

## THE EFFECTS OF TEXTUAL ENHANCEMENT AND STRUCTURED INPUT ACTIVITIES ON THE ACQUISITION OF THE ITALIAN NOUN-ADJECTIVE AGREEMENT

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The present research has the aim to investigate how input, presented through different types of instructions, can improve the acquisition of noun-adjective gender agreement by L2 Italian learners.

Gass and Selinker defines Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as «the study of how learners create a new language system» (Van Patten & Benati, 2010: 1). Nowadays all theories in SLA agree in giving to input a fundamental role in how learners create linguistic systems. Therefore it is very important to define what input is and why it is so relevant in SLA.

Input is defined as «the language that a learner hears (or reads) that has some kind of communicative intent, that means that there is a message in the language that the learner is supposed to attend to» (Van Patten, 2003: 26).

Input is found at the initial stage of SLA, when a learner is exposed to the foreign language. Once learners receive an input, the input has to be processed, then the underlying knowledge (the internal grammar) has to be restructured and learners can produce output (Farley, 2005).

From an Input Processing perspective (Van Patten, 1996; 2004) learners rely on specific psycholinguistic strategies in order to interpret and process the input they are exposed to; the main focus of this approach is on the meaning of the input. In Van Patten's model, working memory plays a very important role as the human brain has a limited processing ability (Lee & Benati, 2007).

That means that learners do not process all the input they are exposed to, for this reason they rely on specific cognitive strategies.

There are other SLA theories emphasising the importance of the role of input. Chomsky, in the *Universal Grammar theory* (UG), supported the view that everyone is biologically endowed of a “rich internal structure” and an innate ability that makes possible for humans to acquire language. It is assumed that humans inherit a language-specific module that is like a “blueprint” in the brain that defines the specific shape that a language should take (Aitchinson, 2007).

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The role of input in this approach is very important because when learners are exposed to input, UG mechanisms are activated and the set of parameters contained in the language-specific module are set according to the input received from the environment. Other perspectives that give importance to input are the *information-processing theory* that supports the view that language acquisition is driven by general cognitive processes like other types of acquisition and the *skill-acquisition theory* that identifies language learning as the acquisition of a particular skill that involves different stages. When learners are subjected to input, they are able to form a mental representation of the target language (Nassaji & Fotos 2011).

Another important aspect in defining SLA is the distinction between instructed i.e. formal, guided, tutored and uninstructed i.e. informal, spontaneous, unguided, untutored.

Formal instruction can be beneficial to learners when it takes place in communicative contexts (Long, 1983 in Wong, 2005). It cannot modify the route of language acquisition but it can affect the rate of acquisition and it is for this reason that Long (1991) identified two different types of pedagogic interventions: focus-on-forms (FonFs), a type of intervention that draw learners' attention to a specific grammatical form without considering the meaning as opposed to focus-on-form (FonF), that refers to techniques that draw learners' attention to a specific form within a meaningful context.

This second typology of instruction that Long identifies, refers to external effort to draw learners' attention to form while keeping the focus on the meaning or communication.

The two types of instruction that will be researched in this study are Input Processing and Input Enhancement. These types of instruction are based on Long's FonF intervention.

Input Enhancement (Sharwood Smith, 1991) proposes that the attention of learners can be drawn to specific grammatical features through different kinds of techniques. They can be explicit, for example when the teacher explicitly draws the attention of learners to a specific feature, or implicit when learners' attention is drawn to the grammatical feature while their main focus is on meaning (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Enhancement can be applied to written text through textual enhancement (Wong, 2005) or through oral enhancement (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).

Any input to which learners are exposed, have to be comprehensible and most importantly they have to be noticed by the learner, in order for the input to be processed and become intake.

SLA researchers are not all in agreement as to what noticing the input means. Schmidt's noticing theory (Schmidt, 1990) has proposed that only the input that has been consciously noticed can be converted to intake.

I use noticing to mean registering the simple occurrence of some event, whereas understanding implies recognition of a general principle, rule or pattern. (...) Noticing is crucially related to the question of what linguistic material is stored in memory...understanding relates to questions concerning how the material is organized into a linguistic system (Doughty & Williams, 1998: 24).

On the other hand other researchers (Tomlin & Villa, 1994) asserted that it is sufficient to pay attention to the input without being necessarily consciously aware. Because it is also difficult to measure awareness empirically, there is a general agreement in supporting the view that some form of attention to input is necessary in order for it to be usable by learners in the field of SLA.

Both Input Processing and Input Enhancement aim to make input more noticeable to learners by manipulating it, simplifying it or enhancing it, in order to facilitate its intake and processing.

Input Processing was developed by Van Patten (1996, 2004) and analyse what learners do with input once they are exposed to it. He outlined two basic principles each having a number of sub principles that explains the strategies used by L2 learners during processing. Based on the principles of the input processing model, Van Patten developed an instructional method called Processing Instruction (PI). According to this technique, it is possible by understanding how learners process input, to design effective activities to favour input processing for acquisition. Processing Instruction has the purpose to help learners to process input correctly and create a correct form-meaning connection, that is the relationship between referential meaning and the way it is encoded linguistically (Wong, 2005). Structured Input Activities (SIA) are the instructional activities that can be designed in input processing instruction, SIA are structured in a way that learners are forced to notice and process the target form for meaning

The idea behind SIA is to «manipulate the input, that is, structure it in order to force learners to attend the target form in the input and connect it to its meaning» (Lee & Benati, 2007: 41).

The present study will seek to explore how Structured Input Activities and Input Enhancement can improve Italian learners' acquisition of noun-adjective, a morphological feature in the Italian language that is particularly difficult to acquire. The two proposed types of instruction assume that drawing attention to specific target forms by manipulating the input will have an impact on learners' language development. Attention can be drawn either through saliency (IE), or by forcing learners to process the form in order to get the meaning (IP). If it is the case, how and to what extent can these types of instruct influence SLA?

## 2. OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH

The present study assumes that input is necessary for acquisition and that instruction plays a positive role in SLA. For this reason it seeks to explore to what extent different types of pedagogical interventions can be effective in the acquisition of noun-adjective gender agreement by L2 Italian learners.

In the field of Input Processing (IP) it is considered that forcing learners to process the input for meaning can create the kind of form-meaning connection needed for learning (Van Patten & Benati, 2010).

It can be argued that input is not always sufficient in second language classrooms. Therefore Sharwood Smith (1991) introduced the concept of IE, defined as «any pedagogical intervention that is used to make specific feature of L2 input more salient as an effort to draw learner's attention to these features» (Wong, 2005). It is fundamental

in SLA that input must be comprehensible and noticed by the learner, to have an impact on acquisition.

Both types of pedagogical interventions are based on theoretical concepts such as attention, noticing, processing, awareness. The present study will be divided as follows: in chapter 3, a detailed review of the theories underlying these two instructional methods and the research questions will be presented. The method and procedures to conduct the research will be presented in chapter 4. This chapter will present in detail the target form of the present study, the materials created and the population used for the study. The findings of the experiment, results and statistics are presented in detail in chapter 5. The final conclusions, comments on the experimental research and suggestions for further research are discussed in chapter 6.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this study is to explore the effectiveness of IP and IE in the acquisition of noun-adjective gender agreement in L2 Italian learners. For this reason it is fundamental to provide an overview of the theories underpinning these instructional methods, in order to have a better understanding of the concepts involved, including the reason why input manipulation can be considered a positive instructional intervention through IE and PI. This section will also present a review of the studies previously conducted on IE and PI.

#### 3.1. *Input enhancement*

Input is a crucial concept in SLA because it is the core of learning for L2 learners, nevertheless researchers have made a distinction between input (language that learners are exposed to) and intake (language that is registered in learners' mind). Input can become intake; intake can become part of the developing language system of the learner.

The problem arises because not all input will necessarily become intake. To study this problem, many researchers asserted that input cannot become intake until learners do not recognise i.e. notice it (Schmidt, 1990).

In psychology there are six basic assumptions regarding attention (Schmidt, 2001: 1):

- it is limited, because attention has limited capacity.
- It is selective; attention must be strategically allocated due to its limited capacity.
- It is partially subject to voluntary control, because learners can choose what to pay attention to.
- It controls access to consciousness, because attention activates awareness.
- It is essential for action control; attention can control our actions depending whether it is a novice behaviour that needs a controlled processing or an expert behaviour that can be completed automatically.
- It is essential for learning, because attention to input is necessary in order for it to become intake.

Following these assumptions, Tomlin and Villa (1994) distinguished among three

different processes related to attention: alertness, orientation, detection. Alertness is related to the readiness of learners to receive input, orientation is the characteristic to focus learners' attention to one particular input while ignoring the other, detection is the registration of in the input for processing. This is the most important process and it is essential for learning because the detected information can become intake and later part of the developing system (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).

The role of awareness in SLA has direct connections with IE as previous studies have been conducted in the field of IE (more specifically in the field of textual enhancement) and they have been based on the noticing theory developed by Schmidt (1990). IE is a teaching strategy that was first introduced by Sharwood Smith (1991). It is an input-based approach that has the aim to raise learner's attention to specific target forms by making input more salient i.e. enhanced.

Sharwood Smith and an other researcher Rutherford developed this concept arguing against Krashen's hypothesis (1981, 1985) which asserts that instruction plays little or no role in language learning. They stated that IE can influence learners to pay attention to forms that without enhancement would hardly be noticed.

