

A BRIEF PRACTICAL-GUIDE FOR L2-TEACHERS: K-2 AMERICAN CHILDREN LEARN ITALIAN

*Matteo Greco*¹

1. INTRODUCTION²

This article aims to be a brief guide for L2 teacher education – issue arising a growing interest in the last decades since the pioneering work of Richards and Nunan (1990) (see also Burns, Richards, 2009 and the references therein) – moving from some conceptual bases, but with the main goal to discuss the techniques in themselves. More specifically, according to the six domains classification proposed by Richards (1998: xiv) on the content and knowledge of L2 teacher education, this paper will address the first issue, i.e. general theories of teaching, adopting a practical perspective. This point of view is specifically modulated on the second language teacher needs and profiles (Tarone, Allwright, 2005)³, from novice teachers, who may experience a “reality shock” (Veenman, 1984: 143; Farrell, 2008) when they start their teaching activity, to the more expert ones, who want to adopt new strategies in order to improve their results. Therefore, this paper adopts a twofold approach to the teaching experience: on the one hand, it gives some brief practical strategies on how to plan a good L2 course; on the other hand, it discusses the theoretical reasons undergoing those strategies.

2. A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Teaching a second language is an increasing necessity in a lot of countries due to many factors such as, among other things, the migration flows. Two situations mandate such a necessity: teaching the local language to foreign people and teaching a foreign language to local people. As a primary consequence of this fact, teachers are more and more demanding of successful techniques in order to improve their ability and efficiency. It is well known from Lenneberg's (1967) pioneering studies on the *Critical Period Hypothesis*, that L2 learners need different input and approaches depending on their age. For example, it has been argued that learners from 0 to 6 years old are able to learn every natural language without any effort and just from direct contact; learners from 6 years old to the end of the puberty gradually lose their natural ability and, therefore, they increasingly need to be overtly educated. Learners after puberty completely lose the ability to learn a

¹ Scuola Universitaria Superiore IUSS Pavia.

² I'm very grateful to Laura Nicholas Schofield, who taught me how to teach second languages to young students. Special thanks also to Ambassador Andrea Canepari, Principal Cindy Farlino, and Principal Lauren Joy Overton for managing and hosting the present project. Special thanks to Luigi Giraffa, Edoardo Lugarini, Andrea Moro, and Giuseppe Polimeni for their great suggestions. Finally, I thank the two anonymous reviewers for their precious comments.

³ To quote their words, a good L2 teacher education must include «a clear understanding of learners, who they are, why they learn, what they need to learn, what motivates them, and how a teacher goes about negotiating the teaching/learning activities with them» (2005: 18).

language from direct contact alone, requiring deliberate attention and extensive comprehensible input in the target language. Although the Critical Period Hypothesis has been challenged (for a critical discussion, see Muñoz, Singleton, 2011 and the references therein), there is an international consensus on the fact that there is a continuous linear decline in the capacity to learn a second language: from the completely naturalistic way of newborns to the completely structured way of adults. Clearly, teachers who want to perform courses in the best way should adopt different techniques depending on which phase the students belong to. For example, while the correct acquisition of the phonological components of the L2 is natural during the first phase (Tahta, Wood, Lowenthal, 1981), in the last one it is extremely difficult, contrasting with the easier acquisition of the other grammatical components, such as syntactic, semantic and pragmatic ones (Nikolov, Krashen, 1997; Isik, 2000).

Crucially, most of the technical literature on L2 teaching and teachers' education focuses on specific programs for adolescents and adults, whereas the L2 education of young children is often overlooked. However, many studies in the last thirty years show that a two-way bilingual education beginning in the first levels of the education system gives very promising results in the long-term academic success of the enrolled students (Collier, 1992; Pica, 2011 and the references therein), revealing that those students perform as native speakers across all subject areas when tested in the L2 after a four-to-seven year dual-language program. Learning an L2 during the schooling education also provides several "indirect" advantages, such as performing better in problem-solving activities and showing major respect for foreign languages and cultures (Genesee, 1994; Short, 1993, 1994; Kramsch, 1997; Cook, 2005).

A school-based experience will be discussed in order to contribute to teachers' education not just in a general way, but with the specific focus on the second language acquisition and teaching strategies⁴. In fact, receiving a good education in L2 teaching methodologies also affects the new generation of L2 teachers since the way in which new teachers build their own methodologies tends to reflect what they saw when they were students in L2-classes (Appel, 1995), unless they receive a strong training during the academic period (Kennedy, 1998). Such a practical guide is even more important since academic curricula are often considered incompatible with school-based experience reports although it should be an integral part of teacher education (Legutke, Ditfurth, 2009: 209).

For all these reasons it is also more important to have a practice guide like the one discussed in this paper, also because – as Fullan (1993) stated – the «main reason for the failure of teacher education programs is that they are based on extremely vague conceptions. Having an ideology is not the same as having conceptions and ideas of what should be done and how it should be done» (1993: 109). This study can be seen as a sort of "reflective teaching" paper, *a la* Schön (1983, 1987), following a qualitative approach.

