



National Library  
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale  
du Canada

Canadian Theses Service

Services des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0N4

## CANADIAN THESES

## THÈSES CANADIENNES

### NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30.

**THIS DISSERTATION  
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED  
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED**

### AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30.

**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ  
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE  
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE**

Acquisition of Standard Italian in a Heritage Language Program:  
Accuracy in Gender Marking

Susanna Elizabeth Barbatbun

A. Thesis

in

The Department of  
Applied Linguistics

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts at  
Concordia University  
Montréal, Québec, Canada

March 1987

© Susanna Elizabeth Barbatbun, 1987.

Permission has been granted to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author (copyright owner) has reserved other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her written permission.

L'autorisation a été accordée à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur (titulaire du droit d'auteur) se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation écrite.

ISBN 0-315-37073-4

## ABSTRACT

### Acquisition of Standard Italian in a Heritage Language Program: Accuracy in Gender Marking

Susanna Elizabeth Barbatbun

In light of recent trends in language education in Canada and in Italy, this study considers the problem of developing proficiency in Standard Italian in a heritage language program. The sample consists of 145 students (87 elementary; 58 intermediate) attending the Italian-Canadian Patronage for Assistance to Immigrants (P.I.C.A.I.) Saturday School of Italian in Montreal. Subjects were tested for accuracy in gender marking on several types of tasks.

Results indicate greater accuracy among intermediate students than elementary students; girls than boys; students educated in French than those educated in English. Error patterns show unstable forms, overuse of masculine articles, evidence of dialect interference. It appears that children learn articles paired with word bases and pay less attention to final vowel gender markers in the language acquisition process.

Tests are repeated with university students, not of Italian descent, taking an introductory course in Italian. Their accuracy on written tests is comparable to that of intermediate P.I.C.A.I. students; oral production shows evidence of monitored accuracy not manifested by P.I.C.A.I. students.

Implications for heritage language programs are discussed; a question is raised about the extent to which instruction of Standard Italian in heritage language programs should be approached as first language, foreign language, or second dialect development.

### Acknowledgements

This thesis is the result of studies which began in 1981-82 when I was fortunate to receive an Italian Government Scholarship enabling me to attend the University of Perugia. During that year, I was introduced to issues in language education in Italy by Dr. Gabriella Klein, who encouraged me to pursue studies in this field.

On my return to Canada, I had the pleasure of working with Italo-Canadian students as an instructor in the P.I.C.A.I. Scuola del Sabato Mattina. I am indebted to Dr. Mulas, Pedagogic Director, Mrs. Durante, Secretary, the principals, teachers, and students of the P.I.C.A.I. program for their cooperation during the data collection phase of this project. I would also like to thank Dr. D. L. Bastianutti and Dr. J. K. McDonald of Queen's University for providing access to subjects for this project and encouraging my studies of Italian.

Since I began this research, my work has taken me from Montreal to Hong Kong to Kingston, making it difficult to bring this project to completion. I would like to give special thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Patsy Lightbown, and readers Dr. Jack Upshur and Dr. Bruno Villata for accommodating my circumstances and facilitating completion of my thesis.

As distance made it impractical for me to use facilities at Concordia, I was fortunate to have access to resources at Queen's University: Dr. Terry Smith of Queen's STATLAB offered interpretative assistance with the computer program written by Ian McKay; Eleanor Rogers Paulette Bark, and Computing Services facilitated word-processing.

Many friends showed interest in my work; discussions with Susan Lolle, Duncan MacIntosh, Alice Pitt, and Ron Smyth were particularly helpful.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and express deepest appreciation of the kindness of my grandmother, Sarolta Szabo.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	(ix)
LIST OF TABLES .....	(x)
LIST OF APPENDICES .....	(xi)
INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 1 Teaching Standard Italian: Scope of the Pedagogical Problem .....	6
1.1. A Historical Perspective on the Problematic Nature of Standard Italian and its Relationship to the Dialects Spoken in Italy .....	7
1.2. Changing Trends in Italian Language Education .....	13
1.3. Implications of the Italian Situation for the Instruction of Standard Italian in the Context of Canadian Heritage Language Programs .....	19
CHAPTER 2 Acquisition of Gender and Problems of Dialect Speakers: Review of the Literature .....	26
2.1. Rationale for the Present Study .....	26
2.2. Classification of Dialects .....	27
2.3. Gender Rules in Standard Italian and Dialects .....	28
2.4. Studies of Dialect Speakers in Italy: Difficulties with Standard Italian .....	29
2.4.1. Error Analyses .....	30
2.4.2. Differences in the Language Behaviour of Girls and Boys .....	30
2.4.3. Difficulties in Distinguishing between Dialect and Standard .....	31
2.4.4. Attitude Toward Dialect .....	32
2.4.5. Dialect Speakers in Transitional Bilingual Programs (Italian/English) in North America .....	32
2.5. Studies Examining the Acquisition of Gender in French and Spanish as L1 and L2 .....	34
2.5.1. Early Acquisition of Gender in L1 Relative to L2 .....	34

2.5.2. Unstable Forms, Overgeneralization to Masculine Forms .....	35
2.5.3. Use of Phonological Cues as an Aid in Determining Gender ....	35
2.5.4. Learning Articles as Part of the Noun .....	36
2.5.5. Importance of "Other" Linguistic Knowledge for Second Language Acquisition .....	36
2.5.6. Importance of "Monitoring" in Achieving Proficiency in L2 ...	37
2.5.7. Importance of Attitude and Motivation for Successful L2 Acquisition .....	38
<b>CHAPTER 3 Acquisition of Gender Rules in Standard Italian: An Empirical Study of Italo-Canadian Students of Italian in a Heritage Language Program .....</b>	<b>39</b>
3.1. Purpose .....	39
3.2. Research Questions .....	39
3.3. Nature of the P.I.C.A.I. Scuola del Sabato Mattina: Background Information .....	41
3.3.1. General .....	41
3.3.2. Curriculum .....	41
3.3.3. Evaluation .....	43
3.3.4. Teachers .....	43
3.3.5. Parents .....	44
3.3.6. Students .....	44
3.4. Selection of Subjects for this Study: Schools and Grade Levels .....	46
3.4.1. Schools .....	46
3.4.2. Grade Levels .....	46
3.4.3. The Comparison Group .....	47
3.5. Procedures and Instruments .....	48
3.5.1. Questionnaire .....	49
3.5.2. Composition .....	50
3.5.3. Dictation and Cloze Test Based on Dictation .....	51

3.5.4. The Discrete-Point Test .....	53
3.5.5. The Oral Tasks .....	56
CHAPTER 4 Results of the Empirical Study: Analysis and Discussion .....	58
4.1. Questionnaires .....	58
4.1.1. Students in the P.I.C.A.I. Saturday School .....	58
4.1.2. University Students in an Introductory Italian Course .....	61
4.2. The Discrete-Point Test and Analysis of Student Performance in the P.I.C.A.I. Group .....	62
4.2.1. Results of the Three-way ANOVA for the Discrete-Point Test ..	64
4.2.2. Comparison of University Students and P.I.C.A.I. Students on the Discrete-Point Test .....	66
4.2.3. Interpretation of Results of the Three-way ANOVA for the Discrete-Point Test .....	66
4.3. Analysis of Results on the Two Parts of the Discrete-Point Test: P.I.C.A.I. Students .....	68
4.3.1. Interaction Effects: Grade X Part .....	71
4.3.2. Interaction Effects: Gender X Part .....	73
4.4. Comparison of University and P.I.C.A.I. Students on the Two Parts of the Discrete-Point Test .....	74
4.5. Analysis of Error Patterns on the Discrete-Point Test .....	75
4.5.1. Unfamiliar Words Clearly Marked for Gender .....	75
4.5.2. Unfamiliar Words Ending in Ambiguous "e" .....	77
4.5.3. Familiar Words .....	78
4.6. Discussion of the Dictation, Related Cloze Test, and Composition .....	80
4.7. Discussion of the Oral Task .....	82
4.8. Students' Reflections on Strategies Used in Gender Marking ....	84
CHAPTER 5 Summary of the Study and Implications for Heritage Language Programs .....	85
5.1. Summary of the Study .....	85



5.1.2. Comparison of P.I.C.A.I. Students for Accuracy on Gender Marking on a Discrete-Point Test .....	87
5.1.3. Comparison of P.I.C.A.I. Students on Different Sets of Words on the Discrete-Point Test .....	87
5.1.4. Analysis of Error Patterns .....	88
5.1.5. Influence of Dialect Phonology .....	88
5.1.6. Evidence of Conscious Use of Linguistic Rules to Mark Gender .....	88
5.1.7. Comparison of University Students with No Italian Background and P.I.C.A.I. Students .....	89
5.1.8. Gender Marking Strategies .....	90
5.2. Implications of Results for Instruction of Standard Italian in Heritage Language Programs: First Language, Foreign Language, or Second Dialect Development? .....	91
REFERENCES .....	97
APPENDIX .....	103

## LIST OF FIGURES

### Figure 1

Performance on Discrete-Point Test: P.I.C.A.I. Students

Interaction Effects: Grade X Language .....65

### Figure 2

Performance on Discrete-Point Test: P.I.C.A.I. Students

Interaction Effects: Grade X Part .....73

### Figure 3

Performance on Discrete-Point Test: P.I.C.A.I. Students

Interaction Effects: Gender X Part .....74

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	
Discrete-Point Test: Mean Scores/100 Items .....	63
Table 2	
ANOVA of Mean Scores for Discrete-Point Test: P.I.C.A.I Group .....	64
Table 3	
Mean Scores for Discrete-Point Test by Grade/ <del>Part</del> /Gender .....	69
Table 4	
ANOVA of Mean Scores on Different Parts of the Discrete-Point Test .....	70
Table 5	
Comparison of Errors on the Dictation and Cloze .....	81

## LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	Error Patterns .....	104
Table A1	Unfamiliar Words Clearly Marked for Gender: Elementary Students ...	105
Table A2	Unfamiliar Words Clearly Marked for Gender: Intermediate Students ..	106
Table A3	Unfamiliar Words Clearly Marked for Gender: University Students ..	107
Table A4	Unfamiliar Words Ending in Ambiguous "e": Elementary Students .....	108
Table A5	Unfamiliar Words Ending in Ambiguous "e": Intermediate Students ...	109
Table A6	Familiar Words Ending in Ambiguous "e": Elementary Students .....	110
Table A7	Familiar Words Ending in Ambiguous "e": Intermediate Students .....	111
Table A8	Familiar Words--Home Environment: Elementary Students .....	112
Table A9	Familiar Words--Home Environment: Intermediate Students .....	113
Table A10	Familiar Words--School Environment: Elementary Students .....	114
Table A11	Familiar Words--School Environment: Intermediate Students .....	115
APPENDIX B	Italian Regions Represented by Parents of Students in the Sample .....	116
B1.	Regions Represented by Parents of Elementary Students .....	117
B2.	Regions Represented by Parents of Intermediate Students .....	118
APPENDIX C	Instruments .....	119
C1.	Questionario: PICA1 .....	120
C2.	Questionario: Università' .....	124
C3.	Discrete-Point Test .....	125
C4.	Dictation .....	127

C5. Cloze Test Based on Dictation Sentences .....	128
C6. Oral "Memory Game: Acceptable Responses.....	129
C7. Sample Transcripts of Oral Task .....	130
C7.1. Elementary P.I.C.A.I. Student .....	130
C7.1.1. "Memory Game" .....	130
C7.1.2. Reading of Dictation Sentences .....	130
C7.1.3. Repetition of Dictation Sentences .....	130
C7.2. Intermediate P.I.C.A.I. Student .....	131
C7.2.1. "Memory Game" .....	131
C7.3. University Student .....	131
C7.3.1. "Memory Game" .....	131

## INTRODUCTION

Since the federal government adopted a policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" based on the recommendation of Book IV of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, several provincial governments have supported the establishment of educational programs designed to preserve the languages of ethnic communities in Canada (hereafter referred to as minority or non-official languages):

Alberta was the first to make a strong commitment to multilingualism when, in 1971, it legalized the use of languages other than English and French as the mediums of instruction.

Similar legislation has been passed in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

In Ontario and Quebec, provisions have also been made to teach languages other than English and French, but only the two official languages may be used as mediums of instruction.

Depending on the type of provincial legislation, three main types of minority language programs have been established:

bilingual programs in which the instructional time is divided (the proportion may vary) between English-medium and the minority language; transitional programs in which the students' home language is used in the initial stages of instruction and gradually replaced by English; programs in which the minority language is taught as an optional subject outside the regular curriculum.

The term "heritage language program" has been used in the most general sense to refer to any type of minority language instruction. It was adopted by the Ontario government to refer to its optional program offering instruction in a minority language

as an additional subject for a maximum of two and one-half hours per week outside the regular curriculum. It is to this type of optional program, in which the minority language is the object of instruction rather than the medium of instruction in the regular curriculum, that the term "heritage language" will refer in the present work.

Of the heritage language programs, the Ontario program is perhaps the most widespread. In the period 1981-83, 49 languages were being offered to a total of 81,993 registered pupils.

Italian is one of the largest language groups represented, with 38,358 pupils registered in the program in 1982-83 (Ontario Ministry of Education, personal communication, October, 1984). In 1978, the Province of Quebec also began a heritage language program (Programme d'Enseignement des Langues d'Origine--PELO) offering instruction in Italian, Portuguese, Greek, and Spanish; it has since expanded to include Cambodian, Chinese, Laotian, and Vietnamese.

Before minority language instruction received official government support, ethnic groups had been teaching their languages within their own communities. With the widespread government promotion of instruction in the languages and cultures of ethnic communities, came concern that mother-tongue maintenance of minority language children would be at the expense of the official languages and cultures. Consequently, there has been a large body of research addressing the issue of mother-tongue maintenance which has focused on the linguistic, cognitive, and social development of children participating in minority language programs. Results have supported the promotion

of these programs (Cummins, 1978, 1981; Bhatnagar, 1980; Swain, 1981).

Though effects of minority language programs on children's psycho-social development have been well documented (Cummins, 1983a), little research has been done on children's proficiency in the language these programs purport to foster. Furthermore, most of the programs that have been investigated are of the bilingual or transitional type. A parent-teacher survey conducted by the Metropolitan Separate School Board in Toronto (Keyser and Brown, cited in Cummins, 1983a, pp. 10-11) indicates satisfaction with its heritage language program results, but, as Cummins (1983a) notes, there is a need for systematic investigation of students' proficiency in the target language of these programs.

In the case of Italian heritage language programs, research on students' proficiency in the target language is particularly important if programs are to be effective because, as will be demonstrated, the relationship between the target language and the childrens' home language poses a pedagogical problem. The present study will contribute to the research on minority language education by investigating the Italian language proficiency of children in a heritage language program in Montreal. The focus of the empirical study is on accuracy in gender marking.

The first chapter begins with the historical perspective on the development and spread of Standard Italian in relation to dialects in Italy that is necessary for understanding pedagogical problems arising in Italian heritage language classes in Canada. The term Standard Italian (SI), as will be demonstrated in



Chapter 1, is problematic. In the references cited, terms used seemingly interchangeably to refer to the same concept include: lingua nazionale, lingua sovraregionale, lingua italiana, lingua italiano. Throughout this study, the term "Standard Italian" (SI) will be used in the most general sense to refer to the official language of government and instruction in Italy.

Schools in Italy have only recently begun to respond to the fact that the language of instruction (SI) differs to varying degrees from the first language of the majority of the students (Francescato, 1978). Recognition of this fact, together with growing concern for the needs of migrants and emigrants (Etudes Migrations, 1980, 57) has led to an increasing focus of attention on the problems of teaching Standard Italian to dialect speakers in Italy (Leoni, 1979; Medici & Simone, 1971; Simone & Ruggiero, 1977). This changing approach to language education in Italy is outlined in Chapter 1.2, followed by a discussion of the implications of the language education issues in Italy for Italian heritage language programs in Canada.

Chapter 2 begins with a rationale for the selection of gender marking as the focus of investigation of the present study. This is seen in light of a summary of research findings of selected studies in the acquisition of gender in two other Romance languages (French and Spanish) learned as first and second languages, together with findings of research addressing difficulties dialect speakers in Italy experience when learning Standard Italian.

The present study examining the ability of students in a heritage language program to mark gender in Standard Italian is

described in Chapter 3. Results are presented and interpreted in Chapter 4.

The work concludes with a summary of the findings of the empirical study and suggestions for further research. Implications of the results for the development of heritage language programs in Italian are considered.

## CHAPTER 1

### Teaching Standard Italian: Scope of the Pedagogical Problem

"The term Standard Italian is a somewhat fictitious label, aiming to circumscribe a hopelessly vague concept" (Cardona, 1976, p. 3). This view, recently expressed by an Italian linguist, is just one indication that the Questione della Lingua is still unresolved among scholars of Italian. While the long disputed question of the nature of the linguistic variety to be adopted as a national model seemed to come to a de facto resolution with Manzoni's promotion of Florentine in the late nineteenth century (Hall, 1980; Migliorini & Baldelli, 1981 Chap. 11, 12); interest in this problem has recently been renewed with a somewhat different focus in a debate known as La Nuova Questione della Lingua (Cardona, 1976).

This debate is reflected in Italian language education policy today by a reevaluation of the public education system's original nineteenth century mandate (De Mauro, 1979, pp. 46-47) to prescribe the Florentine model of Italian. In light of the development of sociolinguistic studies, Italian educators are being encouraged to consider linguistic variability and the relationship between the language of instruction, the first language of the students, and the linguistic repertoire of the community (Mioni, 1975, 1978).

Before it is possible to discuss the changing approach to Standard Italian in education, however, the reasons for the controversy surrounding this "hopelessly vague concept" and its relationship to the other varieties of Italian must be

understood. The first part of this chapter, therefore, will trace the development and spread of Standard Italian in Italy. This historical perspective will be followed by an outline of changing trends in Italian education which has only recently begun to address the problems associated with linguistic variability. Implications of linguistic diversity in Italy for the instruction of Standard Italian in the Canadian context of heritage language programs will be discussed in the third segment of this chapter which will demonstrate the need for research on the acquisition and use of Italian and its varieties in Canada.

#### 1.1. A Historical Perspective on the Problematic Nature of Standard Italian and its Relationship to the Dialects Spoken in Italy.

Whereas Italy is commonly considered to be a monolingual country with some linguistic variation, comparable perhaps to that in England, France, or Spain, Italy has, in fact, been characterised by more numerous and more widely differentiated varieties of language than almost any other European country (Hall, 1980, p. 95). How did this situation arise?

In the pre-Roman era, various Indo-European languages and several non-Indo-European languages including Etruscan, Ligurian, and Sardinian were spoken by the different peoples of the Italian peninsula. With the formation of the Roman Empire, Latin was established as the official language of communication, but was never imposed on the people through a systematic language policy (De Mauro, 1979, p. 270). As a result, Latin was learned to various degrees depending on the nature of the language and the

level of civilization of the different populations. These local varieties of Latin--referred to as latino volgare in contrast to the literary model--form the basis of the modern dialects.

With the fall of the Roman Empire, political disunity and geographic barriers reinforced the linguistic heterogeneity of the peninsula, though most writers kept the tradition of using Classical Latin until the late thirteenth century (Migliorini & Baldelli, 1981, p. 56).

Of those who broke with this tradition by writing in the volgare, Dante was the first to achieve widespread recognition, and with the Divina Commedia brought prestige to the variety of Florentine in which it appeared during the early years of the fourteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Derived from the latino volgare of the Etruscans, which did not deviate significantly from the classical model, Florentine was relatively easy to understand by anyone educated in Classical Latin (De Mauro, 1978, p. 33). The commercial and political importance of Florence during the Renaissance further contributed to the prestige and diffusion of its literature.

And so it happened that of the many linguistic varieties represented in the Italian peninsula, literary Florentine became widespread among the cultured elite. It is this literary Florentine which would become the focus of the long debated Questione della Lingua.

But why should there be any more controversy over the Florentine standard than over the developing standard in other European countries? Literary Florentine could be defined as a

standard language in that it was codified according to a formal series of norms defining correct usage and accepted by a community of speakers (Stewart, cited in Fishman 1972/1975, p. 80). In fact, the Florentine Accademia della Crusca, founded in 1583, was among the earliest European language academies and its vocabulary list issued in 1612, constituted one of the first major dictionaries (Migliorini & Baldelli, 1981, p. 37).

The crucial factor, however, is that, in spite of its early codification, literary Florentine did not acquire an official national status until the late nineteenth century and until that time was used only among the cultured elite (De Mauro, 1979, chap. 1). While movements for national unity had encouraged increasing linguistic unity in France, England, and Spain, political divisiveness persisted in the Italian peninsula until the late nineteenth century, serving to reinforce continuing linguistic heterogeneity (Hall 1980, p. 96). The diffusion of the Florentine model was further impeded by limited access to education which, in the absence of the movement for widespread literacy accompanying the Reformation elsewhere in Europe, remained the privilege of the Catholic elite (De Mauro, 1978, p. 35).