Originally introduced as consciousness-raising, Sharwood Smith decided to change the term arguing that input enhancement would better imply that the control is external to the learners and depends only on the materials presented to the learners. This term focuses on the action of drawing the attention of learners to the input through enhancement.

It is important in IE that learners would pay attention to specific forms before they can become intake and subsequently become part of the language system. Attention plays an important role in IE and helps acquisition. IE does not guarantee that input will become salient to learners or processed in their developing system. Surely learners can notice the enhanced form but they may not necessarily it will process it. In other occasions learners may not also notice the enhanced forms at all.

In this kind of pedagogic intervention, learners can notice the input without being conscious about it, as in Tomlin and Villa's processes related to attention. IE can vary on two different dimensions: explicitness and elaboration. Explicitness is the degree of the attention that is drawn to the target form, e.g. explicit rule explanation. Elaboration refers to the intensity and the amount of time dedicated to enhance the target form, enhancement may vary in elaboration.

While explicit enhancement may focus more on the form e.g. when the teacher directs learners' attention to a particular target form, implicit enhancement happens when learners' attention is drawn to the target form while keeping the focus on the meaning. Another distinction can be made between positive and negative enhancement. Positive input enhancement or positive evidence relates to those strategies that make a form salient but emphasising what is correct in the language. This is sometimes known as naturalistic input (Trahey & White, 1993 in Wong, 2005). On the contrary, negative input enhancement or negative evidence shows the learners the wrong form, thus indicating that there is a mistake. An example of negative input enhancement is the use of corrective feedback.

There are many ways to draw learners' attention to particular target forms.

A simple example would be the use of typographical conventions such as underlining or capitalizing a particular grammatical surface feature, where

you merely ask the learners to pay attention to anything that is underlined or capitalized. Another example would be the deliberate exposure of the learner to an artificially large number of instances of some target structure in the language on the assumption that the very high frequency of the structure in question will attract the learner's attention to the relevant formal regularities (Rutherford and Sharwood Smith, 1985: 27 in Wong, 2005: 8).

Input can be manipulated through different strategies. The input manipulation at the centre of this study is called textual enhancement and in this case the input is written. It can be a story, a letter, an article or any other form of written text. Textual Enhancement «is a technique that involves manipulation the typographical features of a written text so that the perceptual salience of a certain grammatical forms of that text are increased. This may be achieved by changing the font style, enlarging the character size, underlining, bolding, etc.» (Wong, 2005: 120).

If in the text there are not sufficient target forms, it is possible to manipulate the text by adding more target forms. In this case textual enhancement would be combined with input flood, another technique in which L2 learners are intentionally exposed to many examples of the target form. It is assumed that the high frequency of the input will help learners to notice it.

Textual Enhancement (TE) is an implicit form of input enhancement that seeks to draw learners' attention to the form while keeping the focus on the meaning. Doughty and Williams (1998) proposed a taxonomy of Focus-on-form tasks and techniques (Figure 1). According to their approach (Doughty & Williams 1998: 258) there are FonF methods that have a lower degree of obtrusiveness such as IE and methods that have a higher degree of obtrusiveness such as IP.

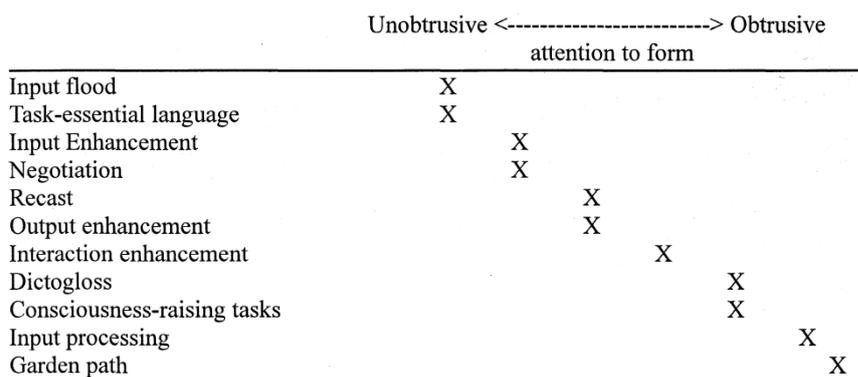


Figure 1. *Degrees of obtrusiveness of Focus-on-form techniques.*  
(from Doughty & Williams, 1998: 258)

### 3.1.1. *Studies on input enhancement*

Several studies have been conducted with the purpose of assessing whether Input Enhancement is effective to get learners to notice the target forms.

In this section studies on Textual Enhancement (TE) will be presented.

One of the first studies on TE was conducted by Shook (1994). In addition to testing the effectiveness of TE, Shook also wanted to investigate whether the explicit explanation of the target form would have made any difference and compared two target forms: Spanish present perfect tense and Spanish relative pronouns. The subjects for this study were Spanish learners of first and second year college.

The subjects of the study were divided in three different groups: the first group received an enhanced version of the text and also explicit instruction (EI) to the enhanced forms, the second group received an enhanced version of the text but without any explicit information and the third group received a text without any enhanced form and without any explicit information. The target forms in the enhanced version were enhanced by bolding and rewriting the text in a bigger case.

The results showed the groups that received the TE and TE+EI tests, performed better than the third group.

Shook did not notice any difference in the results of the first two groups, that means that EI did not influence the performance of the subjects.

However Shook noticed that the scores were affected by the target forms. The results of the tests on the Spanish present perfect tense were better than the results on the Spanish relative pronouns. Shook asserted that the outcomes were different because present perfect tense has a higher communicative value compared to the relative pronouns, that means that it was more important to understanding the meaning of the texts.

Alanen (1995) combined TE with EI to investigate whether the use of EI would make any difference in the acquisition and production of the target forms. The target forms in this research were semi-artificial locative suffixes and consonant changes in Finnish. The subjects of the study were adult L1 English speakers and they were divided in four groups. The first group received EI and then TE, the second group received only EI and the third group only TE. The fourth group served as a control group, they read unenhanced texts and did not receive any explicit information.

The subjects were asked to think aloud while reading the texts. The think aloud data were recorded and they showed that the subjects that were reading the enhanced version of the texts (where the target form was italicised) mentioned the target forms more compared to the other groups who did not have enhanced texts.

On the other hand, results of the production tasks showed that the group who was exposed to explicit information and textual enhancement performed better than the others, and the group who receive only EI (group two) performed better than the group that received only the enhanced text (group three).

These findings reveal that while TE helped the subjects to notice the target form and recognise it, EI helped learners to use the form in production tasks.

Another study conducted by Overstreet (1998) tried to investigate if a familiar text would help learners to focus more on the target forms. The idea behind this research was that learners could have more time to focus on the enhanced form if they already knew the text, because they would have taken less time for comprehension.

The target forms were preterite and imperfect tenses in Spanish and the subject were adult Spanish learners. They were divided in four different groups.

Preterite tenses enhanced by underlining, shadowing and using a larger size and a different font and with imperfect enhanced by underlining, bolding and using a larger size and a different font.

The first group read a familiar text (“Little Red Riding Hood”) with the targets enhanced. The second group read an unfamiliar text (“A letter to God”) with the target forms enhanced. The third group read the familiar text with no enhancement and the fourth group read the unfamiliar text with no enhancement.

The tests results showed that TE did not have any effect on comprehension as subjects’ results were negative. Overstreet (1998) argued that by focusing their attention on the enhanced forms, learners were forgetting to pay attention to the meaning and failed to understand the texts. Another hypothesis is that enhancing more than one target form can distract learners and affect the comprehension and intake of the target form. These results are in line with Van Patten previous findings (1991) stating that learners have difficulties to focus on forms and meaning at the same time especially the target form is not essential to get the meaning.

However, Overstreet’s study is one of the few studies that found negative evidence on TE for comprehension.

A more recent study by Wong (2003) studied the effects of TE and simplified input on the comprehension of gender agreement of French past participles in adjectival relative clauses. The subjects were adult L1 English learning French and they were divided in four different groups: the first group received an enhanced and simplified text, the second group received an enhanced text without simplification, the third group received a simplified text without enhancement and the fourth group received a text without enhancement nor simplification.

The target forms were enlarged, bolded, italicised and underlined and the article of the head nouns were also enlarged bolded and italicised. The simplified version was focusing on lexis and sentence structure without involving the target form. The study showed positive results, but since TE was combined with simplified or unsimplified versions of the text, the improvements were attributed to the exposure to input rather than TE or simplification because there was no evidence of differences between the two strategies.

The studies presented in this section show the positive effects of TE in language learning. Researches have shown that TE helps significantly to notice the target forms but failed to facilitate the creation of form-meaning connections.

However, as Williams and Evans argue ‘it has not been clear exactly what it means to *draw a learner’s attention to form* or how this is to be accomplished.’ (Williams and Evans 1998:139). Input Enhancement failed to create a general consensus on how features of the target forms should be enhanced i.e. the article, the ending of the head noun, the whole adjective or the ending of the adjective, when teaching noun-adjective gender agreement and how to enhance them in order for learners to notice them without forgetting to pay attention to the meaning.

The present study seeks to explore to which extent textual enhancement can be effective on the acquisition of Italian gender agreement.

### 3.2. *Input processing*

Input Processing (IP) refers to a specific aspect of SLA that is the comprehension and the processing of input, from input to intake.