Finally, I'd like to suggest a possible change in the language acquisition common field. It is broadly accepted that teachers in language acquisition move from the theoretical knowledge applying it to the practical field (Sharked, Johnson, 2003). Nothing prevents the other way around: from the practical field to the theoretical bases. In fact, the vivid experience in the classroom may suggest new ideas about student's habits, clarifying whether a given approach works and raising new questions on the cognitive basis of second language acquisition. This is not the major focus of this article, of course, but it can be an attempt to contribute to the great research in the theoretical field as well as in the practical one. Moreover, classrooms are perfect places in which researchers can

⁴ See Gebhard (2009) – and the references therein – for a detailed discussion on the importance of the "practicum" in the teacher education.

conduct their studies as largely proposed by many scientists, such as, among others, Doughty, Varela (1998); Harley (1998); Swain, Lapkin (2001); Pica *et al.* (2006). In fact, «the classroom, with a cohort of learners in place over time, offers a site worth considering, for its validity in informing questions on content and language integration as an aid to language learners in the academic arena. Task-based activities and classroom sites are rich resources for addressing policy and practice concerns about simultaneous learning of an L2 and the subject content it communicates» (Pica 2011: 264).

3. TEACHING ITALIAN TO K-2 AMERICAN CHILDREN

Learning additional languages is part of the core curriculum in many countries all around the world (Pufahl, Rhodes, Christian, 2000; Fortune, Tedick, 2008) as witnessed by the continuously increasing number of multilingual classes and projects. The United States of America represents an exception to this trend, inasmuch as the trend is the opposite one (Rhodes, Pufahl 2009): in the ten years from 1998 to 2008 the number of elementary schools offering foreign language classes dropped from 31% to 25%. Even though this pattern is changing, it is still surprising in a country hosting more than 350 spoken languages (based on American Community Survey data collected from 2009 to 2013). Clearly, this high number of spoken languages comes from the high number of communities spread all over the country (based on the U.S. Census Bureau statistics⁵). One of these is the Italian community and the present project focused on it. Before addressing the core elements of this study, it is worth discussing three aspects that are crucial for the success of an L2 course – and that were crucial for the success of the present program: the context in which it is conducted, the choice of the teachers, and the choice of the category of students. This preliminary discussion is already part of the original contribution of this paper.

It is well known (see Lindholm-Leary, 2007 and the references therein) that the social context, as well as the school proposing the L2 teaching, is crucial in order to gain a good result in second language programs. In fact, «[w]hat works in one community or with a particular population of students or teachers may not work as effectively in another community or with another population» (Lindholm-Leary, 2007: 7). This is the reason why the project was conducted in South-Philadelphia where people who have origins from Italy – mostly due to WWII migrations – are the majority. According to Stanger-Ross (2010: 25), «in 1980, over 55,000 Italians in Philadelphia lived as a majority in their own census tracts. Of these, more than 40,000 lived in South Philadelphia, where they comprised more than 80 percent of the population in some census tracts». Nowadays, most of the Italian-origin families do not speak either Italian or Italian dialects, representing, according to Polinsky and Kagan's (2007) classification, a heritage language with few individuals who speak it (see also Hornberger, Wang, 2008). From this point of view, teaching Italian in South Philadelphia was a way to give back a stronger sense of belonging to the people who came from Italian families, deriving it from «linking one's own identity to the community of speakers of the language» (Cummins, 2008). This also guaranteed a co-participation of the other members of the family, as well as the students who were enrolled in the L2 class. Besides the city context, the other crucial element of the project was the school hosting the L2 project, i.e. the William M. Meredith School, a public K-8 school located in the Queen Village neighborhood of Philadelphia. This school strongly supported the teaching of second language projects gearing Italian toward kindergarten through second-grade students. The project titled "*Il Convivio*, the Italian

⁵ See the website <https://www.census.gov/en.html> for the updated data.

language initiative” was managed by the Italian Ambassador Andrea Canepari with the participation of the Philadelphia School District, the Italian section of the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Pennsylvania and “*Il Convivio*”, a non-profit organization. Each grade had a 30-minute Italian class twice a week for 9 months.

The choice of the Italian teacher was the second crucial point in the strategic plan of the project. An increasing amount of studies (see, among many others, Medgyes, 1994; Árvai, Medgyes, 2000; Hinkel, 2011 and the references therein) shows that non-native speaking teachers perform very well in L2 teaching since they can understand the students’ struggles with both grammatical rules and idiomatic expressions, they are able to propose self-tested models of language learning, they are also more empathetic toward students’ difficulties, etc. Theoretically speaking, there are two possibilities: teachers are L1 native speakers and L2 learners; teachers are L1 learners and L2 native speakers. Of course, the latter option is the best one, since it puts together the benefits to be a non-native speaking learner with the one to be a native speaking teacher, such as the perfect phonological pronunciation and the knowledge of models of language learning (see also Donna, 2011 and the references therein). Moreover, this is also important for what is called *interactional competence* (see Galaczi, Taylor, 2018 and the references therein), namely the knowledge of the social interactions associated with the language used in a given discursive context. For example, the Italian use of *lei* (let. ‘she’) when the speaker refers to an older or an unknown person or in a formal context, which is pervasive in Italian but absent in many other languages, including English. Moreover, such an L2 teacher would also require an overt knowledge of the theoretical and practical methodologies in teaching (Burns, Richards, 2009) in order to be able to correctly support an L2 project. These were the reasons why an Italian Ph.D. student in Linguistics and Neurolinguistics was selected as teacher in the project. This situation allowed to realize the optimal option discussed in Pasternak and Bailey’s (2004) classification: having a teacher with good proficiency in the target language plus good professional preparation⁶.