As a result, by the late nineteenth century, the linguistic repertoire of the Italian peninsula had changed little from that of the early fourteenth century: linguistic heterogeneity prevailed; the majority of the population did not know the literary standard, and local varieties of language were often used even in courts and universities. The only difference was that literary Florentine had replaced Classical Latin as the written language of the elite (De Mauro, 1978, p. 35). Literary

Florentine had even been described in the late eighteenth century as a dead language (De Mauro, 1978, p. 37).

Nevertheless, with political unification, literary Florentine was promoted as the vehicle of cultural integration. This can be understood, in part, on the basis of Fishman's model of language policy, which suggests that a variety of language may be selected as a national standard if it satisfies the search for a Great Tradition (Fishman, cited in Bell, 1978, chap. 7). Certainly the language of Dante satisfies such a search. As Settembrini wrote: "La prima cosa che volemmo quando ci risentimmo italiani...fu la nostra lingua comune, che Dante creava..." (cited in De Mauro, 1979, p.11 [The first thing we wanted when we perceived ourselves as Italians...was our common language, that Dante created...]). The greatest promoter of the Florentine standard was the novelist Manzoni, who sought the Romantic ideals of national and linguistic unity through this "pure" form of language (Migliorini & Baldelli, 1981, chap. 11-12).

The first governments of a unified Italy, however, were more concerned with building a strong army and a centralized bureaucracy than with the promotion of a national language through an effective system of public education (De Mauro, 1978, pp. 54, 55). Though provisions had been made for education, widespread illiteracy persisted to the beginning of the twentieth century (De Mauro, 1978, pp. 40, 90). As a result, in the years following political unification, the Florentine model for the national language was diffused more through the movement of people brought together through government, the military, industrialization, and

urbanization, than through any systematic language policy (De Mauro, 1979, chap. 3).

Thus, the major factors in the development of Standard Italian to 1870 which must be taken into consideration if the current problem is to be understood are that there was a high degree of linguistic heterogeneity at the time political unification was completed; that only two per cent of the population was familiar with literary Florentine and that the majority of this small percentage was concentrated in the region of Toscana, where the spoken language was similar to the literary model, and in Rome, where clergy from all parts of the country were assembled and used literary Florentine as a common language; that the Florentine standard had always been the subject of controversy among the educated elite; that the diffusion of Florentine had been in written form and, after having been at various times described as a dead language, was now resuscitated for oral communication throughout the country (De Mauro, 1979, chap. 1-3). Given these considerations, what sort of lingua franca had become the official language of government and instruction?

In the new parliament, members struggled to speak a dead language (Migliorini & Baldelli, 1981, p. 249), and in the schools, teachers tried with varying degrees of success to use as the medium of instruction, a language with which neither they, nor their students were familiar (De Mauro, 1978, p. 47).

In light of the nature of the development and spread of the national language, the reasons for the controversy surrounding the term "Standard Italian" can now be appreciated. While there



is continued debate on its precise description, the key point for the present discussion is that Standard Italian exists only as a written code, verbalized differently according to the origin of the speaker. All would agree that there does not exist in Italy today a non-regional pronunciation comparable to that which exists in other countries where there are significant regional differences in pronunciation, as in Britain, for example (Cortelazzo, 1980, pp. 16-17).

The different regional varieties spoken in Italy, then, are based on the syntax of Standard Italian, but contain many phonological and lexical elements which are dialectal (De Mauro, 1979, pp. 159-186). Of these regional varieties, the italiano regionale spoken in the influential centres of Milan and Rome are competing for the most prestige (Hall, 1980, p. 101).

Dialects, limited in range of use to a given locality, continue to be very much in evidence. They are classified according to their distance from the Standard on the basis of contrastive analysis. Central dialects deviate least from the Standard, while northern and southernmost dialects are mutually incomprehensible (De Mauro, 1979, pp. 186-201).

Italiano popolare, another variety of language on the continuum from the local dialect to the Standard, is the focus of further controversy. The term refers to the variety which has emerged as a result of the migrations of dialect speakers with limited knowledge of Standard Italian to urban centres where different varieties of Italian are spoken (Mioni, 1975, pp. 16-20).

This is a gross simplification of the linguistic repertoire in Italy that has, in fact, many codes which are not easily delineated. The societal patterns of bilingualism and diglossia are complex (Mioni, 1975, pp. 7-56) and are considered within the limits of this study only in reference to the importance of recognizing linguistic variability in education.

## 1.2. Changing Trends in Italian Language Education

When the first legislation for public education was established during the period of political unification in the late nineteenth century, conditions of diglossia without bilingualism had been created (Mioni, 1975, p. 15). The school was to prescribe the norms of Standard Italian, which was to be used as the medium of instruction although it was essentially a foreign language for both teachers and students. In the newly formed nation, the use of dialects was seen as a threat to national unity, and dialectal elements in students' work were to be "corrected" by the school (Covèri, 1981-2).

With the exception of a brief period during which dialects were admissible in elementary education under the Riforma Gentile (1923), public education in Italy was characterized by what De Mauro has termed dialettofobia<sup>5</sup> (De Mauro, 1979, pp. 357-62). Teachers were to strive for the ideal of having their students speak "come un libro stampato" (lit. "like a printed book"). This resulted in the use of archaisms; hypercorrections, and the emergence of a variety which, according to a recent study by Benicà, Ferraboschi, Gaspari, and Vanelli (1979), is still found in Italian classrooms today in the form of italiano scolastico.

In spite of the school's efforts to eradicate dialectal elements from students' oral and written work, the use of dialects in their communities has not been abandoned. De Mauro (1978 p. 102) reports the following statistics based on a 1974 survey:

predominant use of <u>italiano</u> outside the home	35.7%
alternate use of <u>italiano</u> and <u>dialetto</u> outside the home	35.5%
exclusive use of <u>dialetto</u> outside the home	28.8%

Clearly, linguistic variability is deeply rooted in Italy.

Unfortunately, dialettophobia in education and a prescriptive approach to the instruction of Standard Italian seem to be almost as deeply rooted: the legislation for elementary education currently in effect dates from 1955 with guidelines reminiscent of those in effect during the period of political unification calling for teachers to provide a model for the "correct" use of the national language. Though the first spontaneous expressions in dialect may be accepted, teachers are to refrain from addressing their pupils in dialect (De Mauro, 1979, p. 341). Emphasis is on the written code which is to be mirrored in speech, since evidence of the command of a language is the ability to "write as one speaks and to speak as one writes" (Corrà, 1981-82, p. 103).

This legislation, established at a time when two-thirds of the population used dialect as the principal form of expression (De Mauro, 1979, p. 102), ignored the differences between the first language of the students and the language of instruction.

If Standard Italian is essentially a written code, it cannot  
9  
exist as the mother tongue of anyone in Italy. At best, those  
with exposure to italiano regionale will have "only" to acquire  
the skills of written expression in a code which is closely  
related to their first language. Many, however, will be  
struggling with the simultaneous acquisition of oral and written  
skills in a code completely different from the one they normally  
use:

"...la grande maggioranza dei bambini italiani, quando  
vengono a contatto con le strutture scolastiche...sono  
dialettofoni, con tutt'al più una spolverata di elementi di  
italiano più o meno colorito regionalmente..." (Francescato,  
1978, p. 133 [...when the majority of Italian children come  
into contact with the school system...they are dialect speakers  
with, at best, traces of Italian elements which are colored  
to a greater or lesser extent by regional variations...])

Fortunately, there has been a movement among linguists and  
10  
some educators to promote recognition of the need for schools to  
respond to this situation. In the late sixties, movements for  
11  
un'educazione democratica (De Mauro & Lodi, 1974) began to  
focus attention on the social function of language, and the  
recognition of power associated with the ability to make use of  
the full range of the linguistic system was reflected in revival  
of the adage "chi ha lingua passa il mare" (Lo Cascio, 1978,  
intro. [one who commands language can move mountains]). Interest  
has been generated in the sociolinguistic work of Bernstein and  
Labov (Mioni, 1975, pp. 24-31), and there has been some  
investigation of the relationship between social class, language,  
and academic success (Medici & Simone 1971; Simone & Ruggiero 1979).  
Thus, the ideal now being promoted is that of choice of code by

an individual who controls the full range of available codes (Colombo, 1979; Lo Cascio, 1978; Renzi & Cortelazzo, 1977; Ponzio & Mininni, 1980).

12

This is reflected in the 1979 reforms of the Scuola Media (Decreto Ministeriale, 9 febbraio, 1979) which give more attention to the social functions of language and recognize linguistic variability:

L'acquisizione di una sempre più sicura padronanza del linguaggio in tutte le sue funzioni è un diritto dell'uomo...  
(The acquisition of an increasing control of all language functions is a right of the individual...)

La particolare condizione linguistica della società italiana, con la presenza di dialetti diversi e di altri idiomi e con gli effetti di vasti fenomeni migratori, richiede che la scuola non prescindere da tale varietà di tradizione e di realtà linguistiche...

(The particular linguistic conditions in Italian society, with the presence of different dialects and other idioms, and with the effects of extensive migrations, require the school to ensure that such variety of traditions and linguistic realities not be overlooked.)

Parimenti non si trascureranno le varietà tipiche, ad esempio della lingua colloquiale e familiare, della lingua più formale e colta, perché l'alunno ne sappia cogliere le caratteristiche espressive al fine di utilizzare l'una e l'altra varietà linguistica a secondo della situazione.

(Similarly, typically encountered varieties of language, for example, colloquial language used within the family, as well as more formal, educated speech, should not be ignored if the pupil is to learn to perceive differences in expression and be able to use that variety of language which is appropriate in any given situation.)

Thus, the school has finally acknowledged linguistic variability and officially recognized codes other than Standard Italian as legitimate forms of expression. The approach to the instruction of Standard Italian is moving away from prescriptivism toward a more communicative approach which encourages development of all skills to maximize the potential of creative expression (Decreto Ministeriale, 1979).

However, Corrà (1981-82) notes that in practical terms little

has changed. Still without adequate training, teachers are not equipped to respond to the new trends advanced by researchers and policy makers (Berretta, 1980). New texts still tend to treat dialects mainly from a historical perspective, or as pieces of folklore rather than as forms of expression currently serving a social function in the linguistic repertoire of the community (Corrà, 1981-82). Teachers still emphasize the written Standard through a normative approach (Lo Cascio, 1978, intro.).

Some advances have been made, however, by groups such as GISCEL (Gruppo di intervento e studio nel campo dell'educazione linguistica) which have stressed the need for accepting the linguistic variety the child brings to class, and for using this knowledge as the point of departure for learning the Standard. Practical suggestions (De Mauro & Lodi, 1974, chap. 8-10; Francescato, 1978) for accommodating linguistic variability in the classroom include: class participation in compiling a dictionary of dialect/Standard; use of parents as resources in children's research on dialectal expressions, proverbs, folktales, songs; encouragement of children's creativity through composition in dialect; class projects which survey patterns of language use among pupils and their families; use of contrastive examples when teaching structure.

Even if the importance of using the child's first language to develop skills in Standard Italian is recognized, significant problems are encountered in the classroom (Mioni 1975, 1978; Corrà, 1981-82):

Often more than one dialect is represented in a single class. Which one will become the vehicle for literacy development? To

what extent can teachers, given their training, be expected to be familiar with the dialects represented in their classes?

Even if a single dialect were represented in a homogeneous class, dialects are essentially oral languages. Though there is a dialect literature, these languages have not been codified. What will be the model if dialects are to be used in literacy development at school?

Francescato (1978) points out the need for linguistic research. Studies on first language acquisition have not taken linguistic variability into consideration, and provide little information on the relationship between input from the environment and first language development. Longitudinal studies usually follow a child only to age three or four, before the influence of the school's linguistic model may be observed. The few studies which have been done on the relationship between academic success and home language present methodological problems. In addition to these considerations, Francescato indicates a need for more contrastive studies of Standard Italian and its dialects.

Large migrations to urban centres have resulted in less dialect differentiation. Problems of children who have been exposed mainly to the italiano popolare of these centres has been compared to those of speakers of Black English (Mioni, 1975).

The pedagogical problems associated with internal migrations become more complicated with emigration, and are receiving increasing attention in Europe and North Americas. Italy is committed to facilitating the education of children of emigrants (legge 153, 1971) and, in cooperation with host countries,

programs are being developed to meet the needs of these children  
(Etudes Migrations, 1980, 57).

### 1.3 Implications of the Italian Situation for the Instruction of Standard Italian in the Context of Canadian Heritage Language Programs

The European situation differs from the Canadian in that EEC countries expect temporary residency of many and cultural/linguistic assimilation of those who remain (Tosi, 1979-80), while Canada has been committed to multiculturalism since 1971 through a federal policy. The heritage language programs, encouraged by the Canadian multicultural policy (Cummins 1983b), have been called an "unqualified success" (Danesi, 1983). While it is not the intention of the following study to dispute this claim, it must be noted that the research which supports these programs (Cummins, 1983a) ~~has~~ focused primarily on their psychosocial and cognitive effects on the development of participating students. Furthermore, this research has been based principally on bilingual and transitional programs which are completely different from the two and one-half hours per week elective option designed to maintain or develop the child's skills in the "ethnocultural language of the community" (Cummins, 1983a, p. 1). It is to this type of enrichment program that the name Heritage Language Program (HLP) was given by the Ontario Ministry of Education in 1977. Virtually no extensive systematic research has been done on the attainment of the ethnocultural language in this type of program. 13

In light of the preceding discussion of the role of Standard Italian in Italian education, developers of Heritage Language Programs for Italian must investigate the nature of linguistic



variability in the student population and the extent to which teachers are equipped to deal with heterogeneous classes.

If dialect is still the mother tongue of a significant number of Italians, and, if those who emigrated had little formal education (Tomasì, 1977), it is likely that the variety of Italian that has emerged as a result of emigration to urban centres like Toronto is similar to the italiano popolare resulting from internal migrations, with the additional elements of English interference (Clivio, 1971). In Quebec, there are likely to be additional elements of interference from French. While there has been considerable study of lexical interference in Italian communities in North America (Correa-Zoli, 1974; Pietropaolo, 1974; Ferrara, 1980; Villata, 1980), there does not seem to have been extensive study of the patterns of language use in these communities. Danesi (1974, p. 299) suggests that "Toronto's Italians generally possess only regional (or dialectal) codes which are used in all social contexts". What, then, is the ethnocultural language of the community which the HLP is designed to preserve or develop?

While discussions of HLP refer to the "...hope that the language skills of HL children will improve through the development of the first language of the home" (Martindale, 1983, p. 76), it is not clear, in the case of Italian, what that language is. A study by Feuerverger (1982), indicates that ten dialects were represented in a group of 101 children of Italian background. The extent to which these dialects have acquired common features to become a type of italiano popolare merits

investigation and must be taken into consideration when teaching Standard Italian. Danesi (1974, p. 229) has observed that among university students, "...Dialectophonic errors are frequent in a classroom environment."

If students are exposed mainly to a type of italiano popolare at home, how much effect can two and one-half hours per week have on promoting the acquisition of Standard Italian?<sup>14</sup>

Considering the relatively poor results of core French programs, (Stern, 1984) which provide comparable hours of instruction and do not have to contend with a competing variety of the target language in the child's home, the effectiveness of HLP in promoting acquisition of Standard Italian is questionable and warrants research.

An additional problem is presented by the presence of children in these programs who are not of Italian background. One study reported by Cummins (1983a) indicates that 15.6% of the students<sup>15</sup> were not of Italian background. While this may be desirable in the spirit of multiculturalism, what effect will the exposure to possible dialectophonic errors of Italo-Canadian children have on the acquisition of Standard Italian by their non-Italian peers?

In an informal discussion, Professor Pietropaolo of the University of Toronto Department of Italian Studies, which provides separate courses for dialectophones and students with no dialect background, has observed that dialectophones acquire less accuracy in Standard Italian, though they may be more fluent than their non-Italian peers (D. Pietropaolo, personal communication, September, 1984). If one of the goals of HLP is to promote acquisition of Standard Italian, and if there is such a thing as a

classroom dialect (Plann, 1977), what will be the relationship between fluency and accuracy in Standard Italian among children in HLP? Clearly, there is need for studies of language development in this context.

This has been indirectly acknowledged by Burke (1983, p. 25):

"In its first three years the program has had to meet the need of both native and non-native speakers with little preparation for adjustment of curriculum and methodology or accommodation of different dialects of minority languages."

More than ten years ago Danesi (1974, p. 295) observed:

"In teaching Standard Italian to dialect speakers in Italy or abroad one must take into account the fact that there is, in effect, no national standard (only regional standards)."

Nevertheless, conversations with Danesi in preparation for this study indicated that, in spite of awareness of linguistic variability, there have been no formal guidelines to assist teachers in accommodating different dialects in their classes (M. Danesi, personal communication, September, 1984). Enquiries about the use of dialects in classes offered by the Centro Canadese Scuola e Cultura Italiana, which has taken a leading role in the promotion of Italian heritage language programs, revealed that dialects are "by no means encouraged" (Centro Scuola, personal communication, September, 1984).

The need for professional development of teachers in HLP has been addressed by various initiatives, including an annual Heritage Language Symposium. Since many instructors of Italian HLP have been educated in Italy (Di Giovanni, 1983, pp. 18-19), they are likely to have been trained in the tradition of dialettofobia. Professional development courses, therefore, should include practical suggestions for coping with dialect

differences in the classroom, such as those mentioned in the preceding discussion (Chapter 1.2). More important, teachers must be encouraged to adopt an attitude toward the instruction of Standard Italian "...which does not subscribe to an archaic and puristic pseudonorm..." (Danesi, 1974, p. 303).

16

Before effective programs can be developed for Italian heritage language classes, studies are needed to determine the kind of language that students of Italian background are exposed to at home and whether Standard Italian is for them a first language, second dialect, or foreign language.

17

#### Notes

1. The situation in the German-speaking areas of Europe is most comparable, but there is still more variability in Italy (De Mauro & Lodi, 1974, pp. 9-10).

"varieties of language" refers only to varieties of Italian in relation to the Standard. Linguistic minorities in Italy with special status (French, German) and those with no special provisions (Albanian, Slovenian, Greek) will not be considered here. For a discussion of the legal position of these, see Pizzorusso (1975).

2. Though the language of Dante was to represent "true" Florentine, see Migliorini & Baldelli (1981 chap. 5) for grammatical and lexical items indicative of several varieties of Tuscan, different registers of Florentine, some archaisms, and foreign elements which appear in La Divina Commedia.
3. The Accademia began as a group of friends gathered for cruscate--discussions without beginning or end--from which the name "Accademia della Crusca" derives (Migliorini & Baldelli, 1981, p. 159).
4. However, even among the elite, the "Questione della lingua" was not resolved. Disputes between those of the Accademia, and the "anticruscani" persisted even after the fourth edition of the Vocabolario, 1729-1738 (Migliorini & Baldelli, 1981, p. 219).

5. Dialettophobia was intense under the Fascist language policy when the use of dialects was forbidden in theatres, newspapers, as well as in schools. It is interesting, however, to note the number of popular songs glorifying Fascism that appeared in dialect (Covari, 1981-82, p. 91).
6. In fact, Francescato (1978, p. 128) suggests that the current patterns of diglossia and bilingualism reflect the inability of the school to make the Standard accessible to everyone. Diffusion of the Standard has been attributed more to mass media, especially television, than to the school (De Mauro, 1978, p. 102).
7. It is not clear what the term "italiano" used here designates, but it is likely to be italiano regionale.
8. It is difficult to obtain precise information on the patterns of language use due to the nature of self-reporting. Though the statistics may be disputed, it is generally recognized that dialects are far from extinct (Cortelazzo, 1980, p. 22). Extensive use of dialects is most prevalent in the northeast, south, the islands, small rural communities and, in general, among those with little formal education (De Mauro, 1978).
9. "...l'italiano parlato non esiste, almeno finora" (Cortelazzo, 1980, pp. 16 [...spoken Italian (Standard) does not exist, at least not yet])
- Lo Cascio (1978, p. xvii) distinguishes between lingua madre, (mother tongue) usually synonymous with lingua nazionale, (national language) and lingua materna (maternal language) which he uses to refer to the first language of a speaker.
10. Among these educators are Ciari, Lodi, and Rodari (cited in Corrà, 1982) and don Milani (cited in Renzi & Cortelazzo, 1977).
11. Issues of language in education became part of a strong political movement promoting social equality through the power of expression (Francescato, 1978).
- Lettera a una Professoressa created by don Milani and la Scuola di Barbiana became the "little red book" of the 1968 student movements (Renzi & Cortelazzo, 1977, intro.).
12. See also "Dieci tesi per l'educazione linguistica democratica" in De Mauro & Lodi (1974, pp. 105-117).
13. The only large scale investigation of the Ontario Heritage Language Program has been a parent-teacher survey conducted by the Metropolitan Separate School Board in Toronto, 1981 (Keyser & Brown, cited in Cummins, 1983a). This investigation indicated that those involved were satisfied with results. Cummins (1983a) notes the need for evaluation of students' progress.