Van Patten (1996) designed an SLA model to describe the processes learners attend to when they are exposed to input (figure 2).

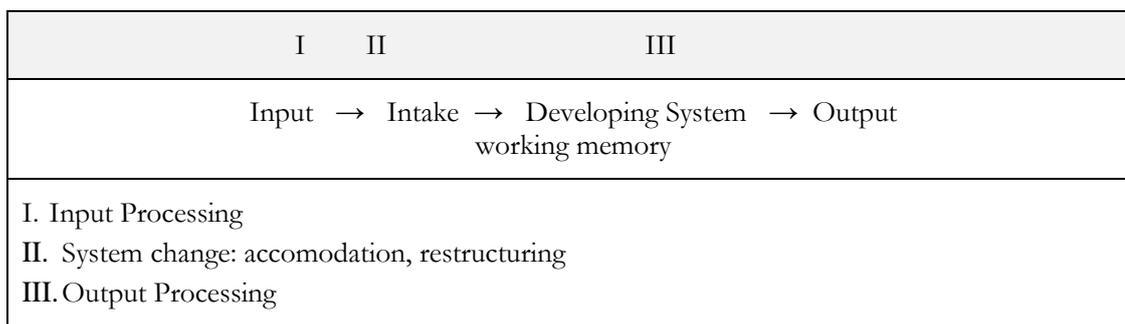


Figure 2. *Van Patten's model of SLA (1996).*  
(from Wong, 2003: 28)

When learners are exposed to input and they also understand the message, a form-meaning connection is created. This connection is the relationship between the referential meaning and the way it is encoded linguistically. For example if an L2 learner reads the word *casa* (house) and understands that this word means a building in which people can live, a form-meaning connection is created. Acquisition is a byproduct of comprehension. Comprehension cannot guarantee acquisition, but acquisition cannot happen without comprehension. Because acquisition strictly depends on the correct creation of form-meaning connections during the act of comprehension (Van Patten, 2007). So it is important not only to notice<sup>2</sup> the input but also to understand the meaning that the input encodes. When a form-meaning connection is created, input becomes intake and it can be internalised.

When input has become intake, it is incorporated to the internal system (accomodation) and the developing system is restructured, that means that the intake becomes part of it. This second phase of SLA takes place in working memory. Once learners acquired the new structure, they will be able to use it and produce utterances in real time, this process is called Output Processing.

Considering the importance of the first phase of SLA, that is making form-meaning connections, IP relates to three key questions (Van Patten, 2007: 116).

- Under what conditions do learners make the initial form-meaning connections?
- Why, do they make some and not other form-meaning connections?
- What internal strategies do learners use in comprehending sentences and how might this affect acquisition?

In order to give an answer to these questions, Van Patten (1996,2004) proposed two Input Processing principles, each of them having a subset of subprinciples. These principles aim to present the strategies (intended as cognitive steps) that L2 learners rely

<sup>2</sup> Here the concept of noticing is used as proposed by Tomlin & Villa (1994). See also ch. 2.1.

on when they process input. IP principles also help instructors in the production of Processing Input materials.

The full list of principles introduced in 1996 was revised in 2004. For the purpose of the present study only the first principle will be reviewed (Figure 3). Principle 2 and its subprinciples can be found in Appendix A.

<b>P1. The Primacy of Meaning Principle.</b> Learners process input for meaning before they process it for form.
<b>P1a. The Primacy of Content Words Principle.</b> Learners process content words in the input before anything else.
<b>P1b. The Lexical Preference Principle.</b> Learners will tend to rely on lexical items as opposed to grammatical forms to get meaning when both encode the same semantic information.
<b>P1c. The Preference for Nonredundancy principle.</b> Learners are more likely to process nonredundant meaningful grammatical form before they process redundant meaningful forms.
<b>P1d. The Meaning-before-Nonmeaning Principle.</b> Learners are more likely to process meaningful grammatical forms before nonmeaningful forms irrespective of redundancy
<b>P1e. The Availability of Resources Principle.</b> For learners to process either redundant meaningful grammatical forms or nonmeaningful forms, the processing of overall sentential meaning must not drain available processing resources.
<b>P1f. The Sentence Location Principle.</b> Learners tend to process items in sentence initial position before those in final position and those in medial position.

Figure 3. *Principle i and sub principles of Input Processing.*  
(From Van Patten, 2004 in Farley, 2005: 6)

The first principle, showed in Figure 3, is the “Primacy of Meaning Principle” and it can be considered as the principle that gather together all the other subprinciples. This principle asserts that learners tend to look for the meaning rather than the way input is encoded. For learners, meaning is the most important aspect of input and form is secondary.

This study will focus on two specific subprinciples: the “Preference for Nonredundancy Principle” and the “Meaning-Before-Nonmeaning Principle”.

The “Preference for Nonredundancy Principle” indicates that learners are more likely to process a meaningful form, that is with high communicative value, if this form is not redundant.

Given the examples:

1. *I played football with Mark.*
2. *Yesterday I played football with Mark.*

In the first example, learners will be more likely to process the morpheme for past tense *-ed*, whereas in the second example the adverb *yesterday* makes the morpheme *-ed* redundant, therefore is less likely to be processed.

Redundancy can represent a problem for learners because it will prevent the processing and acquisition of meaningful forms.

What happens when the input is redundant and nonmeaningful? The “Meaning-Before-Nonmeaning Principle” takes into account these forms and states that meaningful forms are more likely to be processed than nonmeaningful forms. The morpheme of the previous example *-ed* is more likely to be processed because carries a semantic meaning. In other cases, such as the noun-adjective gender agreement in Romance languages, the form does not carry a semantic meaning and it is therefore considered nonmeaningful.

In the Italian phrase *la bambina buona* (the good girl), *buona* ends in *-a* because the noun that it modifies, *bambina*, is grammatically feminine. Nevertheless the *-a* in *buona* does not give any semantic meaning to the phrase. The meaning, the quality of the girl, is conveyed through the morpheme *buon-*. In addition to that, it is possible to notice that three words in the phrase carry the morpheme *-a* (the article, the head noun and the adjective). This grammatical marker is highly redundant and represent a difficulty for learners to process and acquire it (Lee & Benati, 2007).

Van Patten’s principles of Input Processing show the strategies L2 learners rely on when they have to process input, but these strategies are not always efficient and processing problems may arise. They are divided in three main types; learners might process input inefficiently, inappropriately or not at all (Lee & Benati 2007: 14). If learners do not process correctly, they would not be able to make form-meaning connections and have negative consequences on intake and subsequently on acquisition.

In order to resolve these processing problems, Van Patten has developed a model of grammar teaching based on the principles of IP. This model is called Processing Instruction (PI) and it has the aim to manipulate input in order to facilitate learner’s processing. The input that has been manipulated through this grammar teaching model is called structured input (Laval, 2008).

There are three key components of PI as a pedagogical intervention: firstly, learners are provided with information about the target linguistic form or structure, secondly, they are informed of the input processing strategies that may negatively affect their processing of the target structure and thirdly they carry out input-based activities that help them understand and process the form during comprehension. These activities are called Structured Input Activities and it is the second instructional treatment used in the experimental study of this research.

### 3.2.1. *Structured input activities*

Structured Input Activities (SIA) are so called because they are manipulated in order to create activities that contain input that will stimulate the creation of form-meaning connections. Through these type of activities, learners are forced to pay attention to the target form and process it for meaning.

Van Patten (Van Patten, 1996 in Farley, 2005) proposes six guidelines for developing SIA:

- Present one thing at a time. Learners have limited processing capacity, if learners have less items to pay attention to, they will be able to focus on that particular form and there will be a higher possibility that they will process it.
- Keep meaning in focus. If learners are forced to keep focus on the meaning, it will help acquisition because acquisition takes place when the input is comprehended and a form-meaning connection is made. There is a need to focus on meaning to improve input processing.
- Move from sentences to connected discourse. At an initial stage sentences are easier to process. During the initial stages of exposure to a form, learners will struggle even more if utterances are not kept short (Farley, 2005: 14). Then they need to move to more complex activities and be able to process at discourse level.
- Use both oral and written input-based. Learners will have to face both oral and written input when they will be in non-classroom contexts.
- Have learners do something with the input. In a communicative language teaching context, it is important to engage learners in meaningful and purposeful activities.
- Keep learners' processing strategies in mind. SIA has to address to a processing problem in order to be a processing instruction.

Structured Input Activities (SIA) can be referential or affective (Van Patten, 1996 in Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Referential activities always have a tight or wrong answer. For example, learners can be asked to choose whether a sentence is referring to a boy or a girl.



*È buono*  
(He is good)

*È bella*  
(She is good)

In these type of activities there is a right or wrong answer, so instructors can test if learners understood the meaning correctly.

Affective activities do not have a right or wrong answer but they require learners to give their affective opinion, agreement or disagreement to a given set of statements. For example they can be asked to agree or disagree on statements about the mayor of London.

*Il sindaco di Londra è...* (The mayor of London is...)

	Si (yes)	No
a. <i>onesto</i> (honest)		
b. <i>simpatico</i> (friendly)		
c. <i>basso</i> (small)		
d. <i>grasso</i> (fat)		

SIA can be both written and oral. Instructors can use reading or listening activities where learners have to try and process the correct meaning.

### 3.2.2. *Studies on processing instruction*

There are a number of studies that have examined the effectiveness of PI in learning different grammatical target forms and in solving different processing problems. Several studies on PI will be presented in this section.