Finally, the student’s age was the last strategic point at the base of the project, namely children from 5 to 7 years old. As outlined above, young learners are able to learn every natural language without effort and from only direct contact – particularly for what concerns the phonological components of the language – showing, among other things, several advantages in their academic results (see ch. 1).

To sum up, three fundamental premises were at the base of the project, i.e. the context in which it was conducted, the choice of the teacher, and the choice of the category of students. Let us consider now the main elements of this paper, namely the practical activities leading the project with some theoretical considerations.

4. PRACTICAL GUIDES AND ACTIVITIES IN L2 TEACHING

The following sessions display some activities representing the *practicum* aspect of the project. The choice of these activities, and not others, was made on a scientific basis. More specifically, empirical evidence and theoretical studies led to these practices and, therefore, part of the current literature will be discussed – even though in a brief way – in association with the activities in themselves. It is important to recall that these techniques were employed for the specific social and scholastic context described above. They could be ineffective, or less effective, in different situations, for example, if students were adults or teachers were not L2 native speakers. Besides these practical activities, it has been very important to develop some general strategies in order to improve the results of the

⁶ For a detailed discussion on the teacher preparation, see Kamhi-Stein (2009) and the references therein.

teaching, such as the full-body engagement in the classroom activities, the “playing” nuance of all the activities, etc. Both the activities and strategies are described in the following sections.

4.1. *Some Activities*

Teaching second languages requires many tools and abilities. Very often, it is not easy to make decisions on how to arrange an L2 course. Theoretical literature is rich in suggestions, but it often lacks practical indications⁷. On the other hand, practical books present many activities without a theoretical explanation for them. This study wants to give some practical indications, based on a theoretical background, adopted during the Italian course outlined above.

4.1.1. *Evaluation and use of the similarities between L1 and L2*

One of the first helping tools in language acquisition projects is the evaluation of the similarities between the students’ native language with the L2 (in technical words, the *cross-linguistic influence in second language acquisition*; see Odlin, 2012 and the references therein). A full discussion on this topic is beyond the goal of this paper (see Gutierrez-Mangado, Martínez, Gallardo Del Puerto, 2019) and I will just assume a well-established principle in this field: people use the knowledge of their L1 to acquire a new language in all the grammar domains (phonetics, lexicon, etc.). An immediate implementation on this point is that it will be easier for students to start from the similarity between L1 and L2 (Singleton, 1997; Molina et al. 2013). The bottom line of this strategy is to start from the sound and the words that, eventually, are identical in the two languages. In the specific case of this study, it was possible to start from the Italian words the L2 students already knew. Even though the number of English words borrowed from Italian is not completely established, there are likely hundreds⁸. These words come from different domains, such as music and food, and are mostly loanwords, i.e. words adopted from Italian with little or no modification (such as ‘bravo’ in music, ‘ballerina’ in classical ballet, ‘motto’ in literature, ‘pasta’ in cuisine, ‘blue’ in colors, ‘ciao’ as a greeting, etc. (see Haspelmath, Tadmor, 2009 and the references therein). Moreover, Italian borrowed many words from English as well. In fact, Italian is extremely rich in English words – hundreds, according to De Mauro and Mancini (2001) – spreading on many aspects of everyday life, such as ‘computer’ in technology, ‘manager’ in industry, ‘pacemaker’ in medicine, etc. A further step was to show that many Italian words resemble the English ones even though they are not phonologically identical (such as, ‘mamma’ /mam`ma/ and mum /mʌm/; ‘fiore’ /`fjore/ and flower /`flaʊə/; etc.). Such an approach was very effective with young students since they perceived Italian as a familiar language even though they did not know it. Clearly, this

⁷ See, among many others, Kanno and Stuart (2011). They followed two graduated students in a Master of Arts for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages program at a U.S. university. This paper shows how novel teachers lack of the practical experience in L2 teaching classes, whereas they have a full overt education in theoretical aspects. The authors show that the way the teachers learn to teach and the learning-in-practice experience is the fundamental step in order to shape their identities as teachers.

⁸ Unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge there is not a thorough study on the full lexicon shared by English and Italian. Wikipedia has a useful page dedicated to it: https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Category:English_terms_derived_from_Italian.

approach integrating elements of L1 and L2 was possible just because the L2 teachers knew both languages.

