SLEdu

Standard and variation in second language education: a cross-linguistic perspective

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SLEdu Organising Committee

Lucilla Lopriore, Elena Nuzzo, Chiara Romagnoli, Cristina Solimando
Standard and variation in second language education: 
a cross-linguistic perspective

Teaching approaches have been diversely interpreted and implemented in different contexts, while a gap between innovation and actual classroom practice is still widespread. This is particularly true for standards and language variation. If the global diffusion of English has facilitated the spread of innovative teaching approaches while meeting the challenge of World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca, the long-standing traditions of French, German, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish have differently contributed to the development of specific approaches and enhanced several research studies. More recently, because of migration flows within Europe, a further challenge is represented by the growing number of European national languages being now taught as second or additional languages. Other languages such as Arabic, Chinese or Japanese are now emerging as most requested foreign languages at university level. Some of these ‘new’ languages present quite a composite picture of diglossia, with strong normative tendencies expressed by the local academic circles or/and governmental institutions. The relationship between standard and variation is critical not only in the emerging languages, but also in those with a long-standing teaching tradition. In spite of the claims for the adoption of a more authentic approach, the grammatical, phonological and lexical norms generally adopted in foreign language teaching are still linked to standard linguistic norms. These norms often act as gatekeepers and very rarely do they take into account linguistic and pragmatic variations of both native and non-native speakers.

It is within this scenario that the conference ‘Standard and variation in second language education: a cross-linguistic perspective’ will be held at Roma Tre University where courses of both western, eastern and near eastern languages are offered. The conference aims to bring together scholars and practitioners and to provide an opportunity to present, compare and discuss current practices and approaches to second/foreign language education at university and tertiary level. The conference focuses on the relationship between standard and variation in different second-language pedagogical traditions, with a view on the reception and implementation of western second-language education theories in different contexts.
Thursday 12 November

9.00 - 9.30 Room Ignazio Ambrogio Welcome

10.30-11.30 Room Ignazio Ambrogio

Diane Larsen-Freeman, The Relationship between Language Norms and Variation: What Should We Teach?

11.30-12.00 Coffee break

12.00-12.30 Room Ignazio Ambrogio

Lucilla Lopriore, Exploring standard and variation in the English classroom: shifting perspectives

12.00-12.30 Room B

Valentina Benigni & Elena Nuzzo, Multimedia Russian Corpus (MURKO) and the teaching of pragmatics in L2/LS Russian

12.30-13.00 Room Ignazio Ambrogio

David Newbold, Testing English as a Lingua Franca: no norms or new norms?

12.30-13.00 Room B

Anna Lentovskaya, Classificazione nazionale dei verbi russi a cluster

13.00-13.30 Room Ignazio Ambrogio

Sophie Knudsen Swerts, CLIL Reading Strategy Courses at the University of Copenhagen

13.00-13.30 Room B

Anna Perissutti, The role of actional classes in the SLA of Czech verbal aspect by Italian Learners

13.30-14.30 Lunch
14.30-15.30, Room Ignazio Ambrogio

**Zhao Hong Han**, *Focus on form: What form?*

15.30-16.00 Room Ignazio Ambrogio

**Luan Duo**, *The application of colour-coding skill in teaching Chinese syntax*

15.30-16.00 Room B

**Laurent Rasier**, *Standard language, linguistic variation and foreign language pedagogy: a survey of teaching materials and practices*

16.00-16.30 Room Ignazio Ambrogio

**Gloria GABBIANELLI**, *Consapevolezza linguistica e competenza comunicativa nell’insegnamento del cinese come lingua straniera*

16.00-16.30 Room B

**Susanne Lippert**, *L’insegnamento delle varietà linguistiche nazionali nei materiali didattici attualmente in uso presso il Goethe Institut in Italia*

16.30-17.00 Room Ignazio Ambrogio

**Chiara Romagnoli & Hsiao Huichen**, *Chinese nominal classifiers: corpus data and pedagogical implications*

16.30-17.00 Room B

**Matteo Santipolo**, *Argentine Spanish: native speakers’ attitudes and language teaching implications*

17.00-17.30 Coffee break

17.30-18.00 Room Ignazio Ambrogio

**Sergio Conti**, *Standard and variation in Chinese formulaic language teaching*

17.30-18.00 Room B
Russian as an Intermediary between Armenian and English

The purpose of the given presentation is to show how the knowledge of the first foreign language can influence both positively and negatively the acquisition of the second language.