14. See Tosi (1979-80) for discussion of a comparable situation in Britain.
15. Furthermore, the majority of all students surveyed were born in Canada (Keyser & Brown, cited in Cummins, 1983a, p. 10).
16. Danesi (1983, 1986) reiterates the need to accept dialectal variations in students' speech. He suggests teachers use error analysis to understand the source of students' errors and language games to focus attention on difficult forms (Danesi, 1986). However, it is not clear from the examples of errors given in the analysis that the source of error is, in fact, dialect because similar errors are made by university students with no Italian background (e.g. misuse of conditional/subjunctive).
17. At the time research for the present study was in progress, the first major project studying the competence of Italo-Canadian children in their community language was being planned in Toronto (J. Cummins, personal communication, November, 1984). The principal investigator of the project is Professor Arturo Tosi of the Oxford Polytechnic; the project is supported by Centro Canadese Scuola e Cultura Italiana and by the National Heritage Language Resource Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Results are forthcoming (S. Fiorucci, personal communication, March, 1987).

Frescura (1984) has developed exercises based on contrastive analysis of dialect/Standard for dialect speakers studying Italian at university.

Further study is needed which investigates the relative facility of Italo-Canadian students in dialect/community language/Standard Italian.

## Chapter 2

### Acquisition of Gender and Problems of Dialect Speakers: Review of the Literature

This chapter will begin with a rationale linking the focus of the present study to related literature. The rules for marking gender in Standard Italian are outlined and dialectal variations are noted. The literature review which follows considers the findings of studies addressing difficulties of dialect speakers acquiring Standard Italian. Since these studies do not address gender marking specifically, reference will also be made to the acquisition of gender in two other Romance languages (French and Spanish) as L1 and L2.

#### 2.1. Rationale for the Present Study

Gender marking and agreement (definite article/singular noun) has been selected as the focus of investigation of the present study because the degree of accuracy in this area provides an index of attainment of competence in Standard Italian. Obligatory contexts are easily and clearly defined, and 100% accuracy is generally associated with native speaker competence. Furthermore, studies of several languages indicate early acquisition of the gender system in L1, but show persistent errors in L2. By considering results of the present study in light of those of other studies of the acquisition of gender in Romance languages learned as L1 and L2, together with those of dialect speakers in Italy, insight can be gained into the extent to which heritage language teaching ought to be viewed as first language, foreign

language, or second dialect development in the case of Standard Italian.

Evidence of interference in Standard Italian among dialect speakers--the reduction of final vowels (which clearly mark gender in SI) to "schwa" in some southern Italian dialects and the tendency to truncate words and omit final vowels in some northern dialects--suggests that students who report the use of these dialects in the home will experience difficulty in mastering the article system.

## 2.2. Classification of Dialects

Lepachy and Lepschy, (1977, p.41) identify five major dialect groups:

### 1. Northern - Venetian

- Gallo-Italian - Piedmontese

- Ligurian

- Lombard

- Emilian

### 2. Tuscan - central, Florence

- western - Lucca; Pisa, Livorno

- southern - Siena, Arezzo

### 3. Central - northern Latium

- parts of Umbria, and the Marches

### 4. Southern. -- Neapolitan - southern Latium

- Abruzzi

- Campania

- part of Lucania



- northern Puglia
- Sicilian - Salentine peninsula
- Calabria
- Sicily

## 5. Sardinian

### 2.3. Gender Rules in Standard Italian and Dialects

Articles, nouns and adjectives agree in gender and number in Standard Italian. The schema below shows the Standard forms of singular articles and final vowel gender markers which will be the focus of the empirical study.

Masculine		Feminine	
Article	Noun-	Article	Noun-
il	----O/E (libro) (cane)	la	----A/E (porta) (chiave)
l'	[V]----O/E (albero) (esame)	l'	[V]----A/E (oliva) (estate)
lo	S+[C]----O/E (struzzo) (scaffale) GN----O/E (gnocco) (gnagolone) Z-----O (zaio) (zabaglione)		

Dialectal variations of most interest for the focus of investigation of the present study are the reduction of final vowel gender markers to "schwa" in some southern dialects and the tendency to truncate words and omit final vowels in Venetian dialects. (The parents of the majority of students in this study come from southern Italy; a small group comes from northeastern regions where Venetian dialects are spoken--see Appendix B.)

#### 2.4. Studies of Dialect Speakers in Italy: Difficulties with Standard Italian

The acquisition of Standard Italian (SI) by children who are exposed primarily to dialect models outside the school has only recently become the object of empirical study. One of the first major conferences to include a section on the relationship between dialect and SI in Italian schools was the fourth international convention organized by the Societa' Linguistica Italiana (SLI) in 1970. The proceedings of this conference were published by Bulzoni (Rome) under the title L'Insegnamento dell'italiano in Italia e all'estero, Medici and Simone, editors (subsequent publications of SLI conference proceedings with related themes include: Simone & Ruggiero, 1977; Leonì, 1980).

Since research addressing dialectal interference in SI is relatively new in Italy, there is not yet a cohesive body of information from which firm conclusions can be drawn. Studies are disparate, based on relatively small samples, and contain methodological problems. Also, many of the available papers present parts of a larger study, or give anecdotal reports of a

study in progress, making evaluation and comparison difficult. Nevertheless, they provide a useful point of departure for further study.

The following will summarize features of representative studies most relevant to the case of Italo-Canadian children learning Standard Italian in Canada.

#### 2.4.1. Error Analyses

Bazzanella and Guerra (1971); Fabris et al. (1971); and Coffaro and Prinzivalli (1971) have analysed errors in students' compositions. Dialectal interference has been found in syntax, morphology, and lexicon, with orthographic errors reflecting dialect phonology. The latter seems to be most resistant to "correction". There is evidence of simplification, overgeneralization, hypercorrection, unstable forms, and dialect calques.

Methodological problems with these studies include the lack of an operational definition of error classification and specification of obligatory contexts. It is difficult to determine the extent to which errors reflect interference of an underlying dialect as opposed to a developmental stage of SI acquisition which is not dialect specific since most studies of SI as L1 have not taken dialect into consideration (Francescato, 1978).

#### 2.4.2. Differences in the Language Behaviour of Girls and Boys

Pinto and Tranasi (1979), and Cremona (1975) have found girls have a greater sense of conformity to the linguistic model provided by the school than do boys, who associate a greater

sense of solidarity with dialect models and adopt dialect patterns which are perceived to be cruder and more masculine. It will be interesting to see whether such differences also appear among Italo-Canadian children.

#### 2.4.3. Difficulties in Distinguishing between Dialect and Standard

In Cremona's 1975 study, children listened to a recording of thirteen sentences (seven in dialect, six in SI) and were asked to repeat each sentence. The purpose of this task was to determine the extent to which the child would tend to lapse into dialect when given the the SI stimulus, or to correct the dialect stimulus by repeating it in SI. However, children had difficulty keeping the two codes separated: whether the stimulus was presented in SI or in dialect, the response was a hybrid.

It would be interesting to repeat this test with students of dialects which are very different from SI, such as Sardinian, or Venetian to see what effect dialectal distance from the Standard has on the incidence of dialectal interference: Is there a developmentally determined interlanguage common to all learners of SI, or is the interlanguage consistently marked with dialect specific characteristics? Such baseline data on dialect speaking children in Italy is needed to gain perspective on the language of Italo-Canadian children whose dialect is likely to contain elements of English and/or French.

#### 2.4.4. Attitude Toward Dialect

Italian studies investigating attitudes about dialect among students, teachers, and parents find that negative attitudes prevail (Mocciaro, 1979; Pinto & Tranasi, 1979). Ferreri (1971) has suggested that students avoid using certain structures in SI where there should be positive transfer from dialect because of feelings of inferiority associated with dialect.

#### 2.4.5. Dialect Speakers in Transitional Bilingual Programs (Italian/English) in North America

Gonzo and Saltarelli (1979) report on the relationship between dialect and SI in a transitional bilingual program (Italian to English) in Chicago. The purpose of the study was to determine students' level of comprehension in Italian/English and to identify the dominant language of a group of American-Italian children. A secondary purpose was to observe the relationship between dialect and SI in a class where different dialects were represented. The related research question addressed the extent to which SI is a valid bridge in transitional bilingual programs (Italian/English) for children exposed primarily to dialects in the home. In the absence of standardized measures for Italian, the James Language Dominance Test and the Bilingual Syntax Measure were adapted for SI. All dialectal variations were accepted as responses to the stimuli presented.

Results indicate that the children were English-dominant or bilingual. Observations suggest that children could understand SI, though their responses were in dialect. The researchers

conclude, therefore, that SI is an effective bridge for dialect speakers in a transitional program and does not create additional problems as anticipated.

In their 1974 study in Toronto, Purbhoo and Shapson also report that Standard Italian can be used effectively in a transitional program. Though they do not analyze the relative use of dialect/Standard by children in the program, observations are similar to those in the Gonzo and Saltarelli (1979) study: children seem to understand Standard Italian, but their productive skills are dialectal.

Further study on children's relative competence in the home language and Standard Italian is necessary: given the tendency of heterogeneous groups of dialect speakers to adopt a koine, it is not clear exactly what the home language of these children is. It may be a koine which is close enough to SI (and, perhaps, also to English) to make SI appear to be an effective bridge to English. One must certainly wonder about the extent to which the use of SI in transitional bilingual programs can be considered an example of mother tongue development if students' productive skills are in ~~a~~ dialect or koine.

Given the difficulties of dialect speakers in Italy and the evidence of dialectal forms in the speech of Italian children in North America, it is likely that students in heritage language programs will experience difficulty acquiring Standard Italian.

## 2.5. Studies Examining the Acquisition of Gender in French and Spanish as L1 and L2

Unlike Italian, in which gender is explicitly marked in the majority of nouns, French and, to a lesser extent, Spanish do not have as explicit gender markers on nouns. Consequently, research addressing problems of gender acquisition are tangentially related to the present study and will be considered only in so far as they raise issues which may be pertinent to the case of Italo-Canadian children learning Standard Italian in heritage language programs.

### 2.5.1. Early Acquisition of Gender in L1 Relative to L2

Tucker, Lambert, Rigault, and Segalowitz (1968) asked French-speaking children to choose the gender of low frequency and nonsense words and found them to be successful; in contrast, they suggest that L2 learners have persistent errors. This study has been cited and replicated with various modifications by other investigators of French L2. Garavito (1986) in her review of studies of Spanish learned as L1 or L2 also reports similar differences.

The relative accuracy of the Italo-Canadian students in the present study could, therefore, provide insight into the extent to which these students behave as L1 or L2 learners of Standard Italian.

### 2.5.2. Unstable Forms, Overgeneralization to Masculine Forms

This type of error has been reported for Spanish L2 (Andersen, 1982; Cohen, 1974) and for French L2 (Harley, 1979; Stevens, 1984). The suggestion is that masculine is preferred because it is considered an unmarked form. Since masculine and feminine forms are contrastively marked by o/a in many Spanish nouns, it will be interesting to see if Italo-Canadian children will exhibit the same tendency given nouns with the same overt markers.

### 2.5.3. Use of Phonological Cues as an Aid in Determining Gender

Tucker et al. (1968) has suggested that monolingual French children rely on word endings and, in some cases, on initial syllables to determine gender. Slobin (cited in Stevens, 1984) has suggested that the strategy "pay attention to the ends of words" aids children in determining gender. Consistent with this strategy, Karmiloff Smith (cited in Stevens, 1984) shows phonology to be the most important clue for gender marking.

Kessler (1971) suggests that American children who are bilingual in a non-standard variety of Italian and English have difficulty with inflectional endings in English because they are undifferentiated in their dialects.

Italo-Canadian students in this study, who are presumably exposed primarily to dialect models in which final vowel gender markers are reduced to "schwa", or omitted, are likely to rely on strategies other than "pay attention to the ends of words".



#### 2.5.4. Learning Articles as Part of the Noun

Montes Giraldo (cited in Garavito, 1986) suggests that Spanish L1 children learn articles paired with nouns. Given the unreliability of word final phonology in southern and Venetian dialects, learning articles and nouns as a unit would be more useful than the "pay attention to the ends of words" strategy for Italo-Canadian children exposed to these dialects.

#### 2.5.5. Importance of "Other" Linguistic Knowledge for Second Language Acquisition

Bialystock and Fröhlich (1977) propose a model for L2 learning in which "other language knowledge" (i.e. linguistic knowledge other than formal instruction or exposure to the target language) affects proficiency in L2. In a test of reading in French L2, students who spoke Italian at home did better than English speakers. The suggestion is that inferences can be made about the target language on the basis of prior experience with a similar language.

Harley (1979) found language dominance to be a key factor in the acquisition of gender among Franco-Ontarian students: those who communicated mainly in English with their parents were more comparable to monolingual English speakers in gender marking for French than to monolingual French speakers.

Language experience in general is necessary to extract language rules. Stevens (1984) suggests that experience with a gender system in L1 will affect acquisition of gender in L2: since French speakers have many more opportunities to hear and to test their hypotheses about gender than do French L2

learners, the latter may be able to "catch up" to a certain degree over time, but are unlikely to achieve perfect mastery.

As Italo-Canadian children have experience with three linguistic systems that have grammatical gender and with English, which has not, it will be interesting to see which linguistic experience will have most effect on their ability to mark gender in Standard Italian.

#### 2.5.6. Importance of "Monitoring" in Achieving Proficiency in L2

Bialystock and Fröhlich (1977) suggest that the ability to "monitor", that is, to compare one's speech against the native speaker model, is a strong predictor of proficiency in L2. If the native speaker models that Italo-Canadian children are exposed to at home and in their community are non-standard varieties of Italian, and if they perceive themselves as native speakers of Italian, it is unlikely that they will monitor their speech in heritage language classes.

Andersen (1982) reports that his subject (a twelve-year old boy learning Spanish through contacts with native speakers in Puerto Rico) is less concerned about form than about content and, therefore, does not monitor his speech; low accuracy, but general communicative facility is evident.

If Italo-Canadian students are already capable of expressing the content that is necessary for them in some variety of Italian, it is unlikely that they would feel compelled to monitor their speech and adjust the formal features of their message to conform to the model of Italian presented in the heritage language class.

### 2.5.7. Importance of Attitude and Motivation for Successful L2 Acquisition

In addition to the ability to monitor speech, Bialystock and Fröhlich (1977) suggest that attitude and motivation are strong predictors of attaining proficiency in L2. If Italo-Canadian children are able to communicate in a variety of Italian which is understood within their community, what motivation would they have to adjust their speech habits to conform to Standard Italian, which they only use in the heritage language program?

## CHAPTER 3

### Acquisition of Gender Rules in Standard Italian: An Empirical Study of Italo-Canadian Students of Italian in a Heritage Language Program

#### 3.1. Purpose

To describe part of the gender marking system (definite article/singular noun) in the language of Italo-Canadian students learning Italian in the Saturday morning program (Scuola del Sabato Mattina) offered by the Italian-Canadian Patronage for Assistance to Immigrants (P.I.C.A.I.) in Montreal. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide some insight into the extent to which the instruction of Standard Italian in heritage language programs ought to be approached as first language, foreign language, or second dialect development.

#### 3.2. Research Questions

How accurate are students in the P.I.C.A.I. Saturday Schools of Italian at the end of the elementary cycle (elementary V) and at the end of the program (intermediate IIf) in gender marking and agreement of definite articles and singular nouns as required by the rules of Standard Italian?

A. Is there a difference in the performance of

- (1) elementary V and intermediate III students?
- (2) girls and boys?
- (3) students attending English schools and those attending French schools?

B. Are students likely to be more accurate on

- (1) masculine words or feminine words?
- (2) familiar words or unfamiliar words?
- (3) words heard more frequently at home or those heard more frequently at school?

C. Is there a pattern in the errors? Evidence of unstable forms?

D. To what extent are students influenced, if at all, by dialect phonology (in particular, reduction of final vowels to "schwa" and omission of final vowels)?

- (1) On a dictation in Standard Italian, would students be able to transcribe final vowels marking gender that they hear, or would their own gender marking "habits" be reflected in their writing?

- (2) On oral task, do students tend to reduce final vowels to "schwa" and/or truncate words?

E. Do students show evidence of a conscious use of linguistic rules to mark gender

- (1) on a discrete point test?
- (2) on an oral task?

F. How do students with no Italian background taking an introductory Italian course at university compare with Italo-Canadian children in the P.I.C.A.I. program

- (1) on questions B(1)(2), C, D(1), E above?
- (2) on the discrete-point test?

### 3.3. Nature of the P.I.C.A.I. Scuola del Sabato Mattina: Background Information

The overview which follows is based on the researcher's observations during the 1982-83 academic year when she was an instructor in the P.I.C.A.I. program, together with those made while collecting the data for this study in February/March, 1985.

#### 3.3.1. General

The non-profit program is funded by the provincial and federal governments, the Italian Ministry of External Affairs, and tuition fees.

Classes are held Saturday mornings for three hours from mid-September until mid-May for approximately eighty hours of instruction per year. Classroom facilities are rented from boards of education in areas where numbers warrant. In the 1984-85 academic year, classes were held in 30 schools, primarily in Montreal North, St. Leonard, and Laval. The total enrollment for that year was 3,370 (2,323 elementary; 1,047 intermediate, P.I.C.A.I., personal communication, March, 1987).

#### 3.3.2. Curriculum

The cycle of studies is modelled on the Italian system of five years of elementary school, followed by three years of middle school (hereafter referred to as intermediate I, II, III). In addition, some schools offer a kindergarten program. A certificate is granted at the end of elementary V and intermediate III, though there are no formal exams.

The implicit aim is the instruction of Italian language and culture, but there is no formal statement of objectives or approach, nor is there a standard syllabus. Each teacher is required to submit a course outline at the beginning of the year, and a course evaluation at the end of the year, but there is no system for ensuring continuity from one year to the next.

It has been suggested that the elementary program adapt guidelines of the PELO (Projet d'Enseignement des Langues d'Origine) program; however, teachers have experienced difficulties adapting PELO guidelines because the P.I.C.A.I. classes meet for a three-hour session once a week as opposed to the more frequent shorter sessions in the PELO program.

Since each teacher is responsible for his/her own syllabus, it is difficult to make generalizations on content and approach; however, discussions with several teachers at different schools indicate that course content, in addition to language, includes basic notions of Italian history and geography, especially at the intermediate levels. Common classroom activities include dictation, oral reading, composition, and formal grammar instruction at both levels. Pictures, songs, poems, and games are used in the early grades.

Teachers' expectations of students seem to be divided, with some teachers approaching their classes as they would a similar age group in Italy, and others considering their students as second-language learners of Italian. All teachers encountered by the researcher (both in preparation of this study and when involved with the program) feel that their students'

exposure to dialect has a negative effect on their development of Standard Italian.

Books used are sent by the Italian government and include texts prepared for children of emigrants (usually designed for EEC countries) as well as those designed for students in Italy.

The consensus among teachers seems to be that materials designed specifically for students of Italian in the Canadian context are necessary. One Canadian initiative for the development of texts has been made in Toronto by the Centro Canadese Scuola e Cultura Italiana with its series Echi del Nostro Mondo for elementary grades.

### 3.3.3. Evaluation

There are no formal guidelines for evaluation of student performance. Virtually all students are promoted to the next level once they have spent a school year attending classes.

### 3.3.4. Teachers

While individuals with teacher training are desirable, knowledge of Italian language and culture is the essential criterion. Recently, there have been various initiatives for professional development. These include a one-day workshop in 1983 given by the Ministère de L'Éducation du Québec on the use of language games; a weekend seminar in 1984 organized by the P.I.C.A.I. and presented by Professor Wanda d'Addio of the University of Rome on methodology and classroom techniques; and a series of seminars offered by the TESL Centre of Concordia



University on language acquisition and methodology.

As an incentive for professional development, teachers' participation in seminars offered is taken into consideration when salaries are determined (P.I.C.A.I., personal communication, September, 1983).

### 3.3.5. Parents

As is typical in Italy, there is little active parental involvement in the school program. Though parents are keen to have their children attend classes and generally accompany them to and from school, they do not seem to take an active part in related activities. For example, the majority do not take advantage of the opportunity to meet with the teacher on the last day of school when children receive their report cards.

### 3.3.6. Students

Students are usually placed in class on the basis of age rather than on knowledge of Italian; however, there are cases of twelve-year olds who are placed with older students at the intermediate level because of their fluency in Italian, and, less frequently, older students may be placed in elementary classes.

Informal discussions with students during the collection of data for this study and observations made when the researcher was a teacher in the P.I.C.A.I. program suggest that students attend classes essentially to comply with their parents wishes.