4.1.2. *Passive listening*

Passive listening is one of the most stable principles in the teaching of a second language since the 1960s / 1970s. The importance of this particular activity passed through different theoretical approaches, such as the behaviorism (Bloomfield, 1942) and the innatist view (Chomsky, 1965), and it is still considered one of the primary channels thanks to which students – at least, the youngest ones – gain access to L2 (Rost, 2011 and the references therein). An application of this principle was the gradual conduction of the class in Italian. The use of the students' native language in the early phase of the project was very useful to make learners feel comfortable. In the last phase, namely after 7-8 months, classes were entirely conducted in Italian with particular attention to repetitively use some of the words the students already learned and knew. Moreover, students listened to a story at the end of a class once a week for just 10 minutes. During the story time, students were engaged in a twofold way: they were very attentive to the tale, focusing on it with passion, and the teacher had the chance to interrupt the reading activity (or the watching one, in the case it was on television) to question and ask clarifications. This was particularly appreciated and efficient in order to increase the vocabulary knowledge, confirming what Elley (1989) proposed: stories repeated three times as well as working on some specific words – such as illustrations and definition – considerably increases the vocabulary learning. Finally, other activities very useful for passive listening were the applied projects in L2. We know from the literature (Wesche, 1993; Pica, 1997; Long, 2006) that when students learn a foreign language and, at the same time, some subject-specific content in the same language they gain higher results than a language-only approach. Of course, such integration has to be adjusted based on the student population. For instance, the subject-specific content may be one of the regular classes, such as math (Bournot-Trites, Reeder, 2001) or science, in high school or academic environments, but it cannot be the case in the lower levels of education, such as kindergartens and elementary schools. Therefore, the learning subject-specific contents were related to some specific projects, such as cooking and art classes. This also fit very well with the Italian culture, in which cooking and art are very important, helping the students to learn more about the cultural aspects of the language they were learning. For example, in the occasion of the Carnival, students made some masks expressing different emotions: students learned the basic words to describe them – such as happiness, sadness, etc. – and, moreover, they had the occasion to repeat the names of colors they were using and many other words.

The final result of these applied projects in L2 was that learners improved their competence at least in listening and communication skills.

4.1.3. *Active Speaking*

Speaking in an L2 is undoubtedly the goal of every L2 course. The final goal of the first-year class – at least, in the present project – is to make students able to perform sentences, however simple, and not just lists of words. This requires a 9-month plan based on the learning of nouns, verbs, and adjectives as well as the learning of small full sentences which may guide the students in building more complex sentences. For example, they learned how to ask permission to go to the bathroom (it. *“Posso andare in*

bagno?’, let. ‘may. I go in bathroom’) and, by doing so, students learned how to ask general permissions, the verb *to go* and the preposition *to* in just one time. There is evidence that learning chunks of language as well as singular words increases the fluency and gives better results in a long-term period (Lewis, 1993; Carter, 2001). More specifically, lexical chunks representing pre-patterned grammatical structures may be replicated by changing the lexical vocabulary (as in the previous example), reducing the communicative stress and improving the knowledge of the L2 grammatical features. The vocabulary was selected within the high-frequency multiword groups and phrases – borrowed from English as discussed in Shin (2007) and Shin, Nation (2008) – including colors, greetings, action verbs, body parts, numbers, etc. (see Appendix).

Many activities were implemented to reach this goal, such as pronunciation tasks, repetition tasks, and singing activities. Let us start from the pronunciation aspects.

Very often, languages display sounds that are either different or absent in the learners’ mother tongue language. For example, Italian and Standard English differ in the /r/ pronunciation: Italian /r/ is a voiced alveolar trill consonant; English /r/ is a voiced alveolar approximant consonant. This issue is particularly challenging for L2 learners. An easy way to help students is to pay deliberate attention to pronunciation (Trofimovich, Gatbonton, 2006), such as looking for some acoustic analogies with such sounds. In this case, some animal sounds, like frogs, are perfect for learning how to trill the tongue in order to make a perfect Italian /r/. This also meets a principle for which it seems to be easier to learn a new sound in a word or pseudo-words that «has no previous associations for a learner, than to learn it as part of a known word» (Nation, 2011: 449; see also Nation, 2013). Clearly, many other phonetic “tricks” can be used depending on which phonetic feature students need to learn. Luckily enough, the students enrolled in this project were K-2 grades and they love playing with sounds and, more importantly, they were in a perfect age to achieve a perfect pronunciation in L2 (Tahta, Wood, Lowenthal, 1981; Nikolov, Krashen, 1997; Isik, 2000).

Coming to the repetition tasks, it was arranged in multiple ways. Students have to greet in Italian with standard forms and they have to answer some questions – such as, ‘how do you feel today?’, ‘what day is it?’, etc. in Italian – at the beginning of every class. They also reviewed the content of a previous class at the beginning and at the end of each class for at least 3 consecutive times (since they had Italian twice a week, that means that they reviewed the content of a class for two weeks). That assured deep memorization of the lexicon and the small sentences. Moreover, the story times and the applied projects further give the opportunities to review the acquired knowledge. The peculiar position of the memorization in L2 acquisition is well known (see Bygate, 2010 and the references therein) and this really gains high results.

Finally, students also sing an Italian song (the same song for a whole month) every time. Songs referred to some lexical-phonological arguments planned for that month and they were all available on the web. For instance, a song on colors was chosen during the month dedicated to colors, constituting a different kind of repetition task. According to the literature (see, among others, Coyle, Gómez Gracia, 2014; Ludke, 2016), using songs is very useful for better and faster lexicon acquisition, gaining long-term benefits. Moreover, this also increases the emotional involvement of the students, who love singing. Some of the songs were translated from English songs, which were already familiar to the students – such as, ‘*head, shoulders, knees and toes*’, a very popular song for kids – further helping the assimilation of new words.

