Doing Italian as a Foreign Language: Investigating Talk about Language and Culture in Three British University Classrooms

by

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ABSTRACT

The study presented in this thesis focuses on teacher-student talk-in-interaction in three Italian classes for beginners taught by two teachers, one British and one Italian, in two British universities. The aims of the study are to: (1) investigate the views of language and of language teaching/learning that informed the teachers' practice; (2) identify the cultural worlds and images of Italian-ness constructed through the classroom talk; (3) examine the different identities the teachers assumed as they discussed language and culture. The research combines ethnographically-informed classroom observation, video-recording of classroom interaction with discourse analysis. It is guided by poststructuralist thinking and by Kramsch's (1993:9) vision of language teaching/learning as "social practice that is at the boundary of two or more cultures". It reveals similarities in the composition of the classes. Both included international students and both teachers drew on the diverse funds of linguistic and cultural knowledge represented in their classes, creating 'third places' for language teaching/learning. The research also reveals differences between the teachers – in their views of language, their representation of Italian 'culture' and in the classroom identities they assumed. These differences are explained with reference to the teachers' linguistic and cultural backgrounds and their professional biographies.

THESIS SUMMARY

This thesis presents a detailed case study of teacher-student talk-in-interaction in modern foreign language (MFL) classes. The research sites selected for the study were Italian language classes for beginners taught by two teachers in two different university contexts in the UK. One teacher was British and one was Italian. The research was guided by a post-structuralist view of language teaching/learning as a social and cultural practice and by Kramsch's (1993) vision of language teaching/learning as "initiation into a kind of social practice that is at the boundary of two or more cultures" (1993:9). The three main aims of the study were: (1) to investigate the views of language and of language teaching/learning that informed the teachers' practice and to describe the specific ways in which these were revealed in the classroom talk; (2) to give an account of the ways in which different cultural worlds and different images of Italian-ness were constructed in and through the classroom talk; and (3) to describe the ways in which teachers took on different identities and adopted different stances as they talked about different aspects of language and of culture. The research was conducted by means of an ethnographically-informed approach to classroom discourse. The university classes of both teachers were observed, audio-recorded and video-recorded. My observations were accompanied by fieldnotes and I kept a researcher's diary for the duration of the project. Textual materials were also gathered (e.g. copies of the teaching materials being used in the classes observed). The data analysis focused, in turn, on episodes when talk about language predominated; on episodes when different aspects of culture (Italian, British or other) were evoked and on episodes when the teachers took on and different identities and adopted different stances on the topics they were addressing.

The main findings were as follows: (1) There were differences between the two teachers in terms of their views of language and in the ways in which these views guided their classroom practice. The British teacher prioritised the teaching of language forms, and particularly grammar, whilst the Italian teacher valued communicative skills and vocabulary acquisition. I argue in the thesis that these differences need to be understood in terms of the professional biographies of these teachers and in terms of their respective ages and status (the former teacher was a good bit older than the latter). (2) There were also differences between the teachers in terms of the images of Italy and Italian culture that they were constructing with their students: the British teacher privileged high culture (e.g. art, opera) and the Italian teacher focused on everyday cultural practices associated with contemporary life in urban Italy. (3) In addition, there were differences in the identities that the teachers took on at different moments in the classroom interaction. The British teacher primarily assumed the identity of expert on language and on culture, whereas the Italian teacher took on a range of identities, including those of expert on the Italian language, cultural broker and advanced language learner of English. These positionings shaped the nature of the relationship that each teacher was able to develop with her students. (4) Finally, there were similarities in the composition of the classes with which the two teachers were working. Both classes included international students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as British students. This degree of cultural diversity is increasingly common in contemporary MFL classes, particularly at university level. Both teachers in this study showed awareness of this linguistic and cultural diversity and drew on the linguistic and cultural knowledge of their students in their classroom conversations with them. In concluding this thesis, I point to the resonances between the similarities and differences identified in these university classes and classes in other university contexts where Italian is taught and learned (and in university

departments where other MFLs are on the language curriculum) and I identify the new lines of enquiry that still need to be pursued in this still under-researched area of MFL education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction to this chapter

This thesis presents a study of language teaching and learning as a social and cultural practice. The research sites for the study were two university departments where Italian was being taught as a foreign language. The research focuses on two teachers, with different backgrounds and different teaching styles who were teaching beginner classes at undergraduate level. Most of the students were British, but some came from other countries and a few were of Italian descent.