While the opportunity to get together with their friends

seems to sweeten the prospect of an extra morning of school, the consensus, particularly among intermediate students, is that Saturdays could be better spent doing something else. The Italian program is taken less seriously than the regular school program, in terms of both classroom co-operation and effort on assignments. There was some suggestion by older students that this attitude prevails because the program does not sufficiently stimulate their interest.

Nevertheless, most students do not object to the idea of learning Italian in principle; they indicate that it is important to them to know Italian because it is the language of their families, and they think that a third language (a language in addition to English and French) will be an asset when applying for a job. However, most students in the final year of the P.I.C.A.I. program indicate that they will not continue their studies of Italian because they feel they already know enough to communicate for their own purposes.

Although interaction between students and their teachers is generally in some form of Italian and despite the fact that students (particularly at the intermediate levels) can communicate in some variety of Italian, interaction among students, in class and on breaks, is in English or French.

Additional background information on the students in this study is presented in the discussion of the questionnaire results in Chapter 4.1.

### 3.4. Selection of Subjects for this Study: Schools and Grade Levels

#### 3.4.1. Schools

The sample was selected on the basis of P.I.C.A.I. reports of student enrollments. These records contain information only on age and sex of students; therefore, a quota sample of students controlled for variables such as SES and French/English dominance, which may affect results, would have required a survey constituting a study in itself. Based on observations and discussions with teachers at various seminars, however; it was reasonable to assume that the difference between schools was not likely to be greater than that among individuals within a given school. Consequently, three schools were selected on the basis of location from a list provided by the P.I.C.A.I.

The schools chosen for this study, then, can be assumed to constitute a representative sample reflecting a student population drawn from three main areas where the program is offered: Montreal North, St. Leonard, and Laval. In order to ensure an adequate sample size, the schools selected were among those with the highest enrollments.

#### 3.4.2. Grade Levels

Since a certificate is granted on completion of the five-year elementary cycle and at the end of the three-year intermediate cycle, students at these two stages of the program were selected to be the subjects of this study in order to gain some insight into students' proficiency in Standard Italian on

completion of these two levels.

#### 3.4.3. The Comparison Group

Tests were also administered to students completing a credit course in introductory Italian at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. The majority of these students (24/27) were not of Italian origin and had no prior exposure to Italian. Their course consisted of three hours of classes (essentially formal grammar) and one hour of lab per week for twenty-four weeks. Conversation classes (optional) and computer-assisted instruction (an assigned series of exercises) were also available. Students were tested in the final week of the course.

This group was included in the study with the expectation that they would be as accurate as, or better than, the Italo-Canadian students in the intermediate III grade of the P.I.C.A.I. program for two main reasons: being older, they would be more efficient learners; having no Italian background, they would not have to deal with competing dialectal forms that may be interfering with the P.I.C.A.I. students' acquisition of Standard Italian. If this expectation is substantiated by the results of the study, questions will be raised about the rationale and goals of Italian heritage language programs.

By examining the similarities and differences between the university and P.I.C.A.I. students' performance, insight can be gained into the extent to which Italo-Canadian students of Italian in heritage language programs exhibit characteristics comparable to those of students learning a foreign language.

### 3.5. Procedures and Instruments

Data were collected over the course of six consecutive weeks at the end of the 1984/85 session (mid-February to end March, 1985) during the regular Saturday class periods. Classroom teachers (who did not know the research questions) were present to maintain discipline. In order to mitigate possible test effects, students were told that the purpose of the experiment was to assist the researcher in planning future heritage language classes rather than to assess their performance per se so that they were encouraged to give spontaneous responses. Another measure to limit test effects was taken by presenting tasks whose object of investigation was not evident before those which were explicit tests of gender marking. Tasks were to be completed in two sessions during consecutive Saturday classes to avoid fatigue.

The following tasks were to be completed by all subjects in the order in which they appear below:

1. background questionnaire (30 min)
2. dictation (20 min)
3. composition (20 min)
4. cloze-type test based on dictation sentences (5 min)
5. discrete-point test (15 min)

The discrete-point test was the primary focus of investigation. The other tasks would provide additional information with which to validate and interpret results of the discrete-point test. When all tasks had been completed, students were asked to reflect on the way they had made their choice of

article/final vowel on the discreta-point test.

Before completing tasks (4) and (5) above, a boy and girl from each class were also to do an oral exercise (10 min) recorded individually with the researcher. For the purposes of comparison, the entire procedure was to be repeated with university students completing an introductory credit course in Italian. Deviations from these intended procedures became necessary and will be explained as they apply to each task in the description that follows.

### 3.5.1. Questionnaire

All students were asked to complete a background questionnaire in order to gain insight into the type of student in the program and thereby facilitate interpretation of results. At the time this study was undertaken, virtually no data from which a student profile could be constructed were available. It is hoped that the information gathered in the course of this study will provide a useful starting point for needs assessments in future program development.

The questionnaire (Appendix C1) was designed to elicit information pertaining to family background; language use and attitude toward Italian language; preservation of an Italian identity; and participation in heritage language classes. Written in Italian, student responses to the questions generated additional language samples which, though not formally analyzed, would provide additional insight into the degree to which the students were able to communicate in writing.

Though the questionnaire was meant to be completed without

assistance and was worded with the youngest students in mind, it became necessary for the researcher to guide the elementary classes through the questions, as in a structured interview. It seemed that the nature of the questions, rather than the language, was the source of difficulty: the students, whether in elementary or intermediate classes, had never really considered their patterns of language use, or feelings about learning Italian. Consequently, the open-ended questions had to be supplemented in some cases with multiple-choice style suggestions provided by the researcher to ensure a response. While this may have influenced results, as much neutrality and consistency were preserved as possible. Students were encouraged to give spontaneous answers and were assured that individual results would not be disclosed to teachers. Students at one school completed the questionnaires at home due to lack of time available in class.

A similar questionnaire (Appendix C2) was prepared for the comparison group to provide information on the students' language learning experience and motivation for studying Italian. Students completed the questionnaires individually on a voluntary basis outside class.

### 3.5.2. Composition

The composition was intended to provide written data which was more spontaneous and less focused on gender than the discrete-point test. At the first school, students were asked to describe a typical Canadian house to someone in Italy who had never been to Canada. The elementary students were also shown a picture

to facilitate the writing task. The topic was selected on the basis of its potential for generating a large number of high-frequency vocabulary items heard in the home environment.

A cursory examination of the compositions written by students at the first school, however, indicated that this task was not a particularly fruitful source of the definite article/singular noun agreement as expected. Consequently, the in-class composition was eliminated from the series of required tasks.

Since the compositions did, nevertheless, yield other interesting types of errors, it was decided to assign compositions for homework (to save limited class time) at the other schools. The compositions would be used not in a formal error analysis, but as supplementary data providing information on general proficiency in writing Standard Italian.

It was not possible to obtain sample compositions from the comparison group of university students.

### 3.5.3. Dictation and Cloze Test Based on Dictation

The dictation consisted of a series of sixteen sentences (Appendix C4) recorded on tape by a professor of Italian who is a native speaker of Italian. His accent, though identifiably northern, is not strongly marked.

Each sentence was read once at normal speed and then repeated, pausing just long enough between phrases to allow transcription so that students would have little, if any, time to reflect on form. Once all the sentences had been dictated, they were reread at normal speed.



The cloze-type test based on the dictation sentences consisted of a transcription of the dictation sentences with the articles and final vowels of nouns and adjectives omitted.

(Appendix C5) Students were required to fill in the blanks without time to reflect on form. There was a recess between the administration of the dictation and the cloze test.

The purpose of the dictation and the related cloze test was to determine whether students would accurately transcribe the articles and word final vowels they heard, or whether they would make substitutions according to their own gender system that may have been influenced by dialect phonology in which word final vowels are reduced to "schwa", or omitted.

With this in mind, the sentences were constructed in the form--DEF ART + N + BE + ADJ + ADJ--with each of the three possible final-vowel gender markers (masc---o; fem---a; masc/fem---e) represented. To ensure that the final vowels were not stressed unnaturally during the recording of the dictation, neither the purpose, nor the design of the dictation was described to the reader of the dictation.

Students' accuracy in marking final vowels on the dictation would be compared with their performance on the cloze test based on the same sentences. These paired tasks were completed only at one school (in both elementary and intermediate classes) and by only part of the group of university students because of time constraints.

### 3.5.4. The Discrete-Point Test

In this task, students were clearly aware that they were being tested for gender marking. The test (Appendix C3) consisted of 100 lexical items divided into two sections:

Part I--familiar words--70 items

Part II--unfamiliar words--30 items

Words in Part I were selected from a frequency list of 1500 commonly used words in a beginner's text of Italian (Katerinov & Boriosi, 1976). Thirty-nine masculine words and thirty-one feminine words were selected with an attempt to include tokens of each possible definite article/noun combination generated by the rules of Standard Italian as follows:

Masculine		Feminine	
Art	Noun-	Art	Noun-
il	-----O -----E	la	-----A -----E
l'	V----O V----E	l'	V----A V----E
lo	S+C--O/E GN--O/E Z----O/E		

There were eight more masculine words than feminine words in order to accommodate tokens of the "lo ----O/E" type for which there is no corresponding feminine category as can be seen in the table above.

Where possible, words of each of the above classes were selected from each of three domains:

- (1) home--20 items
- (2) school--20 items
- (3) non-specific--20 items

This was done with the hypothesis in mind that students may be more accurate when marking words associated with the school environment than the home environment because of greater attention to form and exposure to a Standard Italian model at school.

An additional group of ten items ending in "e" were included regardless of domain to have more tokens of e-ending nouns, which are likely to be problematic since they may be masculine or feminine (see Tables A1 through A11 for items in each group).

Words from each group were ordered randomly on the test and students were required to provide both the singular definite article and the final vowel for each.

The words in Part II were of lower frequency and were presumed to be unfamiliar or less familiar to the students. Again, tokens from each article/noun combination type were included as for Part I with seventeen masculine and thirteen feminine words. (As in Part I, more masculine tokens were necessary to accommodate the article "lo" which has no corresponding feminine class.) Since the words in Part II were presumed to be unfamiliar to the students, final vowels were supplied; students who knew the gender rules should have been able to predict the correct article for those items clearly marked (ending in O/A). Two items (il verdetto and il volante) were inadvertently included twice (Responses are

included for each of the duplicate items).

The following types of words were excluded from the discrete-point test:

1. irregular nouns (e.g. *il clima*; *la mano*)
2. words heard most often in the plural (e.g. *le scarpe*)
3. words having the same base but different referents, distinguished by different articles and final vowels (e.g. *il foglio*-sheet of paper/*la foglia* - tree-leaf) (*la porta* - door was included because of its high frequency although *il porto* - port also exists)
4. words having the same base whose referents have natural gender which is marked by different final vowels and articles (e.g. *il ragazzo* - boy/*la ragazza* - girl)
5. words of the same gender with different referents distinguished by different final vowels (e.g. *la seta* - silk/*la sete* - thirst)
6. words which are invariant, but can have a male or female referent (e.g. *la guida* - guide m/f)  
the word "insegnante" (teacher), which is invariable and can have a male or female referent, was included to see if students' errors suggest a tendency to overgeneralize to masculine as expected in acquisition of grammatical gender, or to feminine because of association with a female referent.
7. foreign words which do not end in a vowel (e.g. *il film*; *lo sport*)

On completion of this test, which was the last of all tasks, students were asked, "How did you know whether to put 'il', 'lo', 'l', 'la' before a word? How did you know what the last letter of the word should be? The students (particularly the elementary students) were clearly perplexed by this question, suggesting that they had not reflected on the form of their responses. The researcher then provided the following prompts: "Did you use a rule? What was it? If you know a rule, but you used another way to find the answer, tell me how you did it--Did you guess? Did you just "know" the word? Did the sound of the word give you a clue?

#### 3.5.5. The Oral Tasks

Time constraints and access to the subjects made it impractical to include the collection of naturalistic speech samples in the research design. An attempt was made, however, to collect oral data in an exercise which diverted the subjects' attention from gender marking.

The sample was to include one subject representing each of the four subject-categories (male/female; English-medium instruction/French medium instruction) who would be selected at random from each grade level at all schools for a total of twelve subjects for each grade level. Time constraints made it impossible to compose the sample as intended; instead, it became necessary to ask for volunteers to participate after class. Members of the university group also participated in this part of the study on a voluntary basis on their own time.

To divert subjects' attention from form, they were asked to play

a "memory game" in which they were shown a series of twenty pictures of commonly encountered items (see Appendix C6 for list of lexical items) presented in groups of four, and asked to recall what they had seen.

The subjects were then asked to (1) read selected sentences from the dictation and words which had appeared on the discrete-point test; (2) repeat sentences read by the researcher from those which had been on the dictation.

The oral tasks were designed with the following questions in mind: Does the P.I.C.A.I. students' speech show evidence of interference from dialect phonology which omits, or reduces final vowels to "schwa"? Can students accurately read/repeat Standard Italian cues, or do they substitute final vowels based on their own system of gender marking? Do students show evidence of monitoring their oral responses for grammatical accuracy?

All oral tests were conducted individually. Responses were recorded on tape for subsequent analysis. Sample transcripts are included in Appendix C7.

## CHAPTER 4

### Results of the Empirical Study: Analysis and Discussion

This chapter presents a discussion of the results obtained on each task. The discrete-point test is the focus of the statistical analysis and, as will be demonstrated, gives clear evidence of the differences in the relative accuracy of students by grade, sex, and language used at school.

An analysis of the error patterns for different groups of words within the discrete-point test, together with the results of the other tests and questionnaire will provide additional insight into the way students handle gender marking in Standard Italian.

#### 4.1. Questionnaires

##### 4.1.1. Students in the P.I.C.A.I. Saturday School

Questions were in Italian (Appendix C1) and students were asked to respond in Italian. While errors in their answers could be attributed to interference from dialect, English, and French, they may also be developmental; further studies are needed to determine the primary source of error for Italo-Canadian students learning Standard Italian in this context.

##### Questions 1-7

All but two students were born in the Montreal area; the two who were born in Italy came to Canada before they were two years old. The average age of the elementary students was twelve; the average age of the intermediate students was fifteen. Most had

changed P.I.C.A.I. schools at least once and had not joined the program at the same stage. The parents of most children came from southern Italy, but both parents were not necessarily from the same region; a minority reported family origins in northeastern Italy; several had one parent---usually the mother---who was born in Canada (Appendix B contains a list of the regions from which parents originate). Many students had no idea when, or why their parents had come to Canada; those who responded to this question indicated that their parents had come to Canada to improve their prospects for employment.

#### Questions 8-10

All children reported most family ties in Italy, and said they would like to learn Italian and visit Italy for that reason. Most of the intermediate students had spent at least one recent vacation with relatives in Italy; many of the younger children had never been to Italy, or had visited when they were too young to remember much about the experience. All students expressed a desire to visit Italy, but none wanted to live there permanently; most felt their parents would not want to return to Italy permanently, but had not heard any discussion about this prospect.

#### Questions 11-19

These questions pertained to language use. Inconsistencies suggest that the students are not aware of the differences between dialect and Italian (they used these terms interchangeably) and reported mixed use of dialect/Italian/English/French in the home; it is not clear whether reference to "mixed" use is meant as alternate use of several languages, or use of one language with



elements of other languages; it is likely that both situations exist within the same household. Students reported that they are addressed in dialect/Italian/English/French by parents, but that they usually respond in English or French; communication with grandparents is in dialect/Italian; communication with siblings is in English or French.

Most students reported that they never read in Italian or watch Italian movies, but sometimes listen to the Italian radio. They consider themselves capable of speaking, writing, and understanding Italian.

Responses to question 17 show that the students do not understand the difference between Italian and dialect because they reported equal facility in writing both, though they would never have had occasion to write in dialect. Of those who indicated an awareness of the difference between dialect and Standard, most perceived the dialect to be of limited use compared to the Standard, which could be understood by more speakers. Many indicated that dialect is an inferior variety of Italian.

#### Questions 20-24

Responses to these questions suggest that there is a definite "Italo-Canadian identity" among the students: their favorite language is the one they speak best--English/French; the language they consider most important is "Italian, because I am Italian"; friends may be anglophone, francophone, or Italian; their identity is "Italo-Canadian, because I speak Italian and I was born in Canada". Most students indicated that it is not important for them to marry an Italian, but they would like their children to

speaking Italian. They consider it important to learn Italian so that they can communicate with their relatives; some older students think it will enhance their employment prospects.

#### Questions 25-28

Most students indicated the primary reason for attending the P.I.C.A.I. classes is to comply with parents' wishes, but also indicated some desire to learn Italian. They do not consider the Saturday School to be as serious or as challenging as their regular school and suggest activities be more stimulating. Many will not continue their study of Italian on completion of the P.I.C.A.I. program because "I will already speak it then".

Questionnaire results suggest that the students in the P.I.C.A.I. program perceive themselves as Italo-Canadians, who speak Italian (the dialect/Standard distinction is not clear to them) and are going to the P.I.C.A.I. school to maintain and develop their skills. Since they seem to make little distinction between dialect and Italian--though they know some sort of difference exists--it is unlikely that they would be attentive to formal features which distinguish the two varieties of Italian and, consequently, would not monitor their speech for accuracy in Standard Italian.

#### 4.1.2. University Students in an Introductory Italian Course

The questionnaire (Appendix C2) finds that this group comprises students from various disciplines, and levels of study in their areas of specialization. All are studying Italian for the first time; for most students, the course is an elective to

complement studies in art history or music, or an interest course motivated by past or future travel in Italy. Most do not intend to do further study in Italian.

Many students reported that they find language learning difficult (most had studied French in high school). A minority of students are interested in pursuing studies in modern languages or translation. Given the reasons most students are studying Italian, it is not likely that they would exhibit characteristics of a self-selected group of "good" language learners.

#### 4.2. The Discrete-Point Test and Analysis of Student Performance in the P.I.C.A.I. Group

Tests (Appendix C3) were hand-scored, and scores (N correct responses/100 items) for each individual were entered into the computer with tags indicating school, grade, class, sex, and school language (English/French). The data were analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) according to the General Linear Models Procedure (proc glm).

Mean scores were computed for each class and compared by grade and by school. Since there was no significant difference between classes of the same grade at different schools, only grade means are reported (Table 1).

A three-way ANOVA was performed with variables grade, sex, and school language. The significance level for all tests was  $p \leq .05$  (Table 2).

Table 1

Discrete-Point Test: Mean Scores/100 Items

## P.I.C.A.I. Elementary V

	English				French				Total			
	N	M	SD	Mn	Mx	SE	N	M	SD	Mn	Mx	SE
Female	41	56.7	15.9	23	84	2.5	16	73.9	11.7	50	86	2.9
Male	22	48.9	16.2	23	83	3.4	8	69.9	10.7	54	86	3.8
Total	63	54.1	16.3	23	84	2.1	24	72.6	11.2	50	86	2.2

## P.I.C.A.I. Intermediat III

	English				French				Total			
	N	M	SD	Mn	Mx	SE	N	M	SD	Mn	Mx	SE
Female	32	82.9	10.2	50	98	1.8	5	87.0	7.6	81	99	3.4
Male	18	75.3	12.6	52	90	3.0	38	68.7	17.2	53	87	10.0
Total	50	80.2	11.6	50	98	1.6	84	80.1	14.4	53	99	5.1

## University Students (not of Italian descent)

	N	M	SD	Mn	Mx	SE
Female	19	80.1	6.4	88	94	1.5
Male	5	71.8	4.8	65	76	2.1
Total	24	78.3	6.9	65	94	1.4

Mn = minimum value

Mx = maximum value

SE = standard error of the mean

#### 4.2.1. Results of the Three-way ANOVA for the Discrete-Point Test

Significant differences were found for all three variables: grade, sex, and school language (Table 2). Students in intermediate classes were more accurate than those in the elementary group ( $p = .0001$ ). Girls were more accurate than boys ( $p = .01$ ). Students who attend French-medium schools were more accurate than those who attend English-medium schools ( $p = .01$ ).

Of the interaction effects, only Grade X Language (Figure 1) showed significant effects ( $p = .004$ ), with less difference among students whose school language is French as opposed to English at the intermediate stage of the P.I.C.A.I. program.