4.2. *Some strategies*

The activities mentioned above constituted the core aspects of the techniques used during the whole language acquisition project. However, their functionality depended on some strategies adopted during the classes, which were associated either to the language acquisition activity or to the teaching activity in general.

One of the key features of the good result of the project was the emotional engagement of the students. It has been obtained following the idea that the whole person is involved in the learning activity and, therefore, that the teaching experience has to deal with a multidimensional and multiple-sensorial approach. For instance, according to Lazaraton (2004), the interaction between gesture and speech during a vocabulary explanation shows that «classroom L2 learners receive considerable input in a nonverbal form that may modify and make verbal input (more) comprehensible» (p. 111) (see Swain, Lapkin, 2001; Kaplan, 2010, for a full discussion on other techniques).

During the present project many strategies were adopted, for example, dancing and gym activities were very useful for keeping the attention up, learning the vocabulary referred to the parts of the body, and having fun at the same time. Painting and drawing were very useful in learning many things, such as food names. Showing pictures of animals when students were asked to shout out their names was particularly appreciated. Watching videos on Italian handicrafts worked very well in the review activity: videos were stopped by the teacher any time the teacher wants to ask some words or phrases referring to something in the given video frame (movie-talk strategy)

Students were also asked to practice at home with parents and siblings. Parents received a monthly report with the Italian words and phrases students learned in the classes (see Appendix) with the English translation and a link with the sound of the correct Italian pronunciation. That was appreciated by parents and several of them decided to learn Italian, creating the perfect social context in which young students felt to be active learners and teachers as well: in fact, they were the teachers of their parents.

Finally, an important strategy was to arrange the class according to an “8-minute rule”: every 8 minutes the ongoing activity was stopped and changed due to the limited attention span of young students, mixing the multidimensional and multiple-sensorial activities seen above. For example, the first 8 minutes were dedicated to reviewing (repetition and song); then, 8 minutes were dedicated to crafts and games; and, finally, the last 8 minutes were dedicated to a movie-talk activity. Clearly, such an approach requires great planning attention by the teacher, but it gains great results.

5. QUALITATIVE RESULTS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Italian acquisition project lasted for 9 months and was performed by children who never took Italian classes before. At the end of the educational program, students were able to correctly use more than a hundred words and dozens of short sentences in L2. Students also started to greet each other in Italian and the older ones – namely, the second-grade students – were able to conduct short dialogs in Italian, such as asking and giving information, either personal or general.

The present work provided some good techniques and strategies L2 teachers may adopt in order to obtain better and stronger involvement from the student in the early scholar stage (from kindergarten to second grade) of an L2 course. The full involvement of the students was the key feature of the learning activity as well as the theoretical-guided multidimensional approach performed by the teacher. Activities were based on listening

and speaking strategies, which ranged from creativity tasks, such as painting and drawing, to practical ones, such as cooking and reciting; from unmoving activity, such as singing, to moving activity, such as jumping and dancing; from memory tasks, such as repetition by heart, to “out the blue” tasks, such as shouting new words out; from traditional support materials, such as paper, to informatic ones, such as videos; etc. Besides these strategies, the final ingredients to gain a very good result in this L2 project were the context in which the project was conducted, the choice of the teacher, and the choice of the category of students.

Of course, this paper is just a preliminary study and its qualitative nature may represent a good starting point for L2 teachers who want to find new strategies in their methodological approach. Future research will arguably give quantitative information on all the techniques discussed here.

REFERENCES

- Appel J. (1995), *Diary of a language teacher*, Heinemann, Oxford.
- Bloomfield L. (1942), *Outline Guide for the Practical Study of Foreign Languages*, Linguistic Society of America, Baltimore.
- Bournot-Trites M., Kenneth Reeder R. (2001), “Interdependence revisited: Mathematics achievement in an intensified French immersion program”, in *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 58, 1, pp. 27-43.
- Burns A., Richards J. C. (2009) *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher Education*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (MA).
- Bygate M. (2010), “Speaking”, in Kaplan R. B. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics* (2 ed.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 63-74.
- Carter R. (2001), “Vocabulary”, in Nunan D., Carter R. (eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (MA), pp. 42-47.
- Chomsky N. (1965), *Aspects of a Theory of Syntax*, MIT Press, Cambridge (MA).
- Collier V. P. (1992), “A synthesis of studies examining long-term language minority student data on academic achievement”, in *Bilingual Research Journal*, 16, 1-2, pp. 187-212.
- Cook V. (2005), “Basing teaching on the L2 user”, in Llorca E. (ed.), *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges, and contributions to the profession*, Springer, New York, pp. 47-61.
- Coyle Y., Gómez Gracia R. (2014), “Using songs to enhance L2 vocabulary acquisition in preschool children”, in *ELT Journal*, 68, 3, pp. 276-285: <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccu015>.
- Cummins J. (1991), “The politics of paranoia: reflections on the bilingual education debate”, in Garcia O. (ed.), *Bilingual education: Focusschrift in honour of Joshua A. Fishman*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 183-199.
- De Mauro T., Mancini M. (2001), *Dizionario delle parole straniere*, Garzanti, Milano.
- Donna C. (2011), “Dual Language Education”, in Hinkel E. (ed.), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, Vol. II, Rutledge, New York-London, pp. 3-20.

