help the reader decode the text properly, 未 usually bears two set of glosses: one referring to the adverbial reading – usually an *i* that stands for the *i* of *imada* –, and one indicating the negative suffix. As a result, when *imada* is used in infinitive and adnominal contexts it is defined by the following two patterns: *imada* ... *zu shite* and *imada* ... *zaru*.

However, to express the same meaning early middle Japanese texts such as *Genji monogatari* adopted a completely different pattern, one based on the link between the adverb *mada* and the variant *nu* of the negative suffix *zu*, according to the two following concordances for the infinitive and adnominal use: *mada ... de* and *imada ... nu*.

Hybrid grammatical patterns of *wakan konkōbun* are thus defined by the crossed concordance of the native adverb *mada* with the negative suffixes *zu shite* and *zaru*, and by *imada* with *de* and *nu*.

In the *Heike monogatari*, *imada* is used one hundred and fifty-six times as opposed to *mada*, which is used only three times, which hints to a strong Sinicized tone as a defining trait of the war tale. A closer look at the sentences containing an infinitive pattern shows that in two cases *imada* is related to *zu shite* and in one with *nu* according to a hybrid pattern.

いまだともかうもし奉らでをきまいらせて候

‘I have not been able to bring myself to do anything about him yet. He is still here’.

(*Ibidem*: 400 and 412)

An examination of the sentences with an adnominal structure yields an especially interesting result. Only in eight cases is *imada* used with *zaru* according to the orthodox Sinicized pattern; in twelve it is used with *nu*, which indicates the prevalence of the hybrid pattern over the native one.

いまだ死期も來らぬおやに身をなげさせん事、五逆罪にやあらんずらむ。

‘I suppose it must be accounted one of the Five Deadly Sins to make a parent drown before her time’.

(Kindaichi *et al.* 1959: 103; Engl. trans. by McCullough 1988: 35)

淀・はづかし・宇治・岡の屋、日野・勧修寺・醍醐・小黑栖・梅津・桂・大原・しづ原・せれうの里と、あぶれみたる兵共、或はよろいきていまだ甲をきぬもあり、或は矢おうていまだ弓をもたぬもあり。

‘Agitated warriors came galloping from places scattered far and wide – Yodo, Hazukashi, Uji, Oka no ya, Hino, Kanjūji, Daigo, Ogurosu, Umezu, Katsura, Ōhara, Shizuhara, Seiryō no sato: some dressed in armor but not yet wearing helmets, some bearing arrows on their backs but not yet carrying bows’.

(*Ibidem*: 176 and 76)

いまだ遠からぬふねなれ共、涙に暮てみえざりければ、鐔都たかき所に走あがり、澳の方をぞまねきける。

‘Although it had not gone far, he was too blinded by tears to see it. He raced to a hilltop and beckoned toward the offing’.

(*Ibidem*: 216 and 100)

人の七八は、何事をもいまだおもひわかぬ程ぞかし。

‘Ordinary children do not reach the age of reason at seven or eight. Alas!’

(*Ibidem*: 320 and 159)

年月はかさなれ共、昨日今日御別のやうにおぼしめして、御涙もいまだつきせぬに、治承四年五月には第二の皇子高倉宮うたれさせ給ひぬ。

‘Despite the passing of the years, he had continued to feel as though he had parted from her only yesterday or today, and his tears were still flowing when his second son, prince Mochihito, was slain in the Fifth Month of the fourth year of Jishō’.

(*Ibidem*: 401 and 206)

無間の底に墮給ふべきよし、閻魔の廳に御さだめ候が、無間の無をかゝれて、間の字をばいまだかゝれぬなり

‘It has been decided by the tribunal that the Chancellor-Novice will fall to the bottom of the [Hell of Punishment] Without Intermission [Mugen] [...] Enma has written the *mu* of Mugen, but he has not put in the *gen* [intermission] yet’.

(*Ibidem*: 408 and 210)

同廿二日、新攝政殿とゞめられ給ひて、本の攝政還着し給ふ。纔に六十日のうちに替られ給へば、いまだ見はてぬ夢のごとし。

‘The new regent, Moroie, was relieved of his post on the Twenty-Second, and his predecessor, Motomichi, was reinstated. For Moroie, replaced after a mere sixty days, the experience was like an unfinished dream’.