One of the first studies that have been conducted on PI was by Van Patten and Cadierno (1993). They compared the effectiveness of PI with the effectiveness of traditional grammar instruction. Traditional grammar instruction has to be intended as the typical approach to second language teaching that involves the progression from mechanical drills to meaningful drills to communicative drills (Farley, 2055: 110).

Van Patten and Cadierno compared the effectiveness of PI and traditional grammar instruction in the acquisition of Spanish clitic object pronouns as it was assumed that Spanish learners have difficulties in processing this target form.

Subjects were divided in three groups: the first group received traditional grammar instruction, the second group received processing instruction and the third group served as a control group and did not receive any instruction. Results showed that the second group performed better than the other groups both in comprehension and production.

Another line of research has focused on investigating whether the positive effects of Processing Instruction should be attributed to Explicit Instruction (EI) or to the Structured Input Activities component (SIA). In 1996 Van Patten and Oikkenon conducted a research to find out which aspect of PI was beneficial to learners. The target form of their study was object pronoun placement in Spanish. The subjects participating to the study were divided in three groups: the first group received both EI+SIA, the second group received only EI and the third group received only SIA. The results to this study showed that the positive effects of PI are due to SIA and not to EI.

Benati (2004) researched whether SI activities + EI can be more effective than SI activities only on tasks involving interpretation and production of the Italian future tense. For this study Benati divided the subjects (English native speakers who were learning Italian) in three groups: the first group received only EI, the second group received only SI activities, the third group received both EI and SI activities.

Results showed that the second and third group improved significantly and performed better than the group that received only EI. These results agreed with the

study of Van Patten and Oikkenon (1996) and proved again the importance of SI activities on EI.

A new line of research has focused on comparing PI to other input enhancement techniques, one of those is textual enhancement. This is the case of Lee and Benati (2007) who designed an experiment to measure the effects of SIA and they compared it with the effects of Enhanced SIA (SIAE).

The target form was Japanese past tense, a feature that presents processing problems to speakers of Italian learning L2 Japanese. Subjects were all Italian native speakers who were studying Japanese and they were divided in three different groups: the first group received SIA, the second group received SIAE (the target form was enhanced textually or aurally), the third group served as a control group and did not receive any type of instruction.

Results have shown that SIA is the main element for learners' positive performance. Learners exposed to SIA and SIAE were both equally effective, so it is the structured input that helped learners to process the input and facilitate the creation of form-meaning connections (Lee & Benati, 2007).

The studies presented in this section show that PI has to be considered a more effective strategy compared to traditional grammatical instruction, the effectiveness of PI is due to the SIA element and not to the EI and that PI can successfully help learners to process input and support the creation of form-meaning connections with or without enhancement.

#### 4. MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

This chapter will present the motivation and the purpose of the study, including the research question and the hypothesis at the foundation of the research. The design and the target form, noun-adjective gender agreement in Italian, will also be explained in this chapter together with research evidence of the effects of TE and PI on the target form. This chapter will also present the methods and procedure used in this study (population, materials) and finally the results and the analyses of the results will be described.

##### 4.1. *Research questions and hypothesis*

Input manipulation represents an effective typology of instruction to draw learners' attention in order to support the process of input becoming intake and subsequently part of the language system.

This study is based on a previous research conducted by Benati (2004). Benati focused his research on the relative effects of PI, SIA and EI on the acquisition of gender agreement in Italian (Benati, 2004: 67). Subjects were divided in three different groups: the first group received PI, the second group received only SIA and the third group received only EI. This investigation had the aim to test immediate effects only and the results were similar to those of previous studies (Van Patten & Oikkenon, 1996).

The PI and SIA group made significant improvements in sentence-level interpretation and production compared to the EI group.

Furthermore in a more recent study Agiasophiti (2011) investigated on input processing and input enhancement in L1 English, L2 German in the acquisition of V2 and the marking of the accusative case. The subjects of the study were divided on four different groups: the first group received only TE, the second group receive only PI, the third group receive a combination of the two instructions TE+PI and the fourth group did not receive any kind of instruction. Results showed that the group who received a combination of the two instructions (TE+PI) performed better than the other groups.

Based on Agiasophiti's research on Textual Enhancement and Processing Instruction, this study seeks to individuate which instruction strategy can produce more effective results in learners' comprehension.

The question that the present study will seek to answer are the following:

Q1: Do learners make greater grammatical gains on Italian gender agreement by performing TE activities as measured by an interpretation test?

Q2: Do learners make greater grammatical gains on Italian gender agreement by performing SIA activities as measured by an interpretation test?

Q3: Which of the two strategies (TE, SIA) would bring better improvements as measured by an interpretation test?

It is hypothesised that SIA will be a more effective teaching intervention than TE because it is more elaborate, more obtrusive and more explicit compared to TE (Doughty & Williams, 1998:258).

#### 4.2. Target form

One of the issues learners of the Italian language may encounter is noun-adjective gender agreement. In Italian, adjectives always have to agree in gender and number with the nouns they are referring to.

To say that a *mela* (apple) is good, the adjective *buono* (tasty) has to be inflected as *buona*, because the noun *mela* is grammatically feminine. In this way the adjective would agree in gender with the noun to which it is referring to (Benati, 2004).

This feature can become a problem when it has to be taught, as gender-agreement morphology does not carry a semantic meaning, instead it is purely a grammatical form. Saying that the *mela* is *buono* would not change the meaning of the sentence, but it would be grammatically wrong.

The semantic meaning is transmitted through the morpheme *buon-* and it carries the quality of the apple being good.

In the example given, both noun and adjective carry the same semantic information, i.e. the gender and for this reason this feature is characterised by high redundancy (the same information is repeated two times) and by low communicative value (it is just a grammatical distinction without a semantic meaning).

We have a case of redundancy «when two or more elements in an utterance or discourse encode the same semantic information» (Farley 2005: 7).

In the example “la *mela buona*” the morpheme *-a* at the end of article, noun and adjective identify that the gender of the head noun is feminine. The same information is found in three different elements of the sentence, an L2 learner would consider these repetitions highly redundant without being able to process them at a first glance.

As illustrated in § 2.2., Van Patten considers a feature with high communicative value if it carries semantic value and it is therefore more likely to be processed.

«L2 learners tend to make form - meaning connections sooner in the case of forms that are semantic and non redundant as opposed to redundant non meaningful forms such as gender morphology» (Benati, 2004: 56).

Learners tend to process (develop a form - meaning connection) forms that are essential to understand the basic meaning of the sentence. The elements that are redundant and not strictly related to the comprehension of the meaning - like gender markers - are not given priority, so they would be processed secondly by L2 Italian learners (see the “Primacy of Meaning Principle” in § 3.2).

This chapter illustrates why noun-adjective gender agreement is an issue for Italian learners. The study presents possible solutions to help learners to notice this particular target feature and it will seek to facilitate the processing of this form.

### 4.3. *Methods and procedure*

The experimental research undertaken in this final dissertation is a classroom experimental study, designed to investigate which form of instruction through the manipulation of input can be more effective for the acquisition of noun-adjective gender agreement in the Italian language.

The present study will investigate whether the learners will show improvements after being exposed to TE and SIA and which instructional strategy will be more effective.

In the present study EI has not been taken in consideration, as in previous studies on SIA, it has been demonstrated that EI plays little or no role in the success of SI activities (Van Patten & Oikkinen, 1996; Benati, 2004).

#### 4.3.1. *Population*

The present research was carried out at the *Università degli Studi di Milano* (Milan, Italy) with foreign students attending the *Marco Polo* programme. It is dedicated to Chinese students who want to get in Italian universities. The research started with a 44 and a final sample of 13 university students aged between 19 and 22 years old.

Subjects were all mother tongue Chinese speakers who were attending a seven months course of Italian language. At the moment of the research they were in Italy for 5 to 6 months and they were classified with level A1/A2 of Italian<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Level A1/A2 based on the Common *European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Global\\_scale/globalscale.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Global_scale/globalscale.pdf)

A1: Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

A2: Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can

After completing the consent form, participants were asked to answer a questionnaire in order for the instructor to get to know their background. A copy of the consent form and of questionnaire can be found at Appendix B and Appendix C.

The questionnaires showed that the majority of the subjects were in the country for the first time and they never had contacts with the Italian language before.

The pre-test (3 activities with 10 target forms each) was given to the subjects the day before the instructional treatments took place. The instructional treatments lasted for one hour and the post-test was given briefly after the instructional treatments. The initial number of subjects was 44 but it was reduced to 13, because subjects that scored more than 60% in the pre-test were excluded from the research. One student was not able to participate to the next phases of the research and it had to be excluded from the data collection. Post-test was administered to the two groups immediately after the instructional treatment.

Only the subjects that were able to participate to all three stages of the research were included in the final data collection.

The final pool (from 44 to 13 subjects) consisted of 2 males and 11 females.

The subjects were randomly assigned to two different groups: the first group received TE ( $n = 6$ ) and the second group received SI activities ( $n = 7$ ).

The participants were tested on their ability to comprehend one grammatical target feature (noun-adjective gender-agreement) at a sentence and discourse level.