- Doughty C., Varela E. (1998), "Communicative focus on form", in Doughty C., Williams J. (eds.), *Focus on form in second language classroom*, Cambridge University Press, New York, pp. 114-138.
- Farrell Thomas S. C. (ed.) (2008), *Novice Language Teachers Insights and Perspectives for the First Year*, Equinox, Sheffield (UK).
- Fortune T. W., Tedick D. J. (2008), *Pathways to multilingualism: evolving perspectives on immersion education*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon.
- Fullan M. (1993), *Change forces. Probing the depths of educational reform*, Falmer Press, London.
- Galaczi E. D., Taylor L. (2018), "Interactional Competence: conceptualisations, operationalisations, and outstanding questions", in *Language Assessment Quarterly. An International Journal*, 15, 2, pp. 1-18.
- Gebhard J. G. (2009), "The practicum", in Burns A., Richards J. C. (eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 250-258.
- Genesee F. (1994), "Integrating language and content: lessons from immersion", in *Educational Practice, Report 11*, The National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, Washington, DC, pp. 1-15.
- Gutierrez-Mangado M. J., Martínez-Adrian M., Gallardo Del Puerto F. (eds.) (2019), *Cross-Linguistic Influence: from Empirical Evidence to Classroom Practice*, Springer, Cham (CH): <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22066-2>.
- Harley B. (1998), "The role of focus-on-form tasks in promoting child L2 acquisition", in Doughty C., Williams J. (eds.), *Focus on form in second language classroom*, Cambridge University Press, New York, pp.156-174.
- Haspelmath M., Tadmor U. (2009), *Loanwords in the World's Languages A Comparative Handbook*, De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin.
- Hinkel E. (2011), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, Vol. II. Routledge, New York-London.
- Hornberger N. H., Shuhan C. W. (2008), "Who are our heritage language learners?", in Brinton D., Kagan O., S. Bauckus S. (eds.), *Heritage language education: A new field emerging*, Routledge, New York, pp. 3-38.
- Kamhi-Stein L. (2009), "Teacher Preparation and Nonnative English-Speaking Educators", in Burns A., Richards J.C (eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 91-101.
- Kanno Y., Stuart C. (2011), "Learning to Become a Second Language Teacher: Identities-in-Practice", in *The Modern Language Journal*, 95, pp. 236-252: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01178.x>.
- Kaplan R. B. (ed.) (2010), *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics* (2 ed.), Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Kennedy M. (1998), *Learning to teach writing. Does teacher education make a difference?*, Teachers College Press, New York.
- Kramsch C. (1997), "The privilege of the non-native speaker", in *PMLA, Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 112, 3, pp. 359-369.
- Isik A. (2000), "The role of input in second language acquisition: more comprehensible input supported by grammar instruction or more grammar instruction?", in *ITL: Review of Applied Linguistics*, 129, 1, pp. 225-274.
- Lazaraton A. (2004), "Gesture and speech in the vocabulary explanations of one ESL Teacher: a microanalytic inquiry", in *Language Learning*, 54, 1, pp. 79-117.
- Legutke M. K., Schocker V. Ditfurth M. (2009), "School-based experience", in Burns A., Richards J. C (eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher Education*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (MA), pp. 209-217.

- Lenneberg E. H. (1967), *The Biological Foundations of Language*, John Wiley and Sons, New York.
- Grove C., Lewis M. (1994), *The Lexical Approach: The State of ELT and a Way Forward*, Language Teaching Publications, Hove.
- Lindholm-Leary K., Howard E. R. (2008), "Language development and academic achievement in two-way immersion programs", in Fortune T. W., Tedick D. J. (eds.), *Pathways to multilingualism: evolving perspectives on immersion education*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, pp. 177-200.
- Long M. H. (1990), "Maturational constraints on language development", in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 12, pp. 251-286.
- Long M. H. (2006), "Recasts: the story so far", in Long M. H. (ed.), *Problems in SLA*, Erlbaum, Mahwah (NJ), pp. 75-116.
- Ludke K. M. (2016), "Singing and arts activities in support of foreign language learning: an exploratory study", in *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 12, 4, pp. 371-386.
- Molina G. T., Cañado M. L. P., Agulló G. L. (2005), "Current Approaches and Teaching Methods. Bilingual Programmes", in McLaren N., Madrid D., Bueno A. (eds.), *TEFL in Secondary Education*, Editorial Univesidad de Granada, Granada:
<https://pdf4pro.com/view/chapter-4-current-approaches-and-teaching-methods-581335.html>.
- Muñoz C., Singleton D. (2011), "A critical review of age-related research on L2 ultimate attainment", in *Language Teaching*, 44, 1, pp. 1-35.
- Nation I. S. P. (2011), "Second Language Speaking", in Hinkel E. (ed.), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, Vol. II, Rutledge. New York – London, pp. 444-454.
- Nation I. S. P. (2013), *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language. Second edition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Nikolov M., Krashen S. (1997), "Need we sacrifice accuracy for fluency?", in *System*, 25, pp. 197-201.
- Odlin T. (2012), "Crosslinguistic Influence in Second Language Acquisition", in *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, Wiley Blackwell, Hoboken, New Jersey, pp. 1562-1568: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0292>.
- Pasternak M., Bailey K. (2004), "Preparing Nonnative and Native English-speaking Teachers: Issues of Professionalism and Proficiency", in Kamhi-Stein L. D. (ed.), *Learning and teaching from experience: perspectives on nonnative English-speaking professionals*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, pp. 155-175.
- Pica T. (1997), "Second Language Acquisition Research and Applied Linguistics", in *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 18, 2, pp. 1-15.
- Pica T. (2011), "Second Language Acquisition, research applied and applicable orientations to practical questions and concerns", in Hinkel E. (ed.), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*, Vol. II, Rutledge, New York-London, pp. 256-273.
- Pica T., Kang H. S., Sauro S. (2006), "Information gap tasks: their multiple roles and contributions to interaction research methodology", in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 28, 2, pp. 301-338.
- Polinsky M., Kagan O. (2007), "Heritage languages: In the 'wild' and in the classroom", in *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 1, 5, pp. 368-395.
- Pufahl I., Rhodes N. C., Donna C. (2000), *Foreign language teaching: what the U.S. can learn from other countries*, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC.
- Rhodes N., Pufahl I. (2009), *Foreign language teaching in U.S. schools: results of a national survey*, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC.