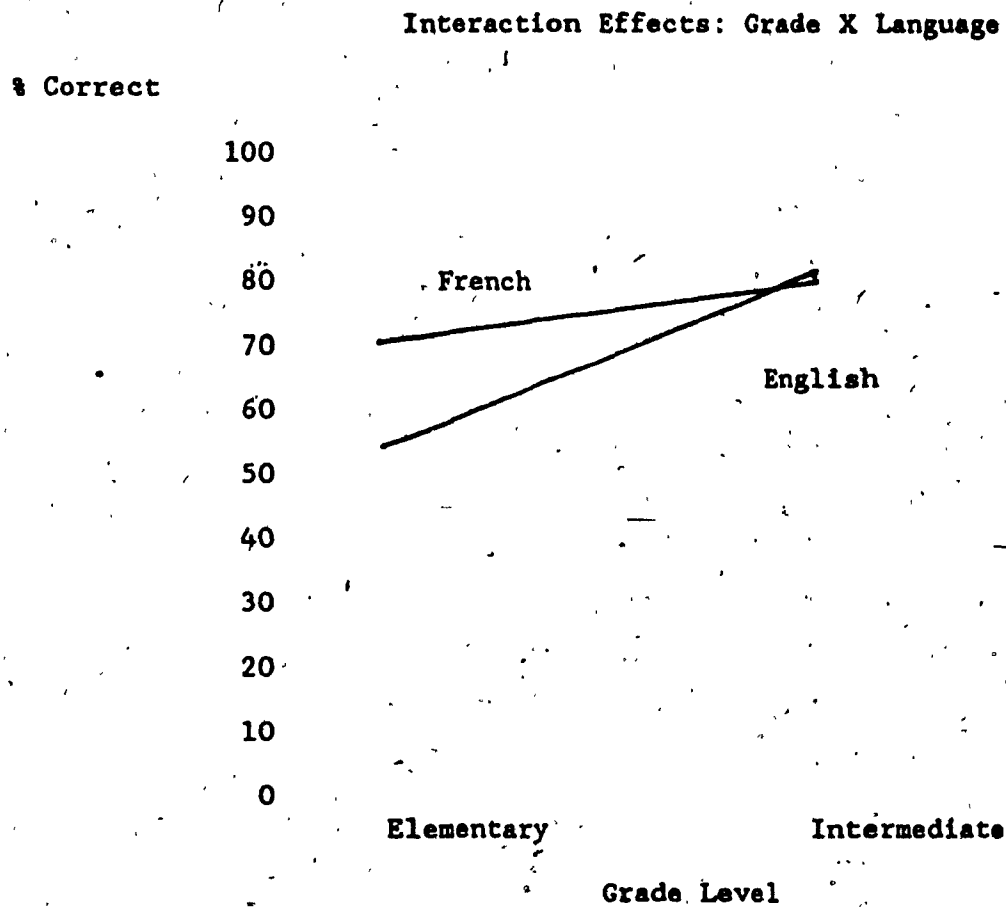
Table 2

#### ANOVA of Mean Scores for Discrete-Point Test: P.I.C.A.I. Group

Source	df	SS	MS	F-ratio	p
School	2	714.6	357.3	1.98	.14
Grade	1	4396.4	4396.4	24.31	.0001
School X Grade	2	106.7	53.4	.30	.75
Class(Grade)	2	571.8	<u>285.9</u>	1.58	.21
Sex	1	1142.1	1142.1	6.32	.01
Language	1	1159.8	1159.8	6.41	.01
Sex X Language	1	2.51	2.51	.01	.91
Grade X Sex	1	52.98	52.98	.29	.59
Grade X Language	1	11543.9	1543.9	8.54	.004
Error	132	23870.8	180.8	---	---
TOTAL	144	48749.8	---	---	---

Figure 1

Performance on Discrete-Point Test: P.I.C.A.I. Students



#### 4.2.2. Comparison of University Students and P.I.C.A.I. Students on the Discrete-Point Test

The discrete-point tests of the university students were hand-marked and mean scores were calculated. Three of the students in the university group were of Italian descent and were excluded from the analysis. The mean score for the 24 university students with no Italian background (Table 1) was comparable to that of the intermediate P.I.C.A.I. students (78.3/80.2).

This confirms the expectation that the university students could achieve accuracy in gender marking comparable to that of the intermediate P.I.C.A.I. students.

#### 4.2.3. Interpretation of Results of the Three-way ANOVA for the Discrete-Point Test

It is encouraging to find a substantial improvement in accuracy among the intermediate students when compared to the elementary students since several conditions existed which could have hindered progress: long, infrequent class periods with more than five months off between annual sessions; exposure to non-standard varieties of Italian outside the instructional time; lack of program continuity from one school year to the next.

In spite of these obstacles, improvement is evident. However, a number of factors other than increased learning through the P.I.C.A.I. program could account for this: increased focus on form in the final years of instruction; increased attention to form by older students as a stage of language acquisition; self-selection of students with poorer students dropping out of the program.

The greater accuracy of girls compared to boys is consistent with studies of dialect speakers in Italy which suggest that girls conform more readily to the Standard model than do boys, who use dialect as a symbol of group solidarity. It is doubtful that solidarity through dialect explains the relatively weak skills of the boys in the P.I.C.A.I. program, but, based on observations made during the data collection and during the period that the researcher was an instructor in the P.I.C.A.I. program, it is certainly likely that balking at attending Saturday Italian classes and resisting instruction are almost defining characteristics of the male peer group.

Since the Sex X Grade interaction was not significant, the relatively weak skills of boys can be attributed more to attitudinal and motivational factors favoring resistance to Italian instruction than to a slower rate of language development among males. If it were the case that a sexually determined rate of language development were the critical factor affecting accuracy levels among males, one would expect less difference among girls and boys in the intermediate stage, by which time boys would have "caught up" to the girls.

The relatively strong skills in gender marking among students whose school language is French, together with the Grade X Language interaction (less difference in performance due to school language among students in the intermediate group than those in the elementary group) suggest that Italo-Canadian children who attend French-medium schools have a "head start" on mastering the gender system of Standard Italian when compared to Italo-Canadian children whose school language is English.



It was expected that the Italo-Canadian children would have difficulty with gender because of their exposure to dialect models in which the final vowel marking gender in Standard Italian is omitted or reduced to "schwa", making the "pay attention to the ends of words" strategy less productive. Since there is a difference between the performance of students whose school language is English and those whose school language is French, it may be that they are using different strategies in the process of acquiring gender in Standard Italian. Further studies are needed to determine whether students who have experience with a language that is marked for gender use different strategies to acquire the gender system in their second language than do students whose linguistic experience is with languages that are not marked for gender.

#### 4.3. Analysis of Results on the Two Parts of the Discrete-Point Test: P.I.C.A.I. Students

Results of the discrete-point test were also analyzed according to student performance on the different item types below:

- (i) familiar words, for which students were asked to supply both the article and final vowel gender marker (70 items--Part I)
- (ii) unfamiliar words, for which students were asked to supply article only (30 items--Part II)
- (iii) masculine/feminine words (Part I--39 masculine/31 feminine)  
(Part II--17 masculine/13 feminine)

Table 3

Mean Scores on Discrete-Point Test by Grader/Part/Gender

Elementary Students: N=87

Z Scores

	Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	SEN
PART I	feminine	60.4	18.3	15.1	93.5	2.0
	masculine	58.8	22.6	7.7	94.9	2.4
	total	58.4	19.3	12.9	90.0	2.1
PART II	feminine	65.9	21.3	0.0	100.0	2.3
	masculine	56.9	20.1	0.0	88.2	2.2
	total	60.8	18.3	0.0	86.7	2.0
GRAND TOTAL		59.2	17.2	23.0	86.0	1.8

Intermediate Students: N=58

Z Scores

	Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	SEN
Part I	feminine	81.7	12.7	48.4	100.0	1.7
	masculine	81.6	13.1	46.2	100.0	1.7
	total	81.6	12.2	51.4	100.0	1.6
Part II	feminine	81.3	15.5	30.8	100.0	2.0
	masculine	73.2	19.3	17.7	100.0	2.5
	total	76.7	14.9	23.3	100.0	2.0
GRAND TOTAL		80.2	11.9	50.0	99.0	1.6

University Students: N=24 Z Scores

	Variable	Mean
Part I	feminine	78.2
	masculine	75.5
	total	76.7
Part II	feminine	84.6
	masculine	80.1
	total	82.1
GRAND TOTAL		78.3

Table 4

ANOVA of Mean Scores on Parts I/II of the Discrete-Point Test

Source	df	SS	MS	F-ratio	p
Grade	1	41.7	41.7	57.4	.0001
Sex	1	13.0	13.0	17.9	.0001
Language	1	12.9	12.9	17.8	.0001
Part	1	0.12	0.12	0.17	.68
Part X Gender	2	6.3	3.2	4.3	.01
Part X Grade	1	3.8	3.8	5.3	.02
Part X Sex	1	0.75	0.75	1.0	.31
Part X Language	1	0.14	0.14	0.19	.66
Grade X Part X Gender	2	1.1	0.55	0.75	.47
Sex X Part X Gender	2	1.27	0.64	0.87	.42
Language X Part X Gender	2	1.28	0.64	0.88	.41
Grade X Language	1	16.7	16.7	23.02	.0001
Error	563	408.6	0.73	----	----
TOTAL	579	659.8	----	----	----

Scores for each of these item types were tabulated and converted to percentages since cells were unbalanced. Mean scores were calculated for each category (Table 3). The scores in Table 3 were analyzed using a weighted ANOVA to compensate for unequal cell sizes.

The differences in students' accuracy on Part I compared to Part II within each grade and on masculine words compared to feminine words within each part were not significant (Table 4); however, interaction effects (Table 4; Figures 2 and 3) were significant ( $p = .02$  for Grade X Part;  $p = .01$  for Gender X Part).

#### 4.3.1. Interaction Effects: Grade X Part

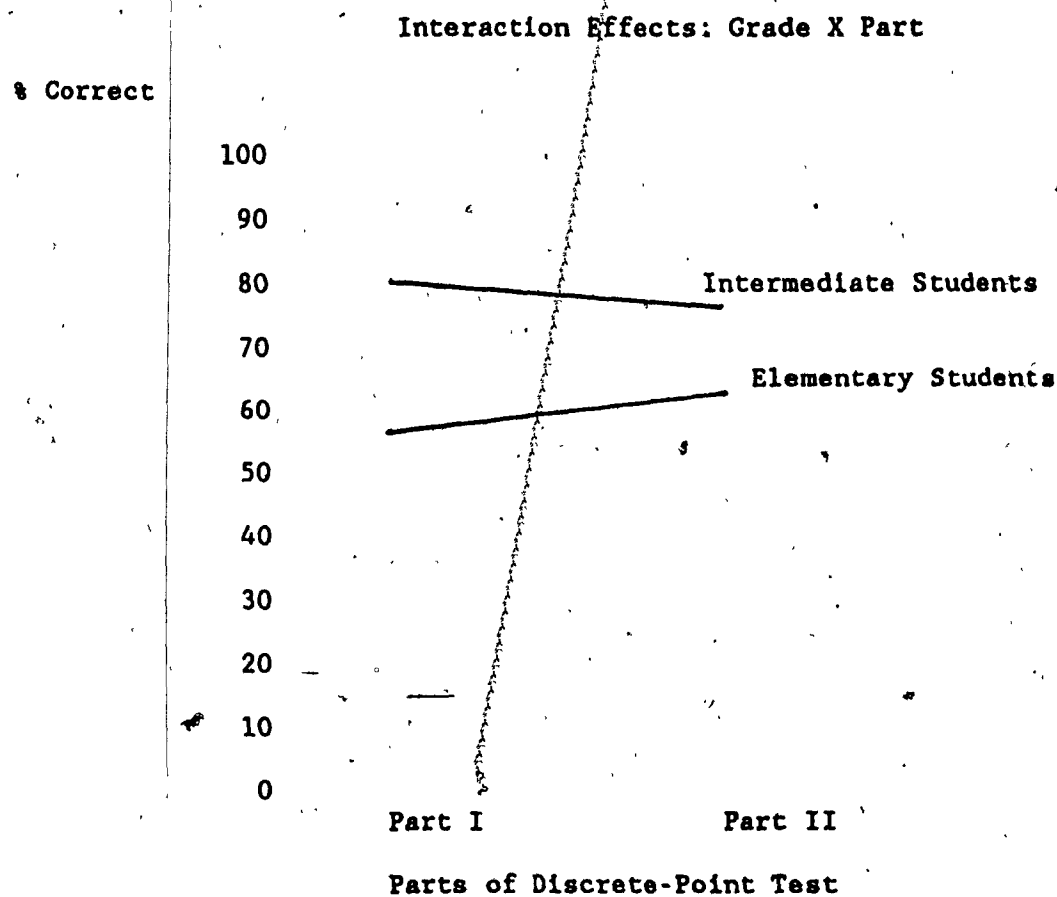
Intermediate students achieve greater accuracy than elementary students on the test as a whole and on each part of the test; however, the gap between the levels of accuracy of the two groups of students is narrower on Part II (unfamiliar words) than on Part I (familiar words). This decreased gap may be a function of the difference between the number and type of required responses on the two parts of the test: On Part I (familiar words) students were required to supply both the final vowel and the article for each word stem, whereas on Part II, the final vowel cue for gender marking was given, requiring students to supply only the article for each word. Since the possibility for error was, therefore, greater on Part I than on Part II, and if the final vowel supplied in Part II is used by students as a cue for article selection, it is not surprising that there is less difference between the two groups of students on Part II.

It is surprising, however, to see that what contributes

most to this narrowing of the gap between students' performance on Part II relative to Part I is poorer performance on Part II by intermediate students and not better performance on Part II by elementary students (Figure 2). Since it should have been possible for students to determine the article required for most of the words in this part on the basis of the final vowels, this result suggests that neither group of students makes full use of final vowel cues for gender marking.

Figure 2

Performance on Discrete-Point Test: P.I.C.A.I. Students

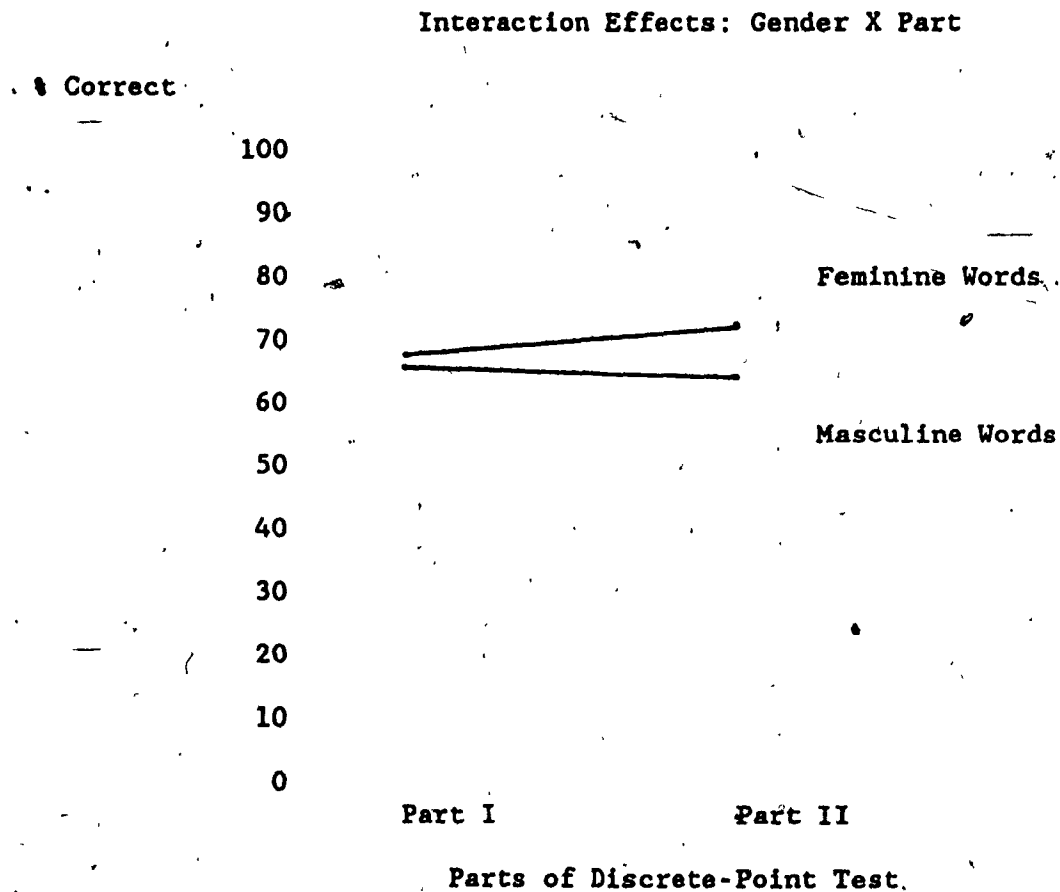


4.3.2. Interaction Effects: Gender X Part

Feminine words were correctly marked more often than masculine words on both parts of the test, but the difference was significant only on Part II (Figure 3). This is seemingly inconsistent with studies reporting overgeneralization of masculine forms; however, analyses of the error patterns on unfamiliar words (Chapter 4.5.1 and 4.5.2) shows that this finding does not, in fact conflict with those of other studies.

Figure 3

Performance on Discrete-Point Test: P.I.C.A.I. Students



4.4. Comparison of University and P.I.C.A.I. Students on the Two Parts of the Discrete-Point Test.

The university students, in contrast with the P.I.C.A.I. students, show somewhat higher mean scores on Part II than Part I. (Table 3). This suggests that final vowels may be more important gender cues for the university students than for the P.I.C.A.I. students: Although the university and intermediate P.I.C.A.I. students achieved comparable accuracy on the test as a whole, it would appear that their strategies for achieving accuracy differ.

It is likely that the university students pay more attention to form than do the P.I.C.A.I. students because of the tendency for university language classes to emphasize formal accuracy.

#### 4.5. Analysis of Error Patterns on the Discrete-Point Test

The test results of one elementary class (24 students) and one intermediate class (16 students) were further analyzed such that any patterns in the errors could be observed. For each of the 100 items, tests were hand-sorted according to the type of error made by each respondent. The results are presented in Appendix A (Tables A1 through A11) and are discussed below.

##### 4.5.1. Unfamiliar Words Clearly Marked for Gender

For this group of words, which appeared in Part II of the test, students were required to supply only the articles; final vowels ("o" and "a" ) clearly marking gender were given.

The error patterns seen in Tables A1 and A2 show that though the ANOVA (Table 4) indicated a significant difference in accuracy on feminine words than on masculine words in this part of the test, most of the errors on masculine words were not in gender assignment but in form of the masculine article: Of the total errors made by elementary students on masculine articles only 15.0% were errors in gender assignment. The other errors were in inappropriate choices of the il/lo masculine articles. Since there is only one possible unambiguous feminine article "la", virtually all errors (97.5%) on articles for feminine words were in gender assignment. One error was a plural form of the



feminine article "le" (Table A1). Similar patterns emerge in the analysis of intermediate students' errors (Table A2).

Analyzed this way, it can be seen that students assign masculine articles more often than feminine articles but do not know which of the masculine articles is appropriate. This tendency to assign masculine articles is consistent with other studies reporting overgeneralization to the masculine in language acquisition (Chapter 2).

Given the suggestion that university students and P.I.C.A.I. students may be using different strategies when marking gender (Chapter 4.4), an error analysis was also made for the university students on this set of unfamiliar words (Table A3).

It is interesting to see (Table A3) that errors are concentrated in the group of masculine words beginning with "s+(C)", "z", "gn" which require the article "lo"; no errors were made in the masculine nouns requiring the regular article "il". Such a clearly divided pattern of errors on forms of masculine articles did not occur among the P.I.C.A.I. students who showed more uncertainty about the choice of masculine articles. This suggests university students pay more attention to form.

An even more striking, and rather curious, error pattern in the responses of university students (Table A3) is the concentration of gender errors on feminine nouns beginning with the initial consonants that would require "lo" in masculine words: students ignored the final vowel "a" feminine cue, prompted instead by the initial consonants to respond with the masculine "lo" that is

associated with them. This further suggests that the university students are more sensitive to form and use different strategies to mark gender than do the P.I.C.A.I. students.

#### 4.5.2. Unfamiliar Words Ending in Ambiguous "e"

As for the group of unfamiliar words clearly marked for gender (section 4.5.1. above), for this set of unfamiliar words in Part II of the test, students were required to supply only the articles; the ambiguous "e" ending was given.

Of interest in the error pattern in this set of unfamiliar words ending in the ambiguous "e" (Tables A4, A5) is the incidence of errors in gender as opposed to form for masculine articles (63.2% for elementary students, 65.6% for intermediate students). This contrasts sharply with the low incidence of gender errors (15.0% for elementary students, 8.2% for intermediate students) on unfamiliar masculine words clearly marked for gender (Tables A1 and A2) and suggests that students must be relying on final vowel gender cues to some degree. The extent to which students depend on final vowel cues to mark gender is not clear, however, given the relative scores on familiar/unfamiliar words (Part I/Part II) and Grade X Part interaction effects discussed in Chapter 4.3.

Evidence of dialect interference is minimal for articles with only three instances of the dialectal form of the masculine article "li" (Table A4)

#### 4.5.3. Familiar Words

For this group of words (Part I of the test) students were required to supply both articles and final vowel gender markers. Error patterns show more difficulty with final vowels than with articles in all cases (Tables A1 through A11). This suggests students are not depending on Slobin's "pay attention to the ends of words" strategy to mark gender. Instead, it would seem that these students learned articles and word stems as units for which they selected final vowels.