(Kindaichi *et al.* 1960: 184; Engl. trans. by McCullough 1988: 295)

白茸毛なる老馬にかゞみ鞍をき、しろぐつははげ、手綱むすでうちかけ、さきにおたてて、いまだしらぬ深山へこそいり給へ。

‘He put a gold-mounted saddle and a polished bit on an old whitish roan, tied the reins, tossed them over the animal’s neck, and drove it before him into the unknown mountain fastnesses’.

(*Ibidem*: 198 and 303)

行さき未いづくとも思ひ定めぬかとおぼしくて、一谷の奥にやすらふ舟もあり。

‘Others hesitated in the offing beyond Ichi no Tani, as though still unable to settle on a destination’.

(*Ibidem*: 227 and 320)

いまだ卅にもならぬが、老僧姿にやせ衰へ、こき墨染におなじ袈裟、おもひいれたる道心者、浦山しくおもはれけん。

‘[...] a man who resembled an emaciated old monk (though he was not yet thirty), dressed in a black robe and a black surplice’.

(*Ibidem*: 270 and 343)

是も八嶋へまいるが、いまだ案内をしらぬにじんじよせよ

'I am heading toward Yashima myself, but I am not sure of the direction. Be my guide'.
(*Ibidem*: 309 and 362)

So far, researchers in Japan have identified the six patterns shown in Table 2. While this is an important step in the study of Sino-Japanized hybrid syntactical structures, the field is still young and will require more surveys in the future.

Table 2. Sino-Japanese Hybrid Writing Grammatical Patterns

	native	sinicized	sino-japanese
pattern I	<i>dani...mashite</i> だに...まして	<i>sura...ifamuya</i> スラ...イハムヤ	<i>dani...ifamuya</i> だに...イハムヤ <i>sura...mashite</i> スラ...まして
pattern II	<i>mada...de</i> まだ...で <i>mada...nu</i> まだ...ぬ	<i>imada...zushite</i> イマダ...ズシテ <i>imada...zaru</i> イマダ...ザル	<i>mada...zushite</i> まだ...ズシテ <i>mada...zaru</i> まだ...ザル <i>imada...de</i> イマダ...で <i>imada...nu</i> イマダ...ぬ
pattern III	<i>yō...nite</i> やう...にて	<i>gotoku...shite</i> ゴトク...シテ	<i>yōni...shite</i> やうに...シテ <i>gotoku...nite</i> ゴトク...にて
pattern IV	<i>e...de</i> え...で	<i>... (ni) atawazu</i> <i>shite</i> ... (ニ) アタハ ズシテ <i>suru koto (wo)...</i> <i>ezushite</i> スルコト (ヲ) エズシテ	<i>e...zushite</i> え...ズシテ ... (ni) atawa de ... (ニ) アタハで <i>suru koto (wo) ede</i> スルコト (ヲ) エで
pattern V	<i>nadoka...bekiya</i> などか...べきや <i>nadoka...n</i> などか...ん <i>ikadeka...bekiya</i> いかでか...べきや <i>ikadeka...n</i> いかでか...ん	<i>ani...nya</i> アニ...ンヤ	<i>nadoka...nya</i> などか...ンヤ <i>ikadeka...nya</i> いかでか...ンヤ <i>ani...bekiya</i> アニ...べきや <i>ani...n</i> アニ...ん

pattern VI	<i>tsuyu...de</i> つゆ…で <i>tsuyu...nu</i> つゆ…ぬ	<i>katsute...kotonashi</i> カツテ…コトナシ <i>katsute...zushite</i> カツテ…ズシテ	<i>tsuyu...kotonashi</i> つゆ…コトナシ <i>tsuyu...zushite</i> つゆ…ズシテ <i>katsute...nu</i> カツテ…ぬ <i>katsute...de</i> カツテ…で
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2.3 Writing Systems

The history of any written language is made more difficult by the nature of the writing system(s) used to express such language. In the case of written Japanese, the features commonly used to classify the various forms of the language tend to be lexical or syntactic. However, scholars rarely distinguish between ‘style’ – *buntai* – and the orthographic forms conventionally used to identify it. In other words, the evolution of the Japanese written language as outlined in 1.2 should be presented along with a discussion of the evolution of the writing systems from *kanji* 漢字 to *kana* 仮名. One should point out that, the more the Japanese attempted to write entire texts in their own language, the more they had to rely on a phonemic script.