- Richards J. (1998), *Beyond training*, Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Richards J., Nunan D. (1990), *Second language teacher education*, Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Rost M. (2011), *Teaching and Researching Listening*, Pearson, Harlow.
- Sharkey J., Johnson K. (2003), *Tesol Quarterly Dialogues: Rethinking Issues Of Language, Culture, And Power*, TESOL, Alexandria.
- Shin D. (2007), “The high frequency collocations of spoken and written”, in *English. English Teaching*, 62, 1, pp. 199-218.
- Shin D., Nation P. (2008), “Beyond single words: The most frequent collocations in spoken English”, in *ELT Journal*, 62, 4, pp. 339-357
- Schön D. A. (1983), *The reflective practitioner*, Basic Books, Inc., Boston.
- Schön D. A. (1987), *Educating the reflective practitioner*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.
- Short D. J. (1993), “Assessing integrated language and content instruction”, in *TESOL Quarterly*, 27, 4, pp. 627-656.
- Short D. J. (1994), “Expanding middle school horizons: integrating language, culture, and social studies”, in *TESOL Quarterly* 28, 3, pp. 581-608.
- Singleton D. (1997). “Learning and processing L2 vocabulary”, in *Language Teaching*, 30, 4, pp. 213-225.
- Stanger-Ross J. (2010), *Staying Italian: urban change and ethnic life in postwar Toronto and Philadelphia*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Swain M., Lapkin S. (2001), “Focus on form through collaborative dialogue: exploring task effects”, in Bygate M., Skehan P., Swain M. (eds.), *Researching pedagogic tasks, second language learning, teaching and testing*, Longman, Harlow, pp. 99-118.
- Tahta S., Wood M., Lowenthal K. (1981), “Age changes in the ability to replicate foreign pronunciation and intonation”, in *Language and Speech*, 24, 4, pp. 363-372.
- Tarone E., Allwright D. (2005), “Second language teacher learning and student second language learning: shaping the knowledge-base”, in Tedick D. J. (ed.), *Second language teacher education: International perspectives*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah (NJ), pp. 5-24.
- Trofimovich P., Gatbonton E. (2006), “Repetition and focus on form in processing L2 Spanish words: Implications for pronunciation instruction”, in *The Modern Language Journal*, 90, 4, pp. 519-535.
- Veenman S. (1984), “Perceived problems of beginning teachers”, in *Review of Educational Research*, 54: 143-178.
- Wesche M. (1993), “Discipline-based approaches to language study: Research issues and outcomes”, in Krueger M., Ryan F. (eds.), *Language and content: Discipline- and content-based approaches to language study*, D. C. Heath, Lexington, pp. 57-82.
- Warwick B. E. (1989), “Vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories”, in *Reading Research Quarterly*, 24, 2, pp. 174-187.

APPENDIX

List of Italian words with the English translation and an example of pronunciation.

Ciao	Hello	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/ciao
Buon giorno	Good morning	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/buongiorno
Buona sera	Good evening	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/buona sera
Buona notte	Good night	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/buona notte

Mastro	Teacher (male)	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/maestro
Classe	Set of students	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/classe
Io mi chiamo	My name is	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/Io mi chiamo
Come stai oggi?	How are you today?	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/Come stai oggi%3F
Io sto bene	I'm good	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/io sto bene
Canzone	Song	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/canzone
Sono felice	I'm happy	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/sono felice
Sono triste	I'm sad	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/sono triste
Come ti chiami?	What's your name?	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/Come ti chiami%3F
Mi chiamo ...	My name is ...	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/Mi chiamo
Banco	Desk	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/banco
Matita	Pencil	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/matita
Foglio	Paper	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/foglio
Sedia	Chair	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/sedia
Scuola	School	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/scuola
Cestino	Basket	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/cestino
Lavagna	Whiteboard	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/lavagna
Libro	Book	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/libro
Gomma	Eraser	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/gomma
Zaino	Backpack	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/zaino
Bottiglia	Bottle	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/bottiglia
Colore	Colour	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/colore
Giallo	Yellow	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/giallo
Verde	Green	http://www.wordreference.com/iten/verde
Azzurro	Light Blue	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/azzurro
Blu	Blue	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/blu
Arancione	Orange	https://translate.google.it/-it/en/arancione
Rosso	Red	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/rosso
Viola	Purple	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/Viola
Rosa	Pink	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/rosa
Bianco	White	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/Bianco
Grigio	Grey	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/grigio
Nero	Black	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/nero
Marrone	Brown	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/marrone
Mi piace...	I like...	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/mi piace
Non mi piace...	I do not like	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/non mi piace
Come si dice...?	How can I say...?	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/Come si dice%3F
Cosa vuol dire...?	What does ... mean?	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/Cosa vuol dire%3F
Numeri	Numbers	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/numeri
Zero	0	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/zero
Uno	1	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/uno
Due	2	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/due