From time to time, the teachers took account of the cultural diversity in their classes, making specific reference to the cultural backgrounds and lived experience of the students. Talk about culture, and about language, was a crucial part of the ebb and flow of the classroom conversations that I audio- and video-recorded. So, at the heart of this research is an investigation of the specific ways in which language and culture were discussed, evoked and represented in these conversations.

This research focus, on the specific social and cultural practices of language teaching and learning, stems from my own experience as a language teacher. It is closely related to my own story, to who I was and who I have become, both professionally and personally. In the section that follows, I will therefore give a brief account of how I came to be interested in language education and,

specifically, in the teaching of Italian at higher education level. I will also show how, in embarking on research in this area, my concerns turned to the construction of identities and cultural worlds in the foreign language classroom.

1.2 Starting Points

Since 1988, I have had three professional identities: as a translator (specialising in English and German); as a secondary school teacher of English in several state schools in Italy and as an Italian lector, employed by the Italian Government, working in universities in Latvia and in the UK. I have therefore experienced, first hand, in very different institutional contexts, the ways in which people represent and 'translate' linguistic and cultural worlds for each other.

Probably the roots of my interest in exploring and bridging different cultural worlds are even older, and are to be found in my own family background. Being the first son of an Italian father, who does not speak any language except Italian, and a German mother, whose proficiency in Italian was somewhat limited at the time of my childhood, certainly exposed me at a very early age to cultural differences. On the one hand, this made me progressively more aware of the de-stabilizing nature of cultural elements when different cultural traditions meet. Kramsch speaks of this in the introduction of her book *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* (1993). On the other hand, this caused in me an inner affective split. While the other children I knew had only one affective context of reference, to a cultural world where only Italian was

spoken, I could not rely on such a reassuring affective background, and soon felt the necessity to mediate between two worlds, associated with German and with Italian, which sometimes needed adjusting in order to fit together. I am sure that this personal situation was at the basis of my interest in learning foreign languages, and even of my choice of taking English, rather than German, as my first foreign language - a way to assert my identity as different from both my father's and my mother's worlds, a way of carving out my own personal space within my family and the wider world.

I therefore became a student in translation, specialising in English and German, and graduated with a thesis on the translation of organisational sociology back in 1987. My first university degree in translation first directed me towards professional openings such as commerce, finance and industry. For two years I worked in an industrial setting, in the sales department and, later, in the purchasing department of a firm, which was part of a German multinational group. Although this job implied using all the foreign languages I knew on a daily basis, doing this did not fulfil my cultural interests. In that job the use of foreign languages was obviously a tool, an accessory to the production and sale of goods and there was no time to consider the cultural implications of my day-to-day work, nor was anybody in the workplace remotely interested in considering this aspect.

This was the reason why, while I was still employed in my first job, I became a freelance translator for a small publisher in Padua, for whom I translated a number of German publications on a variety of topics, from gardening to yoga,

between 1990 and 1992. Dealing with the translation of full texts was certainly more challenging and professionally more fulfilling than writing routine telex or telefax messages and I would have probably pursued a career in translation in the publishing trade, had my employer not gone bankrupt. If I had had the opportunity to obtain work from a number of different publishing houses, it would have been possible to risk embarking on such a career. But this would have meant having to rely, for an indefinite time, on an uncertain source of income, while in the meantime I had got married and was aiming at getting financial stability, within a reasonable time span.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Italian State held a national competitive examination as a means of recruiting teachers in state schools. This new professional opening was appealing and I decided to take courses in preparation for the state examination and to qualify as a secondary school teacher of English. The teaching training course made me concentrate on topics, such as language teaching techniques and stylistic analysis of literary texts. At the end, I took two different competitive examinations, one for teaching at *scuola media* (years 6-8) level and one for teaching at *scuola secondaria superiore* (years 7-11), and qualified for both[i]. While the training to teach in *scuola media* focused mainly on language teaching, the training for *scuola secondaria superiore* prepared us in particular to teach English literature. I soon realised, when I was appointed to my first post at a state school, that this preparation was not in line with the practicalities of the job. First of all, our preparation had been totally theoretical, with no opportunity to actually test the job in the field. To be fair, it must be said that most of the