If one follows this approach, a different story emerges. At the beginning of its history, Japanese was an unwritten language; writing became possible only after the introduction of Chinese characters. Consequently, the first written form the Japanese learned was classical Chinese – *kanbun*. *Kanji*, an orthographic form deeply linked to the language it conveyed, were the tools used to express that writing. The tenth century kicked off the process of standardization of *katakana* 片仮名 and *hiragana*. The latter in particular found wide application in *wabun*, the new, native literary prose court ladies used to convey the innermost feelings of the human heart. The emergence of new social dynamics and the decentralization of culture in the late twelfth century resulted in the creation of a hybrid form of expression that merged the formal world of men (revolving around diatypes expressed with the aid of Chinese characters) with the lyrical one of women (heavily relying upon a pure phonogrammatic system of writing – *wakan konkōbun*).

For didactical purposes we can draw a parallel between a written language and the orthographic forms adopted therein. However, this does not mean that variations in the writing systems naturally imply discrepancies at a syntactical or lexical level.

For a long time Japanese scholars have argued there existed a relationship between a codified group of writings and the orthographies adopted to record them. Such trend is also revealed in the different taxonomies of the Japanese language that have been presented since the nineteenth century, tax-

onomies that show a combination of syntactic and orthographic approaches in categorizing the different models of classical Japanese. In this respect, the Sino-Japanese hybrid writing offers a poignant example of grammatological classification of a written diatype because, as far as writing systems are concerned, both *wakan konkōbun* and *kana majiribun* 仮名交じり文⁴ can be understood as “mixed forms of Chinese and Japanese”.

Of course, it was the development of purely phonogrammatic writing systems such as *hiragana* and *katakana* that boosted the growth of an authentic Japanese culture and the flowering of a refined literary prose during the ninth and tenth centuries.

With the creation of *hiragana* and *katakana* – obtained respectively by the cursivization and the reduction of Chinese characters to their elemental components – the Japanese language achieved its full potential. Such potential was achieved by a multilayered orthography which involved the adaptation of a system borrowed from a foreign country combined with two different sets of native signs. Still, in its early stages this system was far from efficient as a form of expression.

In other words, a variety of systems was used across the social spectrum to convey at least three different linguistic diatypes – i.e. Chinese, Japanese and Sino-Japanese .

The main issue, then, is to define who and when used which system, as well as to identify the addressee and the context and purpose of a text; one must also determine whether the adoption of one orthography in lieu of another required specific choices at the lexical or syntactic level. According to Tsukishima Hiroshi:

The definition used so far has not always been clear, being used to indicate a text that mixes *wabun* with *kanbun* (*kundoku*) and, in most cases, adopts *kanji kana majiribun* as formal orthography. Specifically, *wakan konkōbun* indicates the style of *gunki monogatari* of the Kamakura period such as the *Heike monogatari* and *Taiheiki*. In this kind of writing, based on the syntax of Middle Japanese as seen in *wabun* and *kanbun kundoku* materials, numerous Chinese loan words (*kango*) are used alongside late Middle Japanese vernacular expressions; elements of *hentai kanbun* are also very common. In a broad sense *wakan konkōbun* can be defined as a *buntai* that merges elements of *wabun* and *kanbun kundoku*, although this sort of generalization is not always possible. One can say with certainty that *kanji kana majiribun* is a definition pertaining to the classification of writing systems while *wakan konkōbun* is a concept used in the taxonomy of contexts.

(Kokugo Gakkai 1980: 937-938)

⁴ The precursor of modern orthography, where Chinese characters are used as semantic elements and supplemented by phonograms for inflections and particles.

A survey of the history of written Japanese reveals the presence of embryonic forms of Sino-Japanese hybrids since the very beginning of Japanese history. The evolution of *wakan konkōbun* does not seem directly linked to the development of writing systems, as variations in the practice of copying texts and manuscripts might have altered the style of a text at surface level.

Some of the texts preserved in the Shosōin 正倉院 testify to the use of a mixed semantic-phonogrammatic script since the second half of the eighth century. This 748 example is one of the oldest (Sakakura 1969: 17-26; Kotani 1971: 16-25).

是以祖父父兄良我仕奉禰留次_ル在故_ル海上群大領司_ル仕奉止_申
是を以て、祖父・父・兄_らが仕_へ奉_りける次_に在_るが故_に、海上の群の大領司_に
仕_へ奉_らむと申す。

‘Therefore, being in direct line of descent from my grandfather, my father and my brothers who all have served [from generation to generation], I request to be placed in active service under the Governor of a district near the sea’.