Tre	3	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/tre
Quattro	4	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/quattro
Cinque	5	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/cinque
Sei	6	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/sei
Sette	7	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/sette
Otto	8	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/otto
Nove	9	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/nove
Dieci	10	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/dieci
Undici	11	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/undici
Dodici	12	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/dodici
Tredici	13	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/tredici
Quattordici	14	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/quattordici
Quindici	15	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/quindici
Sedici	16	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/sedici
Diciassette	17	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/diciassette
Diciotto	18	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/diciotto
Diciannove	19	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/diciannove
Venti	20	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/venti
Grazie	Thank you	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/grazie
Prego	You're welcome	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/prego
Per favore	Please	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/per favore
Papà	Dad	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/papà
Mamma	Mom	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/mamma
Figlio	Son	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/figlio
Fratello	Brother	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/fratello
Sorella	Sister	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/sorella
Nonno	Grandpa	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/nonno
Nonna	Grandma	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/nonna
Zio	Uncle	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/zio
Zia	Aunt	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/zia
Natale	Christmas	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/natale
Pupazzo di neve	Snowman	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/pupazzo di neve
Panettone	Penettone	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/panettone
Presepe	Nativity	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/presepe
Albero di natale	Christmas tree	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/albero di natale
Babbo natale	Santa Claus	https://translate.google.com/-it/en/babbo natale
Neve	Snow	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/neve
Io	I	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/io
Tu	You	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/tu
Lui – Lei	He – She	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/Lui http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/lei
Noi	We	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/noi
Voi	You	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/voi
Loro	They	http://www.vocobolaudio.com/it/loro

Settimana		http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/settimana
Lunedì	Monday	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/luned%C3%AC
Martedì	Tuesday	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/Marted%C3%AC
Mercoledì	Wednesday	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/mercoled%C3%AC
Giovedì	Thursday	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/gioved%C3%AC
Venerdì	Friday	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/venerd%C3%AC
Sabato	Saturday	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/sabato
Domenica	Sunday	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/domenica
Che giorno è oggi	Which day is it?	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/che%20giorno%20%C3%A8%20oggi%3F
Animali	Animals	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/animali
Io ho un...	I have a....	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/io%20ho%20un
Cane	Dog	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/cane
Gatto	Cat	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/gatto
Topo	Mouse	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/topo
Mucca	Cow	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/mucca
Tigre	Tiger	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/tigre
Oca	Goose	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/oca
Elefante	Elephant	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/elefante
Coniglio	Rabbit	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/coniglio
Gallina	Chicken	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/gallina
Asino	Donkey	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/asino
Piccolo	Little	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/piccolo
Grande	Big	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/grande
Io sono arrabbiato	I'm mad	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/Io%20sono%20arrabbiato
Io sono spaventato	I'm scared	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/Io%20sono%20spaventato
Voglio...	I want...	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/Io%20voglio
Non voglio...	I do not want...	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/Io%20non%20voglio
Su	Up	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/su
Giù	Down	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/gi%C3%B9
Luna	Moon	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/luna
Bruco	Caterpillar	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/bruco
Prugna	Plum	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/prugna
Mela	Apple	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/mela
Pera	Pear	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/pera
Fragola	Strawberry	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/fragola
Farfalla	Butterfly	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/farfalla
Arancia	Orange	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/arancia

Quanti anni hai?	How old are you?	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/quant%20anni%20hai%3F
Io ho....	I'm ... years old	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/io%20ho
Bello	Beautiful / Handsome	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/bello
Brutto	Ugly	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/brutto
Testa	Head	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/testa
Spalle	Shoulders	http://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/spalla
Gambe	Legs	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/gambe
Piedi	Feet	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/piedi
Occhi	Eyes	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/occhi
Mani	Hands	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/mani
Orecchie	Ears	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/orecchie
Naso	Nose	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/naso
Bocca	Mouth	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/bocca
Denti	Teeth	https://translate.google.com/?hl=it#it/en/denti
Mi sono fatto male	I hurt myself	https://translate.google.it/?hl=it#view=home&op=translate&sl=auto&tl=it&text=Mi%20sono%20fatto%20male
Uccello	Bird	https://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/uccello
Nuvola	Cloud	https://www.vocabolaudio.com/it/nuvola
La nuvola è grigia	The cloud is grey	https://translate.google.it/?hl=it#view=home&op=translate&sl=auto&tl=it&text=La%20nuvola%20%C3%A8%20grigia