#### 4.3.2. *Materials*

One of the main differences between TE and SIA is that TE does not have exact guidelines on how to plan the activities. The target form has to be enhanced but it does not specify how tasks have to be organised. On the other hand, Structured input activities have a very well defined treatment outline. It has specific guidelines in developing materials and activities (Sharwood Smith and Trenkic, 2001 in Agiasophiti 2011). See also § 3.2.1.

Materials were organised in *pre-test*, instruction material and *post-test*.

Pre-test and post-test were developed to measure their levels before and after being exposed to the instructional materials on noun-adjective gender agreement. They consisted in two sentence level interpretation tasks and one discourse level interpretation task. Pre-test and post-test can be found in appendix D and E. An example of sentence level interpretation task can be found in appendix D1. In this task learners were required to listen to several sentences and they had to choose whether they were referring to a woman, a man or if they were not sure. The option “I am not sure” was given to discourage guessing. In these sentences the subject is omitted so students have to understand the gender from the ending morpheme of the adjective. For example in the sentence *è simpatico*, the ending *-o* identifies that the adjective is referring to a male subject.

communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

An example of discourse level is found in appendix D3. In this task, learners are exposed to a text describing a city. The task is a multiple choice and learners had to choose the right adjective corresponding to the noun.

Learners received 1 point for every correct answer and 0 points for every wrong or “not sure” answer. Every target form was read only once. Pre-test and post-test had the same structure and same tasks.

The first sentence-level interpretation task consisted of 10 items. The instructor, who in this case was the researcher, read every item once. Subjects were required to identify whether the items were referring to a man or a woman.

The second sentence-level interpretation task consisted of 10 items and it was very similar to the first one, but in this case subjects were changing at every sentence and learners had to choose to what the item was referring to.

The discourse level interpretation task consisted of 10 items in a short text describing a city. Learners were asked to do a multiple choice task and choose the right noun corresponding to a certain adjective.

Two different instructional material packages were developed. One was administered to the TE group and the other one to the SIA group. Both groups were exposed to the same amount of activities and items, in order to keep a balance in the level of difficulty and vocabulary.

The instructional material for the TE consisted of 8 tasks, that can be found in appendix F.5 of them were sentence-level and three of them were discourse-level. The first two tasks were administered aurally while all the others were written interpretation tasks.

The instructional material for the SIA group consisted of 8 activities, that can be found in appendix G.5 of them were sentence-level and three of them were discourse-level. 2 aural activities. The activities can be found in appendix G.

#### 4.3.3. *Procedures*

The aim of the research is to measure the effects of two different typologies of instruction, i.e. TE and SIA and compare which one brings better results to learners understanding of the target feature.

The present experiment was run in the period of two days. During the first day a questionnaire and a pre-test were administered to the students. Subjects who scored 0% were automatically excluded from the research and also one subject decided to leave the experiment.

The subjects who passed the first phase of the experiment were asked to come for the second phase on the day after. They were randomly divided in two groups: one TE group and one SIA group. Randomisation was used to make the two groups comparable. Shortly after being exposed to the instructional materials, subjects were asked to complete a post-test, in order to evaluate the effects of the two different instructions. The main characteristics of the present experimental research are the following:

- subjects were divided randomly in groups;
- a pre-test and post-test procedure was used;
- materials prepared for the two groups were balanced in terms of difficulty and vocabulary;
- assessment tasks were balanced in terms of difficulty.

The preparation and administration of treatment and testing materials is summarised in figure 4.

	TE	SIA
Explicit Instruction	No explicit information	No explicit information
Treatment tasks	Reading and aural comprehension tasks and interpretation tasks. In every task the target forms were enhanced by bolding and by changing the font and the size.	SI activities both referential and affective. Tasks were focusing on reading and aural comprehension, a true/false task and interpretations tasks.
Testing tasks	Same tests for all subjects: pre-test and immediate post-test.	
Testing items	50 target form and 10 distracters, equally divided between pre-test and post-test.	
Feedback	The instructor did not provide any sort of feedback during the experiment. After the completion of the immediate post-test the researcher provided feedbacks when requested from the subjects.	
Control for guessing	Testing materials contained the option “I don’t know” to discourage guessing.	
Scoring	1 point for every correct answer - 0 points for every “I don’t know” or wrong answer	

Figure 4. *Summary of treatments and testing materials.*

## 5. RESULTS

In this section the collection of data and the statistical analysis of the data will be presented. The chapter will be divided in different subsections: the first subsection will report the statistical analysis of the TE group, the second subsection will report the statistical analysis of the SIA group, a third subsection will compare the results of both groups.

A one way ANOVA was conducted on the pre-test scores to see if there were any major differences between the two groups before starting the treatment phase. The raw data was submitted to one-way ANOVA that showed that the two groups did not present any major differences, as it is shown in figure 5. That means that the improvements that learners will do after the treatment phase, will be attributed to the instructional materials and not to any previous knowledge of the learners.

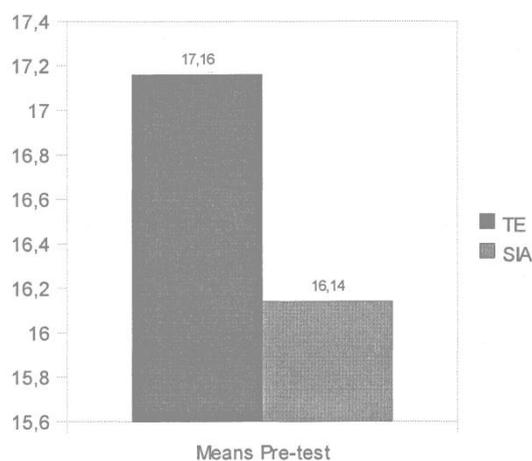


Figure 5. *Distribution of the two groups means.*

### 5.1. *Analysis of the TE group data*

Data was collected from the TE group, in order to answer to the first question formulated in the present study. The question asked whether learners make greater grammatical gains on the target form by performing TE activities. As discussed in chapter 2.1.2, studies on TE demonstrated that this type of instructional method has positive effects on language learning (Shook, 1994; Alanen, 1995; Wong, 2003). As previous TE studies have shown, the results of the TE group's post-test demonstrated improvement in subjects ability to comprehend the target form. Students got higher scores both in the sentence-level interpretation tasks and in the discourse-level interpretation task.

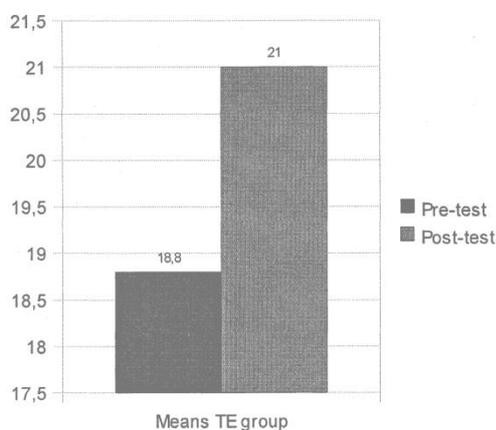


Figure 6. *Means of TE group in pre-test and post-test.*

Figure 6 shows the means of the TE group in pre-test and post-test and it is possible to notice from this graph that subjects improved significantly from the pre-test (Mean = 18.8 and standard deviation = 1.64) to the post-test (Mean = 22.2 and standard deviation = 2.49).

## 5.2. *Analysis of the SIA group data*

Data was collected from the SIA group, in order to answer to the second question formulated in the present study. The second question asked whether subjects would make significant grammatical gains on the target form by performing SI activities. As discussed in chapter 3.2.2 several studies showed the positive effects of SI activities on learner's language acquisition (Van Patten & Cadierno, 1993; Van Patten & Oikkenon, 1996; Benati, 2004; Lee & Benati, 2007).

Subjects of the SIA group were exposed to the same pre-test and post-test as the TE group and it was given the same amount of time. Results on the post-test showed a clear improvement in the comprehension of the target form both at sentence-level and discourse-level.

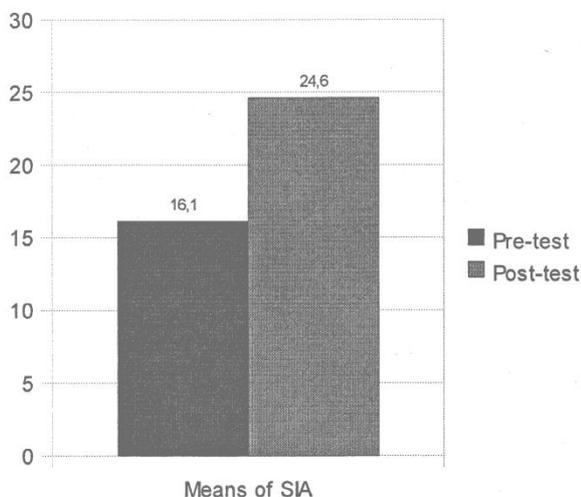


Figure 7. *Means of SIA group in pre-test and post-test.*

Figure 7 shows the means of SIA group in pre-test and post test. The students assigned to this group had an average scoring of 16.1/30 but after the exposure to the treatment material their average scoring increased significantly up to 24.6/30.

## 5.3. *Comparison between TE group and SIA group results*

The third question formulated in the study asked which strategy would bring better improvements as measured by an interpretation test. In order to be able to answer this

question it was necessary to compare the post-test results of both groups. It is important to note that both groups were exposed to the same number of targetforms, having the same level of familiarity and difficulties. The tests that have been administered were equal for both groups. Major differences in the post-test scores are due to the effects of the instructional materials the two groups have been exposed to.