(Yamaguchi 1993: 30. The highlighted characters were written in small size)

With the exception of the opening connective, an elementary Chinese structure easily reorganized to mirror the Japanese syntax, the entire text is written following the Japanese word order and features native lexical features such as honorifics. Like a modern text in *kanji kana majiri* 漢字仮名交じり, moreover, independent words are recorded by means of Chinese characters that are used semantically, while inflexive morphemes and postpositions are rendered by means of small *kanji* that are used phonetically.

The same strategy is deployed in imperial proclamations – *senmyō* 宣命 – or in *shintō* prayers – *norito* 祝詞 – where the semantic component is usually written with a Chinese character and all inflexive endings are written with small Chinese characters used as phonograms and placed to the right or center of the main column of the text. This orthographic form, known as *senmyōtai* 宣命体, appears extensively in the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀 (797), in the *norito* of the *Engi shiki* 延喜式 (927), and in some private writings (Shirafuji 1967: 2).

The theory according to which there exists a correspondence between diatypes and orthographic forms may have been influenced by the strong visual component of the Japanese script, a script in which each sign reveals at a basic visual level the socio-cultural context within which it was adopted. Chinese characters were difficult to separate from the language they were meant to express; the same holds true for *hiragana* with the native language and for *katakana* with the Sino-centered variants. Nevertheless, this convention did not prevent Ki no Tsurayuki, Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長 (966-1028), Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家 (1162-1241), as well as several anonymous writers from relying on the script they considered best suited to the specific context.

The theories of another prominent Japanese scholar, Kasuga Masaji 春日政治 (1878-1962), may lie behind the interpretation according to which *wakan konkōbun* is a mixture of *kanji* and *katakana*, as seen in medieval war tales such as the *Heike monogatari*.

Kasuga is the author of *Saidaijibon Konkōmyō saishōōkyō koten no koku-gogakuteki kenkyū* 西大寺本金光明最勝王經古点の国語学的研究, the monumental and path-breaking philological study of a copy of the *Konkōmyō saishōōkyō* 金光明最勝王經⁵ discovered at the Saidaiji 西大寺 in Nara (Kasuga 1985). This precious *kunten* material was produced around 762 and annotated in 830. Kasuga's work demonstrates that *Konkōmyō saishōōkyō* is in fact a character-by-character rendering of orthodox Chinese. From a grammatological point of view, this document showcases the combination of a logographic system – i.e. Chinese characters – with a phonogrammatic one (*kana*) used to integrate native readings and dependent words.

Based on a study of the techniques used to render a Chinese text into Japanese with the aid of glosses Kasuga argued that an embryonic form Sino-Japanese hybrid appeared since the beginning of the ninth century (Kasuga, 1983: 246-247).

In other words, according to Kasuga the extrapolation of glosses from the interlinear space of the manuscript and the reorganization of their content into an independently coherent text gave birth to the Sino-Japanese hybrid writing, a writing which then came to full fruition with the war tales of the twelfth century.

The *Tōdaiji fujumonkō* 東大寺諷誦文稿 from the first half of the ninth century shows an intermediate step in this process. Whereas in *Konkōmyō saishōōkyō katakana* script for interlinear glosses is smaller and secondary to the main body of the text, in *Tōdaiji fujumonkō* both logographic and phonetic signs are equal in size, just as in the modern language. It would have been natural for a monk to use the orthographical form he was more familiar with – i.e. a mixture of *kanji* and *katakana* – to record annotations and personal thoughts on the message he would then deliver to the public. Freed from specific linguistic conventions, our monk would naturally use in the same context the expressions he deemed best suited to his purpose, mixing native and Chinese vocabulary along with a combination of native and non-orthodox Chinese syntax, and representing them graphically in a mixture of *kanji* and *katakana*.

The religious sphere was undoubtedly a great source of innovation when it came to the writing system. Adding vernacular readings to an orthodox Chinese text by means of marginal glosses in *kana* meant a step towards the creation of a Sino-Japanese hybrid and toward the introduction of *katakana* as a special purpose script.

⁵ A translation of the *Suvarna-prabhāsōttama-sūtra* by Yijing (635–713), a monk of the Tang period (618-907).

However, at this stage, the glosses were minor fragments that only partially suggested readings or inflective parts of the speech; the body of the text was not coherent as a unit, and the main Chinese script was covered with annotations. Also, as mentioned earlier, the combination of logographic and phonogrammatic systems is evident in yet another group of texts from the late eight century, namely the drafts of sermons and the *shintō* prayers, which opens the door to yet new avenues of investigation.

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