Observation of students during the test also suggest that this is the strategy they were using; for each lexical item, students tended to supply the article before deciding on the final vowel. When working on the unfamiliar words, students in the elementary class grumbled, "How are we supposed to do this? I've never even heard these words before".

It is interesting to note that even without gender cues, most errors are in the form of a gender appropriate marker as opposed to use of a marker of the wrong gender. As in the group of unfamiliar words, feminine nouns tend to be incorrectly marked for gender more often than masculine nouns, which are correctly identified as masculine, but associated with an inappropriate form of the masculine article.

Errors on the final vowels of words requiring a strong vowel ending show a tendency not to use the inappropriate strong vowel, but rather to select the ambiguous "e" or to omit the final vowel. It is interesting to notice, however, that of words ending in ambiguous "e", "insegnante" (teacher), which can refer to either a man or a woman, was marked with the feminine final

"a". This suggests that when there is no overt grammatical gender marker, but there is a referent which is perceived to have natural gender, rather than overgeneralizing to the masculine, or "schwa", students mark gender on the basis of the natural referent.

The tendency for students to overuse the ambiguous "e" ending supports the hypothesis that students are influenced by dialect models in which the final vowel is omitted, or reduced to "schwa" and that they overuse the "e" ending as a graphic representation of the "schwa". This is interesting in light of the backgrounds of the students in the sample for which errors were analyzed: Parents of most subjects in the study are from southern Italy (primarily Abruzzo/Molise and Campania, in which dialects reduce final vowels to "schwa"), but the classes were heterogeneous (Appendix B), including many students of "mixed marriages" (parents from different regions of Italy, or one parent not of Italian origin--see Appendix B). That a clear error pattern emerged supports the suggestion that dialectal distinctions blur in the Italian community which has created its own koine (Chapter 1.3.).

Though the hypothesis was that students would be more accurate on "school words" than on "home words", results for the elementary students were virtually the same on both sets of words (49% accuracy, see Tables A8, A10). However, the number of errors on final vowels which were due to an overuse of "e" (probably a representation of the dialect "schwa") is lower on "school words" (39) than on "home words" (58), as expected (Tables A10, A8).

Intermediate students were slightly more accurate on "school words" (74.7% Table A11) than on "home words" (72.5% Table A9).

Studies of students' facility in the home language, teacher/parent input, and classroom methods are needed in order to determine the extent to which instruction in the heritage language program accounts for this accuracy, particularly since both intermediate and elementary students did better on the non-specific "e" ending words (85.6% intermediate, Table A7; 62.5% elementary, Table A6) than on the "school words" with strong vowel endings (74.7% intermediate, Table A11; 48.95% elementary, Table A10).

#### 4.6. Discussion of the Dictation, Related Cloze Test, and Composition

During the dictation, students made comments (in English!) indicating that they were focusing on the meaning rather than on the form of the sentences (e.g. #5. Franco has a great family!). Nevertheless, almost all final vowels were correctly transcribed by all students in the representative sample analyzed for each grade level: Among the elementary students, the mean number of errors in 66 obligatory contexts was 5.6 for fourteen subjects; for the sixteen intermediate students whose dictations were analyzed, the mean number of errors was 3.6 in 66 obligatory contexts (dictations of the university students were not analyzed since only 6 out of the 24 subjects in this group were present for this test).

These results do not support the hypothesis that students would tend to substitute their own final vowels instead of

accurately transcribing what they had heard, as was anticipated when the dictation was designed (dictation sentences are presented in Appendix C4).

The related cloze test (Appendix C5) shows that accuracy on the dictation was due to accurate transcription and not to control of the final vowel gender markers since individuals whose dictations were accurate had errors on the cloze test (Table 5). This suggests that Slobin's "pay attention to the ends of words" strategy is not operating here.

Errors on the dictation were inconsistent with those on the cloze for given individuals (particularly those in the elementary level) reflecting a stage of language acquisition characterized by unstable forms.

Consistent errors in a given sentence on the cloze were only counted as one error, eg. il cucino canadesa 'e' diversu ... -error; since students were given articles on the dictation but not on the cloze, counting both errors on the cloze would have introduced an extra possibility for error not present in the dictation thus increasing the likelihood of producing more errors on the cloze.

Table 5

Comparison of Errors on the Dictation and Cloze

		Mean errors/66 obligatory contexts	
	N	Dictation	Cloze
Elementary students	14	5.6	19.2
Intermediate students	15	3.6	8.6

Though the dictation did did not yield many errors on final vowels, there was evidence of other errors consistent with those reported in studies of dialect speakers in Italy (Chapter 2).

These include errors in doubling consonants; inappropriate use of accents; substitution of s/z, g/c; b/d. There was also evidence of interference from English and French ("et" for "e" - and; "ch" for [c] represented by "c" in Italian). Compositions also contained errors of these types, together with syntactic errors, some of which are consistent with those of dialect speakers in Italy. Further studies are needed to determine the extent to which errors are developmental and not dialect specific, as opposed to evidence of interference from English or French since the university students, who were not of Italian origin, exhibited some of the same errors (e.g. single/double consonants; missing/added accents; French "et for Italian "e" - "and").

#### 4.7. Discussion of the Oral Task

The "memory game" (list of lexical items is presented in Appendix C6) was interesting because it revealed a clear difference between the performance of the P.I.C.A.I. students and that of the non-Italian university students, which was not apparent on the written tests: the university students showed definite signs of "monitoring" their speech for grammatical accuracy by hesitating, backtracking and correcting, and asking the researcher for verification; the P.I.C.A.I. students were more interested in the "content" of their words and confidently.

without hesitation, used incorrect forms to tell the researcher what items were in the pictures in the "memory game" (Sample transcripts are presented in Appendix C7).

It could be that the increased attention to formal accuracy the university students was partly a function of their age; it is likely that the difference in behaviour is indicative of "foreign" as opposed to "natural" language learning, and not due to age since neither the 17-year old, nor the 12-year old P.I.C.A.I. students monitored their speech.

The oral tests also showed evidence of dialect phonology in the P.I.C.A.I. students' speech: some final vowels were reduced to "schwa" as expected; some voiceless consonants were voiced. There was also evidence of syntactic errors consistent with reports of dialect speakers in Italy (Chapter 2) and several lexical items reported by studies of "italiese" (e.g. frigidairo/ frigorifero; checca/torta, Pietropaolo, 1974; Villata 1980).

The university students did not "sound Italian". They marked gender in Standard Italian more accurately than did the P.I.C.A.I. students, but had less communicative facility. This is consistent with Professor Pietropaolo's observations of differences between university students not of Italian descent and those who are dialect speakers (D. Pietropaolo, personal communication, September, 1984).

When asked to read sentences or repeat them after the researcher, the P.I.C.A.I. students substituted other final vowels (some "schwa", some various) for the written or oral cues; the university students hesitated or backtracked to ensure accuracy.



These results suggest that the P.I.C.A.I. students behave as "natural" language learners, but that their language differs from the target language (Standard Italian) of the heritage language program.

#### 4.8. Students' Reflections on Strategies Used in Gender Marking

On completion of all tasks, students were asked to reflect on the way they had made their choice of article/final vowel on the discrete-point test. The majority of students responded "by the sound of the word"; "I just know the word"; "I guessed". Rules were secondary, if indicated at all. Of those who did indicate that they used a rule, most could not articulate it: "I see if it's masculine or feminine".

Interestingly, the university students' also reported use of rules as secondary, although more students did indicate use of a rule which was explicitly stated and dependent on final vowels (e.g. words ending in "a" are feminine and require "la").

## Chapter 5

### Summary of the Study and Implications for Heritage Language Programs

#### 5.1. Summary of the Study

Given the historical development of Standard Italian in relation to dialects in Italy and linguistic variability complicated by internal migration and emigration, Chapter 1 has demonstrated that the instruction of Standard Italian poses significant pedagogical problems both in the Italian context and in Canadian heritage language programs: the first language of the students differs to varying degrees from the language of instruction.

Virtually no systematic research has addressed the problem of developing proficiency in Standard Italian through heritage language programs in Canada. Studies of dialect speakers in Italy reviewed in Chapter 2 indicate dialectal interference in phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. Orthography reflects dialect phonology; phonological deviations from Standard Italian are most resistant to "correction".

The focus of the present study is on accuracy in gender marking. Since the question of gender acquisition is not specifically addressed by Italian studies, Chapter 2 also draws on issues raised by gender studies in French and Spanish as first and second languages. Given the significant interference of dialect phonology reported by the Italian studies, and the reduction of final vowels to "schwa" in southern Italian dialects (which predominate in the Italian-Canadian community in various

forms), the suggestion that children "pay attention to the ends of words" (Slobin), and the role of phonology as a source of cues for gender reported by studies of the acquisition of French (Stevens 1984) are of particular relevance to the interpretation of the data generated by the present study.

Other findings reported in the literature on the acquisition of gender in French and Spanish that are pertinent to the present study are: prior experience with a language having a gender system as a factor affecting acquisition of gender in L2; differences in the language behaviour of girls and boys; overgeneralization to masculine forms as a stage in language acquisition.

In light of the foregoing, the empirical study in the present work addressed the question of accuracy in gender marking by Italo-Canadian children learning Standard Italian in elementary and intermediate heritage language classes. Students were given several tasks, of which a discrete-point test was the primary focus of statistical analysis.

Research questions addressed relative accuracy of subjects by grade, sex, and school language. Error patterns on the different tasks were examined to suggest strategies Italo-Canadian children use to mark gender in Standard Italian. A group of university students who were not of Italian descent also completed the discrete-point test in order to provide insight into the extent to which the Italo-Canadian children share characteristics of foreign language learners. Findings are summarized below.

### 5.1.2. Comparison of P.I.C.A.I. Students for Accuracy on Gender Marking on a Discrete-Point Test

When compared by grade, sex and school language, performance of the P.I.C.A.I. students on the discrete-point test indicates that intermediate students are more accurate than elementary students; girls are more accurate than boys; students attending French-medium schools are more accurate than those attending English-medium schools. Of the interaction effects, only Grade X School Language is significant, with less difference in performance due to school language among the intermediate students than among elementary students.

### 5.1.3. Comparison of P.I.C.A.I. Students on Different Sets of Words on the Discrete-Point Test

There is a Gender X Part interaction with a greater difference in accuracy on feminine and masculine words in Part II (unfamiliar words, final vowel gender markers given). There is also a significant Grade X Part Interaction with the performance of intermediate students approaching that of the elementary students on Part II.

When compared for accuracy on words associated with the home environment as opposed to the classroom environment, elementary students show no differences in the number of correct responses on words heard most frequently at home as opposed to those associated with the school environment; intermediate students are somewhat more accurate on words heard more frequently at school than on those associated with the home; in both groups of students, errors on final vowels reflect a greater overuse of "e" (probably representing "schwa") on "home words" than on "school words". Further study is

needed to determine the extent to which the heritage language program accounts for this difference.

#### 5.1.4. Analysis of Error Patterns

Final vowels are incorrect more often than articles: errors on final vowels show a tendency to overuse the ambiguous "e". In cases of overuse of a strong vowel ending, it is virtually always gender appropriate.

Errors on masculine articles are due to uncertainty about which of the two gender appropriate forms (il/lo) to select, as opposed to doubt about gender.

#### 5.1.5. Influence of Dialect Phonology

There is no evidence of interference of dialect phonology on the transcription of final vowels during a dictation: students are able to transcribe what they hear. There is, however, evidence of interference in orthography. Since students are not able to generate correct final vowels when given a copy of the dictation sentences with word-final vowels omitted, accuracy on final vowels in the dictation must be due to oral cues and not to an internalized system of gender marking for Standard Italian.

In oral production, students tend to reduce final vowels to "schwa".

#### 5.1.6. Evidence of Conscious Use of Linguistic Rules to Mark Gender

On a discrete-point test, most students report that they select gender markers on the basis of the "sound" of the word, that is, their familiarity of a word through use. Rules are secondary,

if used at all (of those who reported using rules, most were not able to articulate--with any degree of precision--a rule for gender marking).

In oral production, P.I.C.A.I. students did not hesitate in order to reflect on the formal accuracy of their responses; rather, they behaved as "natural" L2 learners or native speakers though they did not exhibit native-like accuracy.

#### 5.1.7. Comparison of University Students with No Italian Background and P.I.C.A.I. Students

On the discrete-point test, university students achieved accuracy comparable to that of the intermediate P.I.C.A.I. students.

Relative accuracy on feminine/masculine nouns was also comparable; however, university students did not exhibit a decrease in accuracy on unfamiliar words relative to familiar words as did the intermediate P.I.C.A.I. students. In fact, the error pattern on unfamiliar words shows greater consistency and more attention to formal details among the university students.

As the P.I.C.A.I. students, the university students reported that they determine gender of words on the discrete-point test by using the "sound" of words (their familiarity with a given word acquired through experience); use of linguistic rules is a secondary aid to determine gender. During oral production, however, university students showed considerable evidence of "monitoring" their speech for formal accuracy which was not manifested by the P.I.C.A.I. students. Further study comparing university students who are not of Italian descent with dialect speakers is needed.

#### 5.1.8. Gender Marking Strategies

For the Italo-Canadian students, exposure to dialect models in which the final vowel gender marker is reduced to "schwa" or omitted, the strategy "pay attention to the ends of words" is not a useful one for determining gender. Instead, students appear to learn articles and word-stems as a unit, and select final vowels accordingly. As a stage in this process, students overgeneralize to the masculine article and show inconsistent use of the il/lo masculine articles. Overgeneralization on final vowels to "e" is presumably due to interference of the dialect "schwa".

There is no evidence of monitoring for formal accuracy among P.I.C.A.I. students; university students seem to pay more attention to formal features of the language.

## 5.2. Implications of Results for Instruction of Standard Italian in Heritage Language Programs: First Language, Foreign Language, or Second Dialect Development?

The Italo-Canadian students in this study exhibit characteristics of L1 learners in that their oral production is spontaneous and free of attempts to monitor for formal accuracy. Their level of accuracy in gender marking for Standard Italian, however, is comparable to that of foreign language learners at university. Errors of the Italo-Canadian students show interference of dialect phonology; orthography, lexicon, and syntax also reflect interference from English and French.

In light of these results, together with considerations of the relationship between Standard Italian and dialect discussed in Chapter 1, questions must be raised about the goals of heritage language programs for Italian. General goals outlined by the Ontario Ministry of Education and cited by Burke (1983, p.23) are

- (i) [to] enhance the students' concept of themselves and their heritage
- (ii) [to] improve communication with parents and grandparents
- (iii) [to] prepare students to use heritage languages in the Canadian context
- (iv) [to] allow students to use skills and concepts they already possess
- (v) [to] provide experiences in learning that may prove a valuable basis for credit courses at the high school level
- (vi) [to] encourage all students to develop new language skills that will help them to function more effectively in Canada's multicultural environment as well as in the international community



Questions will be raised about the extent to which each of the goals outlined above is appropriate for Italian heritage language programs:

- (i) [to] enhance the students' concept of themselves and their heritage

How should "heritage" be interpreted in Italian programs?

This may appear to be self evident, or merely a terminological quibble, but the consideration it merits will become evident as the discussion of program goals progresses.

Given the regionalism and linguistic heterogeneity that is deeply rooted in Italy and reflected in the Italian communities in Canada, should "heritage" be interpreted in the narrow sense of the community to which parents of participating children belonged? This would neither be practical, given the heterogeneity within a single class, nor desirable, as it would serve only to reinforce existing divisions.

Di Giovanni (1983) has indicated the need to encourage appreciation of the Italian-Canadian heritage through readings related to the experience of immigrants. This raises a new question: what is the language of the Italian-Canadian heritage?

At the same time, Di Giovanni (1983, p. 19) has emphasized that "...you don't have to be of Italian...background to take that language" What image will non-Italians, as well as children of Italian background have of modern Italy if the focus of instruction is on the immigrant experience? A broad perspective of the realities of modern Italy, together with historical references to the conditions resulting in emigration must be presented if students are to understand their heritage.

- (ii) [to] improve communication with parents and grandparents
- (iii) [to] prepare students to use heritage languages in the Canadian context

What language do the parents and grandparents speak? If, as has been suggested, they are likely to have only limited knowledge of Standard Italian, and if the variety they speak differs significantly from the Standard, how will the instruction of Standard Italian facilitate the communication of children with their families?

Even if the parents are familiar with the Standard, and are exposed to it through Italian media, they may prefer to use a different variety in the home. If different dialects or a type of italiano popolare mixed with English and/or French is used in the community, what does it mean to "use heritage languages in the Canadian context"?

Though there has been considerable study on lexical variations within the Italian community, sociolinguistic studies are needed on the patterns of language use (dialect/Italian/English/French) in order to assess the relative importance of the instruction of Standard Italian for facilitating communication within the ethnic community.

Studies are needed such as the one undertaken by Professor Tosi in conjunction with Centro Scuola and the National Heritage Language Resource Centre on the initial competence of children in the "community language" (results forthcoming, S. Fiorucci, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, personal communication March, 1987). If it is the case that a child has

reasonable facility in some variety of Italian on entering a heritage language program, it is likely that he/she already knows enough of the "heritage" language to communicate with family and friends; if the child has little or no knowledge of any variety of Italian, and if Standard Italian is not widely used in the community, how would instruction of Standard Italian enable him to increase his participation in the ethnic community?

(iv) [to] allow students to use skills and concepts they already possess

All students in the present study were born in Canada, educated in English or French and speak some variety of Italian to some degree; what are the skills and concepts referred to here? The problem is that the term "heritage language program" and stated goals refer to both elective enrichment programs in which the students are learning the target language, and to transitional or bilingual programs which are designed to enable new immigrants to make use of their first language as they learn one of the official languages.

Even if the program were designed to make use of the first language, there would be a problem for Italian children: Danesi (1986) notes that often the first language of the Italo-Canadian child is a non-standard form of the target language of the heritage program.

(v) [to] provide experiences in learning that may prove a valuable basis for credit courses at the high school level

Kuitunen (1979-80) sees the heritage program as a means to encourage the maintenance of enrollments in Italian at the

secondary school. But if Italian is perceived as an ethnic language, limited in use to the Italian community, to what extent can students of different backgrounds be expected to take Italian in high school? Chandler (Burke, 1983, p.24) has observed that "a negative by-product of multiculturalism has been the partial identification of Italian as an ethnic language to be learned and maintained by people of Italian origin, but not really a 'proper' school language for other students" Furthermore, many of students in the present study who were completing the final year of the heritage program indicated that they would not pursue study of Italian at school because they felt they already spoke it well enough for their own purposes.

- (vi) [to] encourage all students to develop new language skills that will help them to function more effectively in Canada's multicultural environment as well as in the international community.

As has been demonstrated, in the case of Italian heritage programs, the extent to which the target language will help a student "function more effectively in Canada's multicultural environment" is questionable because of the nature of the relationship between Standard Italian and the other varieties of Italian which may be represented in the community.

Clearly, the instruction of Standard Italian in heritage language programs is problematic. The present study has demonstrated that Italo-Canadian children share characteristics of both dialect speakers and second or foreign language learners. The crucial issue, then, is whether Standard Italian in heritage

language programs ought to be approached as second dialect or foreign language teaching; certainly it is not a case of first language development.

Tosi (1984, chap.4) has constructed a model describing the language development of second generation immigrants in Britain. Since the situation of immigrants in Canada differs from that in Britain, further study is necessary to describe the language development of Italo-Canadian children (Results of Tosi's Toronto study are forthcoming, S. Fiorucci, OISE, March, 1987).

Other suggestions for further research prompted by the present study include an analysis of students' relative facility in and attitude toward dialect/Standard Italian on entry in a heritage program and longitudinal studies examining stages in the acquisition of Standard Italian in this context; an analysis of the relative interference of dialect, English, and French; input studies comparing the child's home language to that of the classroom; a comparison of Italo-Canadian children learning Standard Italian in heritage language programs to children identified as dialect speakers in Italy.

Only further research addressing the problems associated with the development of proficiency in Standard Italian in heritage language programs and the reevaluation of program goals can ensure that the instruction of Standard Italian will meet the needs of students in this context.