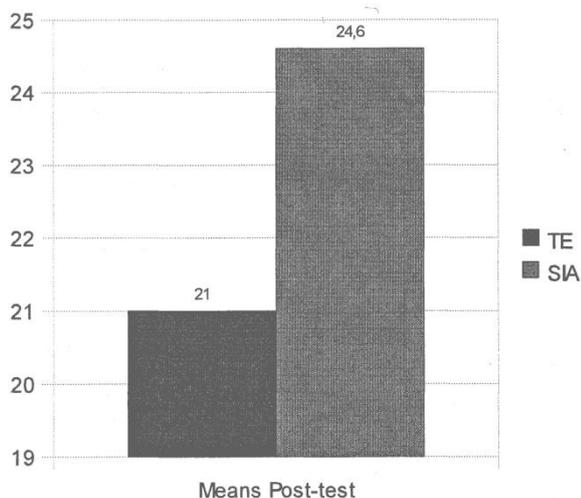


Figure 8. *Means of Post-test in TE group and SIA group.*

As it is shown in figure 8, the group exposed to SI activities had a higher score in the post-test compared to the group that was exposed to TE. The chart above shows that the average results for SIA were three points higher than the average results for those that undertook the TE test. Another interesting point when comparing the two results is that when we compare the pre-test results from Figure 6 and Figure 7, one can note that results for the TE group was an average of 18 in comparison to pre-test results for the SIA group which had an average of 16. This means that whilst the TE group showed a 3 point improvement for their results, the SIA group improved 8 points on average on their post-test results.

Through the analysis of the results it is possible to answer the third question asked at the beginning of the research; which was? and the very clear answer is that SIA demonstrated to be a better solution for learners.

## 6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Many variables were looked at during the course of the experiment and it is important to mention them as they could affect the outcome of the experiment. The limitations of the present research were: time, population, classroom.

### *Time Limitations*

This being a Master's degree final dissertation, only six months were given to complete the experiment and the dissertation. For this reason there has not been enough time to complete a delayed post-test to measure the effects of the two instructional materials weeks after the treatments.

Furthermore the experiment was conducted in Italy at the University of Milan and it required the researcher to travel to Milan and stay there during the period of the research. For this reason the experiment was conducted in the short period of two days.

### *Population limitations*

A second limitation it can be encountered in the study is the population factor. Starting from 44 subjects, the final pool counted only 13 subjects, mainly women. It would be ideal to have the possibility to replicate the research with a higher number of subjects, possibly mixed in gender.

### *Classroom limitations*

The research was conducted with Chinese students attending an intensive Italian course of seven months. Lessons were Monday to Friday for five hours a day. This affected their ability to focus. The experiment took place in the regular classrooms where subjects attend to their language lessons and this caused learners to be easily distracted as they had the tendency to talk between each other, affecting the outcome of the research.

### *Possible solutions*

Possible solutions for the limitations of this study can be looked at, by replicating the experiment with the presence of a control group and by setting the experiment in a different context than the usual classroom, where subjects cannot be easily distracted.

## 6.1. *Conclusion*

The purpose of this research is to study how input, presented through different types of instructions i.e. textual enhancement and structured input activities can help students to process a particular target form, namely noun-adjective gender agreement in Italian.

Through the results of the research it was possible to answer to the questions asked at the beginning of the study.

1. Supporting the view of previous studies conducted on TE, this research showed that subjects exposed to TE treatment got higher scores in the post-test than in the pre-test.
2. Subjects exposed to SIA treatment improved significantly when they were tested after the treatment period. This showed that SIA is an effective instructional strategy.
3. Comparing the results of the TE group and the SIA group, it is evident that the group exposed to SIA instruction performed better than the TE group.

The third point proved what was hypothesised at the beginning of the experiment. Structured Input Activities is a more elaborate, more obtrusive and more explicit compared to TE (Doughty & Williams, 1998).

It is recommended that if this is done in the future it would be better done with subjects who have never been exposed to the Italian language (possibly L2 learners living outside Italy) as it can keep learners away from being exposed to the target form outside the context of the research.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

<b>P2. The First Noun Principle.</b> Learners tend to process the first noun or pronoun they encounter in a sentence as the subject/agent.
<b>P2a. The Lexical Semantics Principle.</b> Learners may rely on lexical semantics, where possible, instead of word order to interpret sentences.
<b>P2b. The Event Probabilities Principle.</b> Learners may rely on event probabilities, where possible, instead of word order to interpret sentences.
<b>P2c. The contextual Constraint Principle.</b> Learners may rely less on the First noun Principle if preceding context constrains the possible interpretations of a clause or sentence.

(From Van Patten, 2004 in Farley 2005: 9)

### APPENDIX B

#### Consent Form

##### *Dichiarazione di consenso da parte del candidato*

Durante l'esperimento lei sarà sottoposto a una serie di esercizi riguardanti una specifica struttura della lingua italiana. Le sue risposte rimarranno strettamente confidenziali e saranno utilizzate solamente nell'ambito della ricerca. I risultati saranno riportati attraverso statistiche e nessuno risultato individuale sarà reso pubblico. La sua partecipazione all'esperimento è volontaria e può decidere di ritirarsi in qualsiasi momento.

Do il mio consenso  Non do il mio consenso

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cognome, Nome

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma

\_\_\_\_\_  
Data

## APPENDIX C

### Questionnaire

- 1) Nome \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Nazionalità \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Madrelingua \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Lingue parlate \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Età \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Sesso: M  F
- 7) Livello d'istruzione:
  - a) laurea triennale
  - b) laurea specialistica
  - c) altro
- 8) Hai mai studiato italiano prima? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Da quanto tempo studi italiano? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Perché hai deciso di studiare questa lingua? \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) Con chi parli italiano:
  - a) amici
  - b) professori
  - c) familiari
  - d) altro \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### Appendix D1:

*Ascolta le seguenti frasi e indica se fanno riferimento a Penelope Cruz o a Hugh Jackman. (Listen to the following sentences and choose if they are referring to Penelope Cruz or to Hugh Jackman).*

				
	Penelope Cruz	Hugh Jackman	Non sono sicuro	<i>(frase ascoltata)</i> (sentence heard)
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	è australiano
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	è spagnola
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	è favolosa
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	è alto
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	è timido

6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	è famosa
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	è interessante
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	è ricco
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	è intelligente
10.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	è simpatica

### Appendix D2:

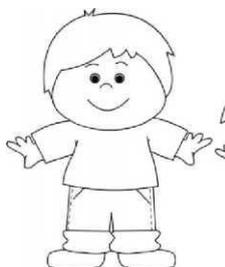
*Ascolta le seguenti frasi e indica chi viene descritto.* (Listen to the following sentence and choose the subject described.)

*(frase ascoltata)*  
(sentence heard)

1. È piccola




Non sono sicuro



2. È italiana

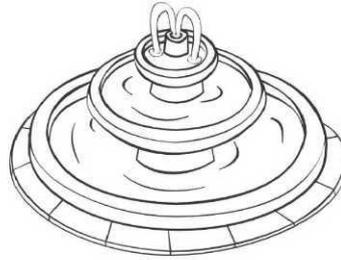
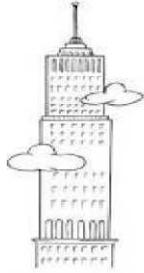



Non sono sicuro



3. È grande

Non sono sicuro



4. È buono

Non sono sicuro



5. È veloce

Non sono sicuro



6. È famoso

Non sono sicuro



7. È vecchio

Non sono sicuro



8. È grassa

Non sono sicuro



9. È bello

Non sono sicuro



10. È coraggiosa

Non sono sicuro



### Appendix D3

*Leggi il seguente brano.*

Cara Giovanna,

Ti scrivo per raccontarti che ho visitato un posto nuovo con mamma, papà e Elena! Siamo stati a Milano un fine settimana per visitare la sorella del papà, perché era il suo compleanno.

Milano è una città molto più grande rispetto a Vicenza, dovevamo usare i tram a la metropolitana per spostarci!

Il centro di Milano è ricco di palazzi e monumenti antichi. La zia ci ha pagato il biglietto per salire con l'ascensore a visitare le spaziose terrazze del Duomo e da lì abbiamo potuto vedere tutto il panorama di Milano, lo stadio Meazza dove giocano due importanti squadre di calcio, il Milan e l'Inter, e i grattacieli che stanno costruendo in vista dell'Expo 2015. Sono grattacieli molto più alti del Duomo e del Castello, e hanno forme diverse. Mi sono piaciuti molto ma preferisco gli edifici del centro perché rappresentano la storia della città.

Milano è una città ricca di storia e di arte. E tu Giovanna? Sei mai stata a Milano?