The Armenian community is mostly bilingual due to historical reasons, and about half of the population is fluent in Russian. The main language used today in schools and institutions of higher education is Armenian. However, Russian is taught as a first foreign language as a part of compulsory curriculum and mostly English as a second foreign language. The influence of Russian is present not only in education but in media as well. Most often a foreign language is taught to learners with good knowledge of both Armenian and Russian. And those two languages influence to a certain degree the acquisition of a third language, namely English. Thus, the problem of the relation between the mother tongue and the foreign language has become increasingly significant in FLT nowadays.

Our observation of the influence of the Russian language on studying English is based on the experience of teaching ESP to students of the departments of International Relations, Political Science and Public Administration at Yerevan State University.

In the process of learning English on both conscious and subconscious levels bilingual students tend to draw parallels (in grammatical, syntactical, semantic and cultural fields) with Russian as their primary foreign language.

It is widely accepted that the way to globalization lies through learning English as the dominant international language; however, for Armenians Russian serves a mediating role in the transmission of world values, as the primary foreign culture that they get acquainted with.

Unlike Armenian which has the tendency of purifying the language Russian mostly preserves the international terminology which facilitates the comprehension of special vocabulary in professional texts. The flexibility of Armenian syntax, as compared to stable English one serves as an obstacle while translating from Armenian into English. On the other hand, the dominant grammatically correct word order in Russian corresponds to the fixed English sentence structure.

Keywords: bilingualism, language acquisition, primary foreign language, mediating role
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Analisi della comprensione orale fra parlanti di lingue romanze

Gli approcci plurali (CARAP) e, in particolare l’intercompreensione (IC) (Escudé & Janin, 2010; Caddé & Jamet, 2013), ambito in cui il presente lavoro si inserisce, presuppongono l’apprendimento di più varietà linguistiche simultaneamente e hanno come presupposto imprescindibile lo sfruttamento massiccio del background linguistico dell’apprendente. In questo senso, il presente lavoro si inserisce anche in una ricerca sulla distanza lessicale (Heeringa et al. 2013) e sui meccanismi di comprensione orale (Blanche Benveniste 2008, Caddé & Jamet, 2013) delle lingue romanze da parte di italofoni. I dati finora ottenuti ci permettono di affermare che il grado di IC delle lingue romanze da parte di italofoni è elevato, anche quando vengono esposti a un input ricco e complesso. Il fenomeno è spiegabile soprattutto, ma non solo, alla luce della variazione linguistica rappresentata dal continuum dialettale romanzo e dal repertorio linguistico degli apprendenti composto anche da varietà dialettali non standard.

L’obiettivo del presente lavoro è illustrare alcune ipotesi sulla processazione dell’input orale in portoghese e spagnolo da parte di italofoni. Riteniamo, cioè, che il transfert lessicale fra lingue affini, anche quando si tratta di differenti varietà di standard (in questo caso spagnolo e portoghese europeo e americano), avvenga sulla base di fattori propri dell’apprendente, in particolare il background linguistico e culturale e la consapevolezza cross-linguistica che si realizza nell’uso di strategie (meta)cognitive, oltreché aspetti inerenti al codice linguistico (la trasparenza lessicale della L1 e L2, il contesto linguistico immediato). Pertanto, molti elementi che a livello formale sono trasparenti e, quindi, facilmente comprensibili, nella performance non risultano compresi perché condizionati dal contesto in cui si trovano e dal profilo linguistico-cognitivo dell’apprendente. Al fine di verificare queste ipotesi abbiamo utilizzato i seguenti strumenti:

- questionari sociolinguistici e metacognitivi;
- trascrizioni di brevi registrazioni tratte da radiogiornali. Tali trascrizioni sono basate sui principi dei Think aloud protocol (Bowles, 2010)
- software per l’elaborazione dei dati quantitativi (SPSS) e qualitativi (NVivo)

I risultati delle analisi dei dati raccolti nell’arco degli ultimi tre anni, relativi a ca. 60 soggetti (a seconda delle lingue), ci permettono di contribuire alla descrizione delle caratteristiche della processazione dell’input e all’approfondimento della nozione di trasparenza lessicale e del meccanismo di transfert, con particolare riferimento alle lingue romanze.

Parole chiave: comprensione di L2, consapevolezza cross-linguistica, input, lingue affini, background linguistico-culturale
References