## References

- Andersen, R. (1982, April). What's gender good for anyway?. Paper presented at the 4th Los Angeles Second Language-Research Forum, UCLA.
- Bazzanella, C., & Guerra, G. (1971). Problemi sociolinguistici in un quartiere periferico torinese. In M. Medici & R. Simone (Eds.), L'insegnamento dell'italiano in Italia e all'estero. Atti del IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Società di Linguistica Italiana (pp.87-102). Roma: Bulzoni.
- Bell, R. (1978). Sociolinguistics. Goals, Approaches and Problems. London: Batsford.
- Benicà, P., Ferraboschi, G., Gaspari, G., & Vanelli, L., (1979). Italiano standard o italiano scolastico. In A. Colombo (Ed.), Guida all'educazione linguistica (pp. 162-178). Bologna: Zanichelli.
- Berretta, M. (1980). La lingua italiana e la sua didattica. In Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere, La lingua italiana oggi. Atti della tavola Rotonda tenuta il 31 maggio 1979 (pp. 55-74). Milano: Author.
- Bhatnagar, J. (1980). Linguistic behaviour and adjustment of immigrant children in French and English schools in Montreal. International Review of Applied Psychology, 29, 141-158.
- Bialystok, E., & Fröhlich, M. (1977). Aspects of Language Learning in Classroom Settings. Working Papers on Bilingualism, 13, 1-26.
- Burke, M. (1983). Heritage Language Education: Problems and Possibilities. In J. Cummins (Ed.), Heritage Language Education: Issues and Directions (pp. 23-26). Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services.
- Cardona, G. (1976). Standard Italian. The Hague: Mouton.
- Clivio, G. (1971). L'Insegnamento dell'italiano e gli studi di italianistica in Canada, particolarmente in Ontario. In M. Medici & R. Simone (Eds.), L'insegnamento dell'italiano in Italia e all'estero. Atti del IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Società di Linguistica Italiana (pp. 37-44). Roma: Bulzoni.
- Coffaro, M. C., & Prinzivalli, R. (1971). Italiano standard, italiano regionale e dialetto in scuole elementari del palermitano. In M. Medici & R. Simone (Eds.), L'insegnamento dell'italiano in Italia e all'estero. Atti del IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Società di Linguistica Italiana (pp.103-126). Roma: Bulzoni.

- Cohen, Andrew D. (1974). The Acquisition of Spanish Grammar through Immersion: Some Findings after Four Years. Canadian Modern Language Review, 32(5), 562-574.
- Colombo, A. (Ed.). (1979). Guida all'educazione linguistica. Bologna: Zanichelli.
- Corrà, L. (1981-82). Dialetto e scuola oggi. Osservazioni su programmi e libri di testo. Rivista Italiana di Dialettologia, 1, 99-111.
- Correa-Zoli. (1974). Language Contact in San Francisco: Lexical Interference in American Italian. Italica, 51, 177-192.
- Cortelazzo, M. (1980). La lingua italiana oggi. In Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere, La lingua italiana oggi. Atti della tavola Rotonda tenuta il 31 maggio 1979 (pp. 15-22). Milano: Author.
- Covari, L. (1981-82). Dialetto e scuola nell'Italia unita. Rivista Italiana di Dialettologia, 1, 77-97.
- Cremona, C. (1975). L'atteggiamento dei bambini verso il dialetto e la lingua italiana. Risultati di una ricerca. Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata, 2-3, 125-140.
- Cummins, J. (1978). Educational Implications of Mother Tongue Maintenance in Minority Language Groups. Canadian Modern Language Review 34, 395-416.
- Cummins, J. (1981). Bilingualism and Minority Language Children. Toronto: OISE Press.
- Cummins, J. (1983a). Heritage Language Education. A Literature Review. Toronto: Ministry of Education.
- Cummins, J. (Ed.). (1983b). Heritage Language Education: Issues and Directions. Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services.
- Danesi, M. (1974). Teaching Standard Italian to Dialect Speakers: A Pedagogical Perspective of Linguistic Systems in Contact. Italica, 33, 295-304.
- Danesi, M. (1983, June). Curriculum Development and Organization. Paper presented at the Heritage Language Association of British Columbia Conference, Vancouver.
- Danesi, M. (1986). Teaching a Heritage Language to Dialect-Speaking Students. Toronto: OISE Press.
- Decreto Ministeriale. (9 febbraio 1979). Programmi, orari di insegnamento e prove di esame per scuola media statale. Padova: Glòria.

De Mauro, T. (1978). Linguaggio e società nell'Italia d'oggi. Torino: ERI.

De Mauro, T. (1979). Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita (2nd ed.). Bari: Laterza.

De Mauro, T., & Lodi, M. (1974). Lingua e Dialetti. Roma: Riuniti.

Di Giovanni, A. (1983). Standardization of Heritage Language Curriculum: The Italian Example. In J. Cummins (Ed.), (1983). Heritage Language Education: Issues and Directions. Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services (65-67).

Etudes Migrations. (1980). 57.

Fabris, M. et al. (1971). Lingua, dialetto e ambiente socioeconomico nel napoletano. In M. Medici & R. Simone (Eds.), L'insegnamento dell'italiano in Italia e all'estero. Atti del IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Società di Linguistica Italiana (pp.103-126). Roma: Bulzoni.

Ferrara, C. (1980). Lexical Interference in Italian Dialect Speakers. Canadian Modern Language Review 34(4), 644-653.

Ferreri, S. (1971). Italiano standard, italiano regionale e dialetto in una scuola media di Palermo. In M. Medici & R. Simone (Eds.), L'insegnamento dell'italiano in Italia e all'estero. Atti del IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Società di Linguistica Italiana (pp.205-224). Roma: Bulzoni.

Feuerverger, G. (1982). Effects of the Heritage Language Program on the Ethnolinguistic Vitality of Italo-Canadian Students. Unpublished master's thesis, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto.

Fishman, J. (1975). La Sociologia del Linguaggio. Roma: Officina. (Original work published 1972)

Francescato, G. (1978). Dialetto, lingua regionale, e lingua nazionale nella scuola. Situazione e prospettive. In V. Lo Cascio (Ed.), Prospettive sulla lingua madre: Sviluppo e educazione (pp. 127-152). Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia italiana.

Frescura, M. (1984). Interferenze lessicali: Italiano-Inglese. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Garavito, J. (1986). El muchacha tiene tres balón: Number and Gender in the Spanish of a Group of Francophone Learners. Unpublished master's thesis, Concordia University, Montreal.



- Gonzo, S.T., & Saltarelli, M. (1979). Lingua, dialetto ed istruzione bilingue a Chicago. In F. Leoni (Ed.) I dialetti e le lingue delle minoranze di fronte all'italiano. Atti dell'XI Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Società di Linguistica Italiana (pp.635-646). Roma: Bulzoni.
- Hall, R. A. (1980). 'Language, Dialect, and Regional Italian'. International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 25, 95-106.
- Harley, Brigit. (1979). French gender "rules" in the speech of English-dominant, French-dominant, and monolingual French speaking children. Working Papers in Bilingualism, 19, 129-157.
- Katerinov, K. & Boriosi, M.C. (1976). La lingua italiana per stranieri. Perugia: Edizioni Guerra.
- Kessler, C. (1971). The Acquisition of Syntax in Bilingual Children. Washington: Georgetown University Press.
- Kuitunen, M. (1979-80). L'Italiano a Toronto: dallo Heritage Program all'università. Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata, 3-1, 11-21.
- Legge 153 (1971).
- Leoni, F. (Ed.). (1979). I dialetti e le lingue delle minoranze di fronte all'italiano. Atti dell'XI Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Società di Linguistica Italiana. Roma: Bulzoni.
- Lepschy, A., & Lepschy, G. (1977). The Italian Language Today. London: Hutchinson.
- Lo Cascio, V. (Ed.). (1978). Prospettive sulla lingua madre: Sviluppo e educazione. Roma. Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana.
- Martindale, P. (1983). The Incorporation of Heritage Language Education within the Public School System and Its Effects on the Community. In Cummins. (Ed.), (1983). Heritage Language Education: Issues and Directions. Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services (69-72).
- Medici, M., & Simone, R., (Eds.). (1971). L'insegnamento dell'italiano in Italia e all'estero. Atti del IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Società di Linguistica Italiana (pp.205-224). Roma: Bulzoni.
- Migliorini, B., & Baldelli, I. (1981). Breve storia della lingua italiana (reprint). Firenze: Sansoni.

- Mioni, A. (1975). Per una sociolinguistica italiana. Note di un non sociologo. In J. Fishman (1972/1975). La Sociologia del Linguaggio. (pp.7-56). Roma: Officina.
- Mioni, A. (1978). Sociolinguistica, appredimento della lingua madre e lingua standard. In V. Lo Cascio (Ed.). (1978). Prospettive sulla lingua madre: Sviluppo e educazione. (pp.55-76). Roma. Istituto della Encyclopedia Italiana.
- Mocciaro, A. (1979). Dialetto e lingua nazionale nel comportamento linguistico di studenti della scuola media di un quartiere di Catania. In Leoni, F. (Ed.). (1979). I dialetti e le lingue delle minoranze di fronte all'italiano. Atti dell'XI Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Societa di Linguistica Italiana (pp.495-504). Roma: Bulzoni.
- Pietropaolo, D. (1974). Aspects of English Interference on the Italian Language in Toronto. Canadian Modern Language Review, 3, 234-241.
- Pinto, M., & Tranasi, M. (1979). Aspetti conflittuali del rapporto dialetto-lingua nella scuola elementare. In F. Leoni (Ed.). (1979). I dialetti e le lingue delle minoranze di fronte all'italiano. Atti dell'XI Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Societa di Linguistica Italiana (pp. 505-520). Roma: Bulzoni.
- Pizzorusso, A. (1975). Il pluralismo linguistico tra stato nazionale e autonomie regionali. Pisa: Pacini.
- Plann, S. (1977). Acquiring a Second Language in an Immersion Classroom. In H.D. Brown, C.A. Yorio & R. H. Crymes (Eds.). On TESOL '77 (pp. 231-225). Washington: TESOL.
- Ponzio, A., & Mininni, G. (1980). Scuola e Plurilinguismo. Bari: Dedalo.
- Purbhoo, M., & Shapson, S. (1974). Transition from Italian: The First Year. Toronto: Toronto Board of Education Research Department.
- Renzi, L., & Cortelazzo, M.A. (1977). La lingua italiana oggi: un problema scolastico e sociale. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Simone, R., & Ruggiero, G. (Eds.). (1977). Aspetti sociolinguistici dell'Italia contemporanea. Atti dell'VIII Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Societa di Linguistica Italiana. Roma: Bulzoni.
- Stern, H. H. (1984). A Quiet Language Revolution: Second-Language Teaching in Canadian Contexts--Achievements and New Directions Canadian Modern Language Review, 40, 506-524.
- Stevens, F. (1984). Strategies for Second-Language Acquisition. Montreal: Eden Press.

Swain, M. (1981). Immersion Education: Applicability for Non-Vernacular Teaching to Vernacular Speakers. Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 4(1), 1-17.

Tomasi, L. F. (1977). The Italian Community in Toronto: A Demographic Profile. International Migration Review, 11(4), 486-513.

Tosi, A. (1979-80). Bilinguismo e immigrazione: una nota sociolinguistica al piano europeo di mantenimento delle lingue nazionali nelle comunità di emigrati. Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata, 3-1, 243-263.

Tosi, A. (1984). Immigration and Bilingual Education. Oxford: Pergamon.

Tucker, G.R., Lambert, W. E., Rigault, A., & Segalowitz, N. (1968). A Psychological Investigation of French Speakers' Skill with Grammatical Gender. Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour, 7, 312-316.

Villata, B. (1980). Le lexique de l'italien parlé à Montréal. Studii și cercetări lingvistice, 3, 257-284.

APPENDIX

**APPENDIX A**  
**Error Patterns**

Table A1

Unfamiliar Words Clearly Marked for Gender: Elementary Students

Number of Respondents = 24

Lexical item	Error type X Article						
	C	B	IL	LO	LA	I	LE
<b>MASCULINE</b>							
il verdetto	14	2		6	(2)		
il verdetto	13	4		7			
il perno	16	1		6	(1)		
il fango	13	1		7	(3)		
il polso	13	1		10			
lo schermo	10	3			(1)	1	
lo struzzo	13	1	10				
lo zaino	19		3		(2)		
lo gnomo	11	1	9		(3)		
Total/216	122	14	31	36	(12)	1	
<b>FEMININE</b>							
la scorta	20	3		(1)			
la stoffa	21		(3)				
la zingara	12	1	(3)	(8)			
la slitta	21	2					
la marea	14	1	(7)	(2)			
la dogana	17	3	(2)	(2)			
la ringhiera	16	3	(5)				
la moffetta	18	2	(3)	(1)			
la ragnatela	20	2	(1)	(1)			
Total/216	159	17	(24)	(15)			1

C = correct B = blank ( ) = incorrect gender

totals = number of respondents X number of lexical items in the set

**Z Correct**

Masculine 56.5  
Feminine 73.6  
Total 65

**Z Error in gender**

Masculine 15.6  
Feminine 97.5

Table A2

Unfamiliar Words Clearly Marked for Gender: Intermediate Students

Number of Respondents = 16

Lexical item	C	B	IL	Error type X Article		
				LO	L'	LA
MASCULINE						
il verdetto	10	1		4		(1)
il verdetto	13			3		
il perno	8	2		6		
il fango	13			2		(1)
il polso	10	1		5		
lo schermo	9		7			
lo struzzo	14	1				(1)
lo zaino	7	1	7			(1)
lo gnomo	5	1	8		1	
Total/144	89	7	22	20	1	(4)
FEMININE						
la scorta	15	1				
la stoffa	16					
la zingara	15	1				
la slitta	15				(1)	
la marea	12	1	(3)			
la dogana	16					
la ringhiera	15	1				
la moffetta	15	1				
la ragnatela	15	1				
Total/144	134	6	(3)		(1)	

C = correct B = blank ( ) = incorrect gender

totals = number of respondents X number of lexical items in the set

Anomalies: lo gnomo &gt; il cognomo

X Correct

X Error in gender

Masculine 61.8

Masculine 8.3

Feminine 93.1

Feminine 100.0

Total 77.4

Table A3

Unfamiliar Words Clearly Marked for Gender: University Students

Number of Respondents = 24

Lexical item	C	B	IL	Error type, X Article		
				LO	L'	LA
<b>MASCULINE</b>						
il verdetto	24					
il verdetto	24					
il perno	24					
il fango	24					
il polso	24					
lo schermo	18	1	5			
lo struzzo	21		3			
lo zaino	18		5			(1)
lo gnomo	8		16			
Total/216	185	1	29			(1)
<b>FEMININE</b>						
la scorta	21				(3)	
la stoffa	20				(4)	
la zingara	20				(4)	
la slitta	21				(3)	
la marea	24					
la dogana	24					
la ringhiera	23		(1)			
la moffetta	23	1				
la ragnatela	24					
Total/216	200	1	(1)		(14)	

C = correct B = blank ( ) = incorrect gender  
 totals = number of respondents X number of lexical  
 items in the set

**X Correct**

Masculine 85.6  
 Feminine 92.6  
 Total 89.1

**X Error in gender**

Masculine 3.3  
 Feminine 100.0



Table A4

Unfamiliar Words Ending in Ambiguous "e": Elementary Students

Number of Respondents = 24

Lexical item	Error type X Article						
	C	B	IL	LO	L'	LA	LE LI
<b>MASCULINE</b>							
il volante	13	2		1		(5)	(2) 1
il volante	13	2			1	(6)	(1) 1
il gregge	17	1		1	1	(2)	(1) 1
lo scaffale	0	1	7			(14)	(2)
l'ordine	21		2	1			
l'interesse	20	1	1			(2)	
l'inconveniente	19	1	3				(1)
Total/168	103	8	13	3	2	(29)	(7) 3
<b>FEMININE</b>							
l'inaugurazione	21		(29)			1	
la plebe	2	2	(16)	(3)			1
la grandine	5		(15)	(2)			2
la valle	5	2	(13)	(2)			2
Total/96	33	4	(46)	(7)		1	5

C = correct      B = blank      ( ) = incorrect gender  
 totals = number of respondents X number of lexical items in the set

## X Correct

Masculine 61.3  
 Feminine 34.4  
 Total 51.5

## X Error in gender

Masculine 63.2  
 Feminine 89.8

Table A5

Unfamiliar Words Ending in Ambiguous "e": Intermediate Students

Number of Respondents = 16

Lexical item	C	B	IL	Error type X Article	
				LO	LA
-----					
MASCULINE					
il volante	9	1		1	(5)
il volante	13	1		1	(1)
il gregge	3	2		1	(10)
lo scaffale	5	1	6		(4)
l'ordine	15		1		
l'interesse	16				
l'inconveniente	14		1		(1)
-----					
Total/112	75	5	8	3	(21)
-----					
FEMININE					
l'inaugurazione	14				(2)
la plebe	4	1	(8)	(3)	
la grandine	8	1	(7)		
la valle	9	2	(5)		
-----					
Total/64	35	4	(22)	(3)	

C = correct    B = blank    ( ) = incorrect gender  
 totals = number of respondents X number of lexical  
 items in the set

## X Correct

Masculine 66.06  
 Feminine 54.7  
 Total 62.5

## X Error in gender

Masculine 65.6  
 Feminine 86.2

Table A6

Familiar Words Ending in Ambiguous "e": Elementary Students

Number of Respondents = 24

Lexical item	Error type									
	C	B	IL	I Article						I Ending
				LO	LA	LE	or	or	O	A I
<b>MASCULINE</b>										
il cane	19								5	
il ristorante	18			1			1		3	1
il direttore	20			1				1	1	1
l'amore	17		1					1	1	(1) 1
l'animale	19		1						2	1
Total/120	93		2	2			1	2	12	(1) 4
<b>FEMININE</b>										
l'automobile	18	1	(2)						1	1
l'attenzione	17	1						2	1	2
la canzone	3	2	(4)			2		1	11	
la carne	9		(1)			2			10	
la colazione	10	3	(4)					3	3	
Total/120	57	7	(11)			4		6	26	3

Total Accuracy = 62.5%

C = correct B = blank ( ) = incorrect gender

totals = number of respondents X number of lexical items in the set

Other errors: il ristoranti; i direttori; l'amori, la amor; l'animali, il animal;  
 l'automobili, la automobil; l'attenzioni (2), la attenzione; le canzone (2)  
 lo canzoni; le carne (2) il carno, il carn; la colazione

Table A7

Familiar Words Ending in Ambiguous "e": Intermediate Students

Number of Respondents = 16

Lexical item	Error type									
	C	B	X Article			X		X Ending		
			LE	LO	LA	LE	A	O	A	I
<hr/>										
MASCULINE										
il cane	16									
il ristorante	15							1		
il direttore	15							1		
l'anore	14							1	(1)	
l'animale	14							1		1
<hr/>										
Total/80	74							4	(1)	1
<hr/>										
FEMININE										
l'automobile	14							(1)		1
l'attenzione	14							(2)		
la canzone	7	1						(1)	7	
la carne	14								2	
la colazione	14								2	
<hr/>										
Total/80	63	1						(4)	11	1

Total Accuracy = 85.6%

C = correct B = blank ( ) = incorrect gender

totals = number of respondents X number of lexical items in the set

Other errors: l'animali, l'automobili

Table A8

Familiar Words--Home Environment: Elementary Students

Number of Respondents = 24

Lexical item	Error type										
	C	B	I Article			Error type			I Ending		
			IL	LO	L'	LA	LE	O	A	E	I
<b>MASCULINE</b>											
il pranzo	9	2		1					1	(1)	6
il piatto	9									5	3
il letto	13	1		2						2	1
il telefono	8			1					5	8	
il frigorifero	8	1							2	9	1
il bagno	13	4		3					2	1	
il bicchiere	9	2					(1)		1	5	4
il latte	15							1		6	1
il pane	16			1		(1)	(1)		1	(1)	1
lo zucchero	9		8								1
l'appartamento	6	1							1	(2)	10
Total/264	115	11	8	8		(1)	(2)	1	11	12	(4) 42 12
<b>FEMININE</b>											
l'oliva	5	1							(5)	6	
la forchetta	18		(1)						1	4	
la macchina	15								1	2	
la cena	9	4									
la chiesa	17	2								3	
la tazza	21	1							1	1	
la bicicletta	17	2							3		
la televisione	13							3	2	2	
la chiave	6	5		(1)				1		9	1
Total/216	121	15	(1)	(1)				4	8	(5) 11 16 1	

Total Accuracy = 49.2%

C = correct      B = blank      ( ) = incorrect gender

totals = number of respondents X number of lexical items in the set

Other errors: pranze; piatte, l'piatte; lo bicchiere (2); le latte; lo telefono; lo frigorifero, la frigorifero; la latti; lo pan, il panne; zuccheri, il zuccheri, il zucchero; la appartament, il appartamento (2); la olive; il forchette (2); il macchini, il macchine (2), le macchin, il macchini; il cene (2), le cen, il cen; il chiese, il biciclett, il bicicletta (2) il televisioni; lo chiavi  
wrong article/ending--la-a = 10; il-o = 5; lo-o = 5

Table A9

Familiar Words--Home Environment: Intermediate Students

Number of Respondents = 16

Lexical item	Error type									
	C	B	IL	I Article		Error type		I Ending		
				LO	L'	LA	LE			
<b>MASCULINE</b>										
il pranzo	14			1						
il piatto	12	2								2
il letto	12	3				(1)				
il telefono	11							1		4
il frigorifero	15			1						
il bagno	15									1
il bicchiere	8					(1)		4		
il latte	13							3		
il pane	11					(1)		1		
lo zucchero	8		7							1
l'appartamento	11			1						4
Total/176	130	5	7	3		(2)	(1)	1	8	11
<b>FEMININE</b>										
l'oliva	5							(2)		9
la forchetta	15									1
la macchina	14									2
la cena	12	1								
la chiesa	11	1								3
la tazza	11	1						(1)		2
la bicicletta	13							1		1
la televisione	14								2	
la chiave	7	1					1		7	
Total/144	102	4					1	1	(3)	18