Con affetto,

Camilla

*Indica a chi o a cosa fanno riferimento, nel testo, i seguenti aggettivi.*

- |                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. nuovo               | 6. spaziosa         |
| a. mese                | a. ascensore        |
| b. posto               | b. terrazza         |
| c. visitato            | c. Duomo            |
| d. mamma, papà         | d. biglietto        |
| 2. suo                 | 7. importanti       |
| a. papà                | a. Milan            |
| b. sorella             | b. Inter            |
| c. compleanno          | c. squadre          |
| d. fine settimana      | d. stadio           |
| 3. grande              | 8. alti             |
| a. Vicenza             | a. Duomo            |
| b. tram                | b. Castello         |
| c. metropolitana       | c. grattacieli      |
| d. città               | d. Duomo e Castello |
| 4. ricco               | 9. diverse          |
| a. Milano              | a. edifici          |
| b. palazzi             | b. grattacieli      |
| c. monumenti           | c. centro           |
| d. centro              | d. forme            |
| 5. antichi             | 10. ricca           |
| a. palazzi e monumenti | a. città            |
| b. palazzi             | b. storia           |
| c. monumenti           | c. arte             |
| d. Milano              | d. storia e arte    |

**APPENDIX E**

**Appendix E1:**

Ascolta le seguenti frasi e indica a chi fanno riferimento. (*Listen to the sentences and choose the person they are referring to.*)



Non sono sicuro  
(*I am not sure*)

Frase ascoltata  
(*Sentence heard*)

- |     |                          |                          |                          |                |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | è famosa       |
| 2.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | è potente      |
| 3.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | è intelligente |
| 4.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | è simpatico    |
| 5.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | è allegra      |
| 6.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | è timido       |
| 7.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | è attento      |
| 8.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | è bassa        |
| 9.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | è magra        |
| 10. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | è vivo         |

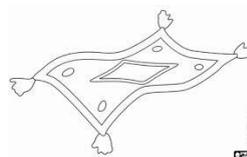
**Appendix E2:**

Ascolta le seguenti frasi e indica chi viene descritto.  
frase ascoltata  
(*sentence heard*)

1. È preziosa




Non sono sicuro



2. è preparata




Non sono sicuro



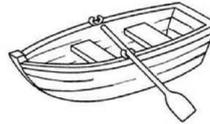
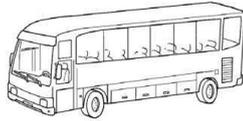
3. È maestoso

Non sono sicuro



4. è rotta

Non sono sicuro



5. È attento

Non sono sicuro



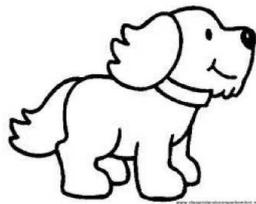
6. È ricco

Non sono sicuro



7. È buono

Non sono sicuro



8. È imponente

Non sono sicuro



9. È interessante

Non sono sicuro



10. È moderna

Non sono sicuro



### Appendix E3:

Leggi il brano e indica a chi si riferiscono gli aggettivi presenti.

ROMA

Roma è la famosa capitale d'Italia ed è conosciuta in tutto il mondo perché è antica, piena di storia, di monumenti maestosi, di chiese e di opere d'arte. Spesso viene definita la città eterna per la sua lunga storia e il suo passato glorioso.

Oggi Roma è considerata una metropoli: ha circa 3 milioni di abitanti ed è la città più grande d'Italia. A Roma c'è quasi sempre traffico perché molte strade sono vecchie e strette. Per questo motivo gli autobus vanno più lenti dei motorini. Per far fronte a questo disagio, sono state costruite due linee metropolitane.

Nella città di Roma c'è un'altra piccola città, la Città del Vaticano. Il Vaticano è uno stato autonomo, non fa parte dello Stato Italiano.

A pochi chilometri da Roma c'è il mare, ma non c'è il porto. Il porto principale è a Civitavecchia, una città vicino a Roma.

1. famosa  
a. Roma  
b. Capitale  
c. Italia  
d. città

2. antica  
a. Roma  
b. Capitale  
c. Italia  
d. città

3. maestosi  
a. monumenti  
b. storia  
c. chiese  
d. storia e monumenti

4. eterna  
a. città  
b. Roma  
c. Italia  
d. Capitale

5. lunga  
a. Roma  
b. storia  
c. Italia  
d. storia e passato

6. grande  
a. Italia  
b. Roma  
c. città  
d. metropoli

7. vecchie e strette  
a. molte  
b. traffico  
c. strade  
d. Roma

8. lenti  
a. motorini  
b. motivo  
c. metropolitane  
d. autobus

9. piccola  
a. città  
b. Città del Vaticano  
c. Roma  
d. altra

10. autonomo  
a. Roma  
b. città  
c. stato  
d. Città del Vaticano

## APPENDIX F

### Appendix F1:

Ascolta le due frasi e collegale al disegno corretto.

- È un alberO altO e robustO. È vecchiO e spogliO, ma davvero maestosO.

a)



b)



- Questa casa è molto bella**a**. È nuova**a**, spaziosa**a** e moderna**a**. Deve anche essere molto costosa**a**.

a)



b)



## Appendix F2:

Ascolta il brano.

Il detective entra nella stanza dove è avvenuto il tremend**o** omicidio. Tutta la stanza è in disordine!

La vecchia**a** sedia di legno sono per terra, la grand**e** finestra è rotta, la bella**a** tenda rossa**a** è strappata e il prezios**o** documento non c'è più! Il detective attent**o** vede una collana nascosta**a** sotto il pesant**e** tappeto dove si trova il fredd**o** cadavere. Lo raccoglie perché pensa che sia un indizio util**e**.

Rispondi alle domande.

1. Cos'è successo nella stanza?
2. Dove è la sedia?
3. Che cosa è rotto?
4. La tenda è ancora al suo posto?
5. Dov'è il documento?
6. Che cosa vede il detective?
7. Che cosa c'è sul tappeto?
8. Com'è il tappeto?
9. Che cosa può essere utile?

*Follow up:* Che cosa pensi che sia successo in questa stanza? Parlane con il compagno.

## Appendix F3:

Leggi il brano.

La mia**a** camera nuova**a** è molto spaziosa**a**.

Nella mia**a** camera c'è un tavolo grigi**o**, un armadio alt**o** e bianc**o** e un letto ampi**o** e comod**o**.

La mamma ha messo una tenda legger**a** e un tappeto viola**a**. C'è anche una libreria piena**a** di libri.

Disegna la camera descritta.

#### Appendix F4:

Leggi il brano.

##### IL TOPO DI CITTÀ E IL TOPO DI CAMPAGNA.

Un giorno un giovan**e** e inespert**o** topo di città andò a trovare il vecchi**o** cugino di campagna. Questo cugino era semplic**e** e un po' rozz**o**, ma amava molto il cugino di città. Lardo e fagioli, pane e formaggio erano tutto ciò che il pover**o** topo poteva offrirgli, ma li offrì volentieri perché era generos**o**. Il delicat**o** e sofisticat**o** topo di città torse il lung**o** naso e disse:

- Non riesco a capire, car**o** cugino, come tu possa tirare innanzi con un cibo così miser**o** ma certo, in campagna non ci si può aspettare di meglio. Vieni con me, ed io ti farò vedere come si vive. Quando avrai trascorso una settimana in città, ti meraviglierai di aver potuto sopportare la vita in campagna! Detto fatto, i topi si misero in cammino e arrivarono all'abitazione del ricc**o** topo di città a notte tard**a**.

- Desideri un rinfresco, dopo il viaggio? - domandò con cortesia il topo di città; e condusse l'affamat**o** cugino nella sala da pranzo. Qui trovarono i resti di un banchetto e si misero subito a divorare dolci, marmellata e tutto quello che c'era. Ad un tratto udirono dei latrati.

- Che cos'è questo? - chiese il topo di campagna.

- Oh, sono soltanto i cani di casa - rispose l'altro.

In quell'istante si spalancò la porta ed entrarono due cani: i topi ebbero appena il tempo di saltar giù e di correre fuori.

Il topo di campagna decise di tornare a casa sua: meglio lardo e fagioli in pace che dolci e marmellata nella paura.

*(Favola di Esopo. Testo riadattato.)*

*Follow up:* Che cosa ci insegna questa favola? Ti hanno mai criticato per il tuo stile di vita? Confronta la tua esperienza con i tuoi compagni.

#### Appendix F5:

Leggi le seguenti frasi riguardo alla città di Milano.

1. Milano è bell**a**.
2. Milano è colorat**a**.
3. Milano è allegr**a**.
4. Milano è ordinat**a**.
5. Milano è tranquill**a**.
6. Milano è cald**a**.
7. Milano è pulit**a**.
8. Milano è antic**a**.
9. Milano è modern**a**.
10. Milano è grand**e**.

*Follow up:* Sei d'accordo con queste frasi? Cosa ne pensi della città di Milano? Da quanto tempo abiti a Milano? È diversa dalla tua città?

### Appendix F6:

Leggi e scegli l'aggettivo che descrive meglio la tua insegnante.

1. La <b>mi</b> a insegnante... a. è timida <b>a</b> b. è estroversa <b>a</b>	2. La <b>mi</b> a insegnante è... a. alta <b>a</b> b. bassa <b>a</b>
3. La <b>mi</b> a insegnante è... a. bella <b>a</b> b. brutta <b>a</b>	4. La <b>mi</b> a insegnante è... a. Preparata <b>a</b> b. impreparata <b>a</b>
5. La <b>mi</b> a insegnante è... a. grassa <b>a</b> b. magra <b>a</b>	6. La <b>mi</b> a insegnante è... a. buona <b>a</b> b. cattiva <b>a</b>
7. La <b>mi</b> a insegnante è... a. simpatica <b>a</b> b. antipatica <b>a</b>	8. La <b>mi</b> a insegnante è... a. ottimista <b>a</b> b. pessimista <b>a</b>
9. La <b>mi</b> a insegnante è... a. pigra <b>a</b> b. sportiva <b>a</b>	10. La <b>mi</b> a insegnante è... a. allegra <b>a</b> b. arrabbiata <b>a</b>

*Follow up:* confronta con la tua insegnante se le tue risposte sono corrette.

### Appendix F7:

Albert è andato a studiare a Milano e ha scritto una lettera alla sua fidanzata.

1. Sono content**o** di essere a Milano.
2. Sono emozionat**o**!
3. Sono sol**o** in questa città.
4. Sono coraggios**o**.
5. Sono saggi**o**.
6. Sono stressat**o** perché ho tanto lavoro.
7. Sono tranquillo**o** perché sto studiando italiano.
8. Corro tutti i giorni. Sono diventato sportiv**o**.
9. Sono pover**o**! Non ho soldi!
10. Sono calm**o**.
11. Sono onest**o**.
12. Sono timid**o** con i miei compagni.
13. Sono nuov**o** nella classe di italiano.
14. Sono un brav**o** studente.
15. In università sono seri**o**.

*Follow up:* Quali degli aggettivi che usa Albert useresti per descriverti?

## Appendix F8:

Leggi il seguente brano.

Oggi sul giornale ho letto una notizia trist**e**! La vecch**ia** libreria dove compravo i libri quando ero un bambino piccol**o**, ha chiuso per sempre. Il signor Antonio, il suo proprietario, mi conosceva bene e mi consigliava sempre il libro più bell**o** che arrivava.

Al posto della piccol**a** libreria apriranno una libreria grand**e**, una libreria famos**a** che è conosciuta in tutta Italia.

Sono molto arrabbiat**o** per questa notizia!

Riordina gli eventi dal più vecchio al più recente.

- \_\_\_ Antonio mi consigliava il libro più bello.
- \_\_\_ Aprono una libreria grande.
- \_\_\_ Sono molto arrabbiato!
- \_\_\_ Ho una notizia triste sul giornale.
- \_\_\_ La vecchia libreria ha chiuso per sempre

## APPENDIX G

### Appendix G1:

Ascolta le seguenti frasi e indica se viene descritto l'albero o la casa.



- |               |                          |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. è alto     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. è spaziosa | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. è nuova    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. è moderna  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. è vecchio  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. è bella    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. è spoglio  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. è maestoso | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. è costosa  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. è robusto | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Appendix G2:

Ascolta il brano e indica se le frasi sono VERE (V) o FALSE (F).

Il detective entra nella stanza dove è avvenuto il tremendo omicidio. Tutta la stanza è in disordine!

La vecchia sedia di legno sono per terra, la grande finestra è rotta, la bella tenda rossa è strappata e il prezioso documento non c'è più! Il detective attento vede una collana nascosta sotto il pesante tappeto dove si trova il freddo cadavere. Lo raccoglie perché pensa che sia un indizio utile.

- |                                |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Il detective è tremendo     | V | F |
| 2. La sedia è vecchia          | V | F |
| 3. La finestra è rotta         | V | F |
| 4. La tenda è bella            | V | F |
| 5. La stanza è rossa           | V | F |
| 6. Il documento è prezioso     | V | F |
| 7. Il detective è attento      | V | F |
| 8. Il cadavere è pesante       | V | F |
| 9. Il tappeto è freddo         | V | F |
| 10. L'indizio può essere utile | V | F |

## Appendix G3:

Leggi il brano.

La mia camera nuova è molto spaziosa.

Nella mia camera c'è un tavolo grigio, un armadio alto e bianco e un letto ampio e comodo.

La mamma ha messo una tenda leggera e un tappeto viola. C'è anche una libreria piena di libri.

A cosa si riferiscono questi aggettivi? Segna con una X

	Camera	Tavolo	Armadio	Letto	Tenda	Tappeto	Libreria
Grigio							
Comodo							
Ampio							
Leggera							
Piena							
Spaziosa							
Viola							
Alto							
Bianco							

## Appendix G4:

Leggi il brano.

### IL TOPO DI CITTÀ E IL TOPO DI CAMPAGNA.

Un giorno un giovane e inesperto topo di città andò a trovare il vecchio cugino di campagna. Questo cugino era semplice e un po' rozzo, ma amava molto il cugino di città. Lardo e fagioli, pane e formaggio erano tutto ciò che il povero topo poteva offrirgli, ma li offrì volentieri perché era generoso. Il delicato e sofisticato topo di città torse il lungo naso e disse: - Non riesco a capire, caro cugino, come tu possa tirare innanzi con un cibo così misero ma certo, in campagna non ci si può aspettare di meglio. Vieni con me, ed io ti farò vedere come si vive. Quando avrai trascorso una settimana in città, ti meraviglierai di aver potuto sopportare la vita in campagna! Detto fatto, i topi si misero in cammino e arrivarono all'abitazione del ricco topo di città a notte tarda.

- Desideri un rinfresco, dopo il viaggio? - domandò con cortesia il topo di città; e condusse l'affamato cugino nella sala da pranzo. Qui trovarono i resti di un banchetto e si misero subito a divorare dolci, marmellata e tutto quello che c'era.

Ad un tratto udirono dei latrati.

- Che cos'è questo? - chiese il topo di campagna.

- Oh, sono soltanto i cani di casa - rispose l'altro.

In quell'istante si spalancò la porta ed entrarono due cani: i topi ebbero appena il tempo di saltar giù e di correre fuori.

Il topo di campagna decise di tornare a casa sua: meglio lardo e fagioli in pace che dolci e marmellata nella paura.”

Indica a chi si riferiscono gli aggettivi presenti nella storia.

1. *Giovane*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. giorno

2. *Inesperto*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. giorno

3. *Vecchio*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. giorno

4. *Semplice*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. rozzo

5. *Rozzo*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. semplice

6. *Povero*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. tutto

7. *Generoso*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. cuore

8. *Delicato*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. naso

9. *Sofisticato*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. naso

10. *Lungo*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. naso

11. *Misero*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. cibo

12. *Ricco*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. abitazione

13. *Tarda*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. notte

14. *Affamato*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. cugino

15. *Saggio*

- a. topo di campagna
- b. topo di città
- c. topo di campagna e topo di città

### Appendix G5:

Leggi le seguenti frasi riguardo alla città di Milano e indica se sei d'accordo o se non sei d'accordo

	Sono d'accordo	Non sono d'accordo
La città...		
1. È bella.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. È colorata.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. È allegra.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. È ordinata.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. È tranquilla.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. È calda.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. È pulita.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. È antica.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. È moderna.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. È grande.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Qual è la tua opinione su Milano? Se più del 50% delle tue risposte è *Non sono d'accordo* hai un'opinione negativa sulla città.

Se più del 50% delle tue risposte è *Sono d'accordo* hai un'opinione positiva sulla città.

Positiva

Negativa

### Appendix G6:

Scegli la frase che secondo te meglio descrive la tua insegnante. Poi lei ti dirà se hai ragione o no.

1. La mia insegnante...

- a. è timida
- b. è estroversa

6. La mia insegnante è...

- a. buona
- b. cattiva

2. La mia insegnante è...

- a. alta
- b. bassa

7. La mia insegnante è...

- a. simpatica
- b. antipatica

3. La mia insegnante è...

- a. bella
- b. brutta

8. La mia insegnante è...

- a. ottimista
- b. pessimista

4. La mia insegnante è...  
a. preparata  
b. impreparata

9. La mia insegnante è...  
a. pigra  
b. sportiva

5. La mia insegnante è...  
a. grassa  
b. magra

10. La mia insegnante è...  
a. allegra  
b. arrabbiata

### Appendix G7:

Albert è andato a studiare a Milano e ha scritto una lettera alla sua fidanzata. Leggi le seguenti frasi e indica se valgono anche per te.

	Vale per me	Non vale per me
1. Sono contento di essere a Milano.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Sono emozionato!	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Sono solo in questa città.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Sono coraggioso.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Sono saggio.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Sono stressato perché ho tanto lavoro.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Sono tranquillo perché sto studiando italiano.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Corro tutti i giorni. Sono diventato sportivo.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Sono povero! Non ho soldi!	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Sono calmo.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Sono onesto.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Sono timido con i miei compagni.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Sono nuovo nella classe di italiano.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Sono un bravo studente.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. In università sono serio.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Appendix G8:

Leggi il seguente brano.

Oggi sul giornale ho letto una notizia triste! La vecchia libreria dove compravo i libri quando ero un bambino piccolo, ha chiuso per sempre. Il signor Antonio, il suo proprietario, mi conosceva bene e mi consigliava sempre il libro più bello che arrivava.

Al posto della piccola libreria apriranno una libreria grande, una libreria famosa che è conosciuta in tutta Italia.

Sono molto arrabbiato per questa notizia!

Rispondi alle domande.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. È giusto che la libreria ha chiuso?<br>a. sì<br>b. no<br>c. forse                                   | 4. Questa notizia ti fa arrabbiare?<br>a. sì<br>b. no<br>c. forse   |
| 2. Pensi che la libreria più grande ha più soldi della libreria piccola?<br>a. sì<br>b. no<br>c. forse | 5. Tu preferisci le librerie piccole?<br>a. sì<br>b. no<br>c. forse |
| 3. È vero che i grandi negozi sono più comodi?<br>a. sì<br>b. no<br>c. forse                           |   |

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