Total Accuracy = 72.5%

C = correct    B = blank    ( ) = incorrect gender

totals = number of respondents X number of lexical items in the set

Other errors: le bicchiero; il cene

wrong article/ending--la-a = 3; il-o = 4; lo-o = 4; le-e = 3

Table 610

Familiar Words--School Environment: Elementary Students

Number of Respondents = 24

Lexical item	Error type												
	C	B	IL	X Article		La Le A			X Ending		A	E	I
-----													
MASCULINE													
il libro	17	1		2								3	
il quaderno	18			2							(1)	1	1
il voto	7	2		3				1				8	
il componimento	2	3		3				2				7	1
il campanello	12			5				1					2
il nome	19			1				2	1				1
il professore	18							2	2				1
lo studente	2		14				(1)	1	1				
l'intervallo	9	1	1	1			(1)				(1)	8	1
l'esame	10	3	2	1				2			(2)		2
-----													
Total/240	114	10	17	18			(1) (1)	11	5		(4)	27	9
-----													
FEMININE													
l'aula	1	3		(1)				3	(9)			5	(1)
l'insegnante	11	1	4			1	1	1	1	1			
la penna	16	4						1					
la lavagna	17							1				1	
la scuola	20											1	
la palestra	17							1					
la domanda	7	2							(2)			4	
la carta	18											1	
la classe	8		(1)		1		1	1			12		
la lezione	6	3	(7)				5						
-----													
Total/240	121	13	12	(1)	1	1	7	8	12		13	12	(1)

Total Accuracy = 48.95%

C = correct B = blank (.) = incorrect gender

totals = number of respondents X number of lexical items in the set

Other errors: l'libro; l'componimento, la componiment, la componimento lo professoro; il studenti (2);

il esani, il esam; la aul; il insegnant, il insegnanti; il penni, la pennas; il lavagn;  
l'scuol; il palestri; O domande, l'domando, lo domando (2); le cart, le carto, lo carto;  
wrong article/ending--la-a = 8; la-e = 2; il-o = 12; lo-e = 9

Table A11

Familiar Words--School Environments: Intermediate Students

Lexical item	Error type									
	C	B	IL	X Article LO L'	LA	LE	X Ending O	O	A	E
<b>MASCULINE</b>										
il libro	15									1
il quaderno	16									
il voto	11	2		1						
il componimento	10	1		1						3
il campanello	9	1								
il none	16									
il professore	11	2		1				1		
lo studente	7		6			(1) 1		1		
l'intervallo	10		1							5
l'esame	10		1					2	(2)	
Total/160	115	6	8	3		(1) 1		4	(2) 9	
<b>FEMININE</b>										
l'aula	6	1	(1)				1	(2)		4
l'insegnante	12			2			1	1		
la penna	14									2
la lavagna	15									
la scuola	15					1				
la palestra	14					1				
la domanda	11					1				
la carta	13									3
la classe	12					1			3	
la lezione	12		(1)			1			2	
Total/160	124	1	(2)	2		4		2	3	5

Total Accuracy 74.7%

C = correct B = blank ( ) = incorrect gender

Totals = number of respondents X number of lexical items in the set

Other errors: article/ending incorrect

la-a la quaderna; la componimenta; la campanella (6); la professora

la-e la vote

il-o il esame; il lavagno; il palestro (2); il domando (2); il carto; il professoro

il-e il aule; il domande



APPENDIX B

Italian Regions Represented by Parents of Students in the Sample

B1.-

# Regions Represented by Parents of Elementary Students

Number of Respondents - 76/87

Region	School 1	School 2		School 3	Total
		Class A	B		
Abruzzo-Molise	6	3	6	4	19
Campania	1	7	5	1	14
Basilicata	1	-	-	2	3
Puglia	-	1	3	-	4
Lazio	1	-	1	2	4
Calabria	2	-	2	2	6
Sicilia	-	1	-	-	1
Marche	-	-	-	1	1
Veneto	1	-	-	-	1
Emilia-Romagna	1	-	-	-	1
Total					54

## "Mixed Marriages"

Campania/Sicilia	-	-	-	1	1
Campania/Calabria	1	-	-	-	1
Campania/Canada	1	-	-	-	1
Campania/Emilia-R	-	1	-	-	1
Campania/Puglia	-	1	-	-	1
Campania/Lazio	-	-	-	1	1
Campania/Molise	1	-	-	1	2
Molise/Emilia-R	1	-	-	-	1
Molise/Lazio	-	-	-	1	1
Molise/Sicilia	-	1	-	1	2
Molise/Canada	-	2	-	-	2
Molise/Egypt	-	-	-	1	1
Puglia/Calabria	-	-	-	1	1
Puglia/Italo-Canada	-	1	-	-	1
Calabria/Sicilia	-	-	-	3	3
Calabria/Canada	-	1	-	-	1
Sicilia/Lazio	1	-	-	-	1
Friuli/Mexico	1	-	-	-	1
Emilia-R/Italo-Can	-	1	-	-	1
Total					22

B2.

Regions Represented by Parents of Intermediate Students

Number of Respondents - 48/58

Region	School 1	School 2	School 3	Total
Abruzzo-Molise	2	5	3	10
Campania	2	5	1	8
Basilicata	-	-	1	1
Puglia	-	2	1	3
Lazio	-	2	2	4
Calabria	2	1	1	4
Sicilia	1	-	1	2
Marche	1	1	-	2
Veneto	2	2	-	4
				Total 38

"Mixed Marriages"

Campania/Lazio	-	4	-	4
Campania/Molise	1	-	-	1
Molise/Lazio	-	1	-	1
Calabria/Sardinia	1	-	-	1
Veneto/Canada	1	-	-	1
Veneto/Campania	-	1	-	1
Friuli/Sicilia	-	1	-	1
				Total 10

APPENDIX C

Instruments

C1.

QUESTIONARIO: PICAL

1. Quanti anni hai?

2. Dove sei nato/a?

3. Quando hai cominciato a venire alla scuola italiana?

4. Sei sempre venuto/a a questa scuola per le lezioni d'italiano?

5. Da quale città italiana viene tuo padre? tua madre?

6. Quando sono venuti in Canada tuo padre e tua madre?

Sai perché hanno deciso di venire in Canada?

7. Dove vivono i tuoi zii? \_\_\_\_\_

cugini? \_\_\_\_\_

nonni? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Tu sei mai stato/a in Italia? \_\_\_\_\_

Quando? \_\_\_\_\_

Per quanto tempo? \_\_\_\_\_

Che cosa hai fatto?

\_\_\_\_\_

Ti è piaciuta? Perché/Perché no?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Vogliono i tuoi genitori ritornare in Italia per vivere?

Ti piacerebbe vivere in Italia? Perché/Perché no?

COMPLETARE LE SEGUENTI FRASI:

11. Quando ero piccolo/a e imparavo a parlare, la prima lingua  
che ho imparato e' stata \_\_\_\_\_. Poi ho imparato  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, e \_\_\_\_\_.

12. Ora la lingua che io parlo meglio e' \_\_\_\_\_  
dopo viene \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Quando sogno, la lingua che sento e parlo e' \_\_\_\_\_

14. A casa mia, di solito noi parliamo: francese  
dialetto  
inglese  
misto \_\_\_\_\_ e \_\_\_\_\_

C'e' una differenza tra l'italiano e il dialetto?

15. Di solito:

mio padre mi parla in \_\_\_\_\_, io rispondo in \_\_\_\_\_

mia madre mi parla in \_\_\_\_\_, io rispondo in \_\_\_\_\_

i miei nonni mi parlano in \_\_\_\_\_, io rispondo in \_\_\_\_\_

i miei fratelli/sorelle mi parlano in \_\_\_\_\_,  
io rispondo in \_\_\_\_\_

i miei cugini mi parlano in \_\_\_\_\_,  
io rispondo in \_\_\_\_\_

i miei amici mi parlano in \_\_\_\_\_,  
io rispondo in \_\_\_\_\_

- |                            |       |               |        |
|----------------------------|-------|---------------|--------|
| 16. Rispondere con         | mai   | qualche volta | spesso |
| Io vado al cinema italiano | _____ | _____         | _____  |
| Sento la radio italiana    | _____ | _____         | _____  |
| compro dischi italiani     | _____ | _____         | _____  |
| leggo libri italiani       | _____ | _____         | _____  |
| leggo fumetti italiani     | _____ | _____         | _____  |

I tuoi genitori ti leggono libri in italiano?

17. In inglese io posso parlare / scrivere / capire

In dialetto io posso parlare / scrivere / capire

In francese io posso parlare / scrivere / capire

In italiano io posso parlare / scrivere / capire

18. La mia lingua preferita e' \_\_\_\_\_ perche'

19. La lingua piu' importante per me e' \_\_\_\_\_ perche'

20. I miei piu cari amici sono inglesi / francesi / italiani

21. Io mi sento soprattutto \_\_\_\_\_  
 francese / inglese / italiano /  
 quebecchese / canadese /  
 canadese-francese  
 canadese-inglese  
 italo-canadese

Perche' \_\_\_\_\_

22. Se un giorno mi sposo voglio / non voglio / non mi importa  
 sposare una persona italiana perche' \_\_\_\_\_

23. Se io avro' bambini, io voglio / non voglio / non mi importa  
 insegnargli l'italiano perche' \_\_\_\_\_

24. Ora, e' importante / non e' importante imparare l'italiano per  
 me perche' \_\_\_\_\_

25. Io vengo alla scuola italiana perche' \_\_\_\_\_

26. A me piace/ non mi piace la scuola italiana perche' \_\_\_\_\_

27. Alla scuola italiana io imparo molto/qualcosa/quasi niente  
perche' \_\_\_\_\_

28. Quando finisco la terza media della scuola italiana io  
continuerò / non continuerò a studiare l'italiano se e'  
possibile perche' \_\_\_\_\_



C2.

QUESTIONARIO: Università

Madre lingua: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Quanti anni hai?

2. Di dove sei?

3. Che cosa studi a Queen's? A che punto sei negli studi?  
(anno 1 2 3 4 )

4. E' questo il primo corso di lingua italiana che frequenti?

5. E' facile per te studiare una lingua? Perche' / Perche' no?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Quali altre lingue stai studiando quest'anno?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Quali altre lingue conosci?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. In confronto alle altre lingue che hai studiato, trovi la lingua italiana piu' o meno facile? Perche'?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Perche' hai deciso di studiare l'italiano quest' anno?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Continuerai a studiare l'italiano l'anno prossimo? Perche' / Perche' no?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Sei mai stato/a in Italia? Quando? Per quanto tempo? In quale regione? Per quale motivo? (turismo, studio....)

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Desideri andare in Italia? Perche'?

\_\_\_\_\_

C3.

Discrete-Point Test

1. COMPLETARE CON IL/LO/L'/LA e METTERE LA VOCALE FINALE DOVE NECESSARIO

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. ___ can___         | 25. ___ color___       |
| 2. ___ oliv___        | 26. ___ nom___         |
| 3. ___ colazione___   | 27. ___ vot___         |
| 4. ___ quadern___     | 28. ___ settiman___    |
| 5. ___ zùccher___     | 29. ___ componiment___ |
| 6. ___ chies___       | 30. ___ fior___        |
| 7. ___ nev___         | 31. ___ penn___        |
| 8. ___ latt___        | 32. ___ ann___         |
| 9. ___ invern___      | 33. ___ television___  |
| 10. ___ ristorante___ | 34. ___ aul___         |
| 11. ___ chiav___      | 35. ___ pranz___       |
| 12. ___ forchett___   | 36. ___ finestr___     |
| 13. ___ person___     | 37. ___ bagn___        |
| 14. ___ campanell___  | 38. ___ bicchier___    |
| 15. ___ strad___      | 39. ___ gioc___        |
| 16. ___ domand___     | 40. ___ professor___   |
| 17. ___ lavor___      | 41. ___ bigliett___    |
| 18. ___ intervall___  | 42. ___ port___        |
| 19. ___ class___      | 43. ___ insegnant___   |
| 20. ___ piatt___      | 44. ___ alber___       |
| 21. ___ palestra___   | 45. ___ lett___        |
| 22. ___ esam___       | 46. ___ cart___        |
| 23. ___ sol___        | 47. ___ nott___        |
| 24. ___ student___    | 48. ___ automobil___   |

49. \_\_\_\_ lezione\_\_
50. \_\_\_\_ appartamento\_\_
51. \_\_\_\_ direttore\_\_
52. \_\_\_\_ giorno\_\_
53. \_\_\_\_ frigorifero\_\_
54. \_\_\_\_ attenzione\_\_
55. \_\_\_\_ tazza\_\_
56. \_\_\_\_ scuola\_\_
57. \_\_\_\_ canzone\_\_
58. \_\_\_\_ animale\_\_
59. \_\_\_\_ macchina\_\_

60. \_\_\_\_ amore\_\_
61. \_\_\_\_ cappotto\_\_
62. \_\_\_\_ pane\_\_
63. \_\_\_\_ lavagna\_\_
64. \_\_\_\_ carne\_\_
65. \_\_\_\_ libro\_\_
66. \_\_\_\_ estate\_\_
67. \_\_\_\_ telefono\_\_
68. \_\_\_\_ cen\_\_
69. \_\_\_\_ bicicletta\_\_
70. \_\_\_\_ paese\_\_

## II. METTERE IL/LO/L'/LA

1. \_\_\_\_ gnomo
2. \_\_\_\_ marea
3. \_\_\_\_ zaino
4. \_\_\_\_ perno
5. \_\_\_\_ scaffale
6. \_\_\_\_ valle
7. \_\_\_\_ plebe
8. \_\_\_\_ struzzo
9. \_\_\_\_ fango
10. \_\_\_\_ verdetto
11. \_\_\_\_ grandine
12. \_\_\_\_ scorta
13. \_\_\_\_ polso
14. \_\_\_\_ inaugurazione
15. \_\_\_\_ taccuino

16. \_\_\_\_ zingara
17. \_\_\_\_ schermo
18. \_\_\_\_ inconveniente
19. \_\_\_\_ ragnatela
20. \_\_\_\_ ringhiera
21. \_\_\_\_ dogana
22. \_\_\_\_ ordine
23. \_\_\_\_ volante
24. \_\_\_\_ moffetta
25. \_\_\_\_ interesse
26. \_\_\_\_ slitta
27. \_\_\_\_ verdetto
28. \_\_\_\_ volante
29. \_\_\_\_ gregge
30. \_\_\_\_ stoffa

## Dictation

1. Questa e' la famiglia di Franco.
2. Il padre di Franco e' forte e alto.
3. La madre di Franco e' giovane e simpatica.
4. Il fratello di Franco e' intelligente e simpatico.
5. La sorella di Franco e' gentile e carina.
6. Il colore preferito di Franco e' rosso ma marco preferisce il colore verde.
7. La cucina canadese e' diversa della cucina italiana.
8. L'estate passata e' stata lunga e calda.
9. Il ragazzo alto che porta il cappotto nero e' bello e elegante.
10. L'estate canadese e' breve ma calda.
11. La ragazza bionda che porta la gonna nera e' bella e elegante.
12. Il gelato canadese non e' cosi' buono come il gelato italiano.
13. La gente italiana e' gentile e simpatica.
14. L'inverno canadese e' lungo ma la neve e' bella.
15. Il paese piccolo ma interessante nell'Italia centrale si chiama San Marino.
16. Lo studente intelligente e bravo fa la lezione difficile.

C5.

Cloze Test Based on Dictation Sentences

METTERE L'ARTICOLO (il/lo/l'/la) E LA VOCALE FINALE DOVE MANCA

1. Quest\_\_ è \_\_ famigli\_\_ di Franco.
2. \_\_ padr\_\_ di Franco è fort\_\_ e alt\_\_.
3. \_\_ madr\_\_ di Franco è giovan\_\_ e simpatic\_\_.
4. \_\_ fratell\_\_ di Franco è intelligent\_\_ e simpatic\_\_.
5. \_\_ sorell\_\_ di Franco è gentil\_\_ e carin\_\_.
6. \_\_ color\_\_ preferit\_\_ di Franco è ross\_\_ ma Marco preferisce  
\_\_ color\_\_ verd\_\_.
7. \_\_ cucin\_\_ canades\_\_ è divers\_\_ della cucin\_\_ italian\_\_.
8. \_\_ estat\_\_ passat\_\_ è stata lung\_\_ e cald\_\_.
9. Il ragazz\_\_ alt\_\_ che porta \_\_ cappott\_\_ ner\_\_ è bell\_\_  
e elegant\_\_.
10. \_\_ estat\_\_ canades\_\_ è brev\_\_ ma cald\_\_.
11. La ragazz\_\_ blond\_\_ che porta \_\_ gonn\_\_ ner\_\_ è bell\_\_  
e elegant\_\_.
12. \_\_ gelat\_\_ canades\_\_ non è così buon\_\_ come \_\_ gelato  
italian\_\_.
13. \_\_ gent\_\_ italian\_\_ è gentil\_\_ e simpatic\_\_.
14. \_\_ invern\_\_ canades\_\_ è lung\_\_ ma la nev\_\_ è bell\_\_.
15. \_\_ paes\_\_ piccol\_\_ ma interessant\_\_ nell'Italia central\_\_  
si chiama San Marino.
16. \_\_ student\_\_ intelligent\_\_ e brav\_\_ fa \_\_ lezion\_\_  
difficil\_\_.

-C6.

Oral "Memory Game": Acceptable Responses

la/una televisione (a colori)

il/un telefono (bianco)

due chiavi - una grande, una piccola/ una chiave grande; una  
chiave piccola

il/un ragazzo con un cane

il/un prosciutto // la carne

il/un letto

un pezzo di pane con burro

il latte // un bicchiere di latte con (le) pattatine fritte

il/un gelato

la/una macchina

due case; una grande una piccola // una casa grande, una piccola

la/una torta // il/un dolce al cioccolato

due fiori - uno grande, uno piu' piccolo/ un fiore grande, un  
fiore piccolo

il/un piatto

un uomo e una donna - la donna porta un cappotto bianco, l'uomo  
porta una giacca nera

due libri; uno grande, uno piccolo // un libro grande, un libro  
piccolo

un frigorifero aperto

un gatto con un cane

C7.

### Sample Transcripts of Oral Task

#### C7.1. Elementary P.I.C.A.I.. Student

##### C7.1.1. "Memory Game"

il primo e' la television(-) con la donna della television( );  
second( ) e' una chiava; dopo c'e' un bambino con un cano; poi  
c'e' sta, un lett( ); dopo sta il burro; sta il latte; poi ci sta  
una... un utensile con una cucchiara (--- correction not clear)  
dopo ( ) sta una macchina; sta un disegno( ) con du( ) case  
sopra; dopo sta una checca; sta una fiore, un piatto e due  
persone coi vestiti.

##### C7.1.2. Reading of Dictation sentences

Questo...questa e' la famiglia di Franco.

Il padre di Franco e' forte e alto.

La madre e' giovane e simpatica.

Il fratello di Franco e' intelligente e simpatico.

La sorella...La sorella di Franco e' gentile e carina.

##### C7.1.3. Repetition of Dictation Sentences

L'estate canadese e' breve ma calda.

L'inverno canadese e' lungo ma la neve e' bella.

## C7.2. Intermediate P.I.C.A.I. Student

### C7.2.1. "Memory Game"

un bicchier( ), una lavagna, ho visto...aspett( )... una tazza( )  
con un gelat( )...[Researcher: Che cosa guardi la sera?] ah...la  
televisone! ho visto un uomo e una donn( ), ho visto un specchio  
e ho visto... aspett( ) due case. C'era un letto, una forchetta,  
una macchina e il pan( ) burro. C'era un piatto con jambon  
c'erano due gatti, c'era... un telefon( ) ross( ), c'era un  
frigorifero, un piatto, c'era un fiore, no - si... un torta e un  
libro

## C7.3. University Student

[Researcher: Perché studi l'italiano?] Sono molto felice con  
l'Italia, allora voglio imparata...imparato...imparare  
l'italiano.

### C7.3.1. "Memory Game"

Ho visto una donna e un uomo; una fiore--non so se e' la propria  
parola; un piatto...una piatta; uhm...un--non posso ricordare  
l'altro...[researcher: quando vuoi chiamare...] la  
telelfon...telefono; ho visto un frigorifero, una torta, del  
latte, delle French Fries; un...un gelato [researcher: com'era  
il gelato?] fraise...strawberries; una macchina; una cane con un  
ragazzo; un chiave; un...non so il parole...jambon...la viande?  
[researcher: la carne] oh, la carne, si.