participants had had at least some supply teaching experience, and at the time, I had already left my office job for a part-time teaching job in a private school. Secondly, having been given my first state appointment in a vocational school preparing secretaries and clerical staff for low-level office jobs, I soon found out that everything I had studied about teaching literature would be quite useless in such a context, and that had I not had a previous experience in the commerce trade (which was the case for most of my colleagues) I would have been completely at odds with the teaching of the language of business and business correspondence. Moreover, most of my students were faced with a curriculum that introduced English for Special Purposes (ESP) when their skills and proficiency in general English was still not good enough for them to deal with the rather complicated formulas of traditional business writing[ii].

How could I motivate my students, who mostly came from simple backgrounds to study a foreign language? How could I make them discover that they needed it to widen their horizons? Surely, I could not capture their interest by teaching them English literature, while insisting on accuracy and the knowledge of the linguistic structures would only put them off. I opted for trying to make them appreciate the advantages that communication in another language could give them in terms of travelling, job opportunities and the discovery of other cultural horizons. If teaching 'culture' had been limited to teaching literary texts which had been produced in the countries where the foreign language was spoken (which corresponded with the instruction I had received in my teacher training course), I would not have been able to arouse any interest in my classes.

This led me to reflect on the nature of 'culture' in language education. Newly appointed teachers in the Italian system, are required to present a project on some aspect of their professional experience. Each new permanent teacher is assigned to a tutor, chosen among senior staff teaching the same (or cognate) subjects, to guide him or her in the drawing up of this project. At the end of the school year, each teacher sits in front of a board of examiners, nominated by each school, and discusses his or her project. If the discussion is successful his or her permanent position is confirmed. My project dealt with the teaching of 'culture' and asked itself what 'culture' could be taught in curricula of English as a foreign language. Among other things, I showed that it was possible to teach not only the language, but also elements of style and genre. I showed how I had introduced poetic genre using the lyrics of pop songs. Moreover, this gave me as a teacher the opportunity to introduce cultural aspects which were linked to social practices which were typical of the context where the song was composed[iii].

In 1993, I began to expand my horizons yet further: the Italian Ministry of Affairs together with the Ministry of Education launched a competitive examination to select permanent teachers in the Italian state school to be appointed as lectors of Italian language and culture at foreign universities. I sat the examination and successfully completed it. So, in January 1995, I started my job as the first Italian lector ever at the University of Latvia, in the city of Riga.

In Riga, the challenge was starting up the teaching of Italian as a second language from scratch. At the University of Latvia there was no Professor in Italian and this language had not been taught since the period between the two world wars. Latvia had become an independent country only in 1991 and the resources allocated by the State to universities were scarce. At the same time, the Italian government, which had sent me there, had not thought of providing the university department with the teaching material which was necessary for my job. The only material I had was one textbook, which belonged to the Italian ambassador. I photocopied from this some texts and exercises for all my students, so that I had some material to base my lessons on. This meant that I had to spend hours and hours producing teaching material (which, at the beginning, was mainly handwritten, since the department did not have computers available for the staff). Eventually, part of this material was collected and came to compose the first grammar of Italian for Latvian students, which I wrote and which was finally published by Zvaigzne ABC, Riga, in 1999.

The two and a half years that I spent in Riga were my first experience of work at a university, as well as my first experience with non-Italian students. At the beginning, my post was part of the Department of German and French, within the Faculty of foreign languages. However, the success of the new Italian courses and the addition of a lector of Spanish to the Department made the creation of a new Department of Romance Languages, within the faculty, possible. Apart from courses in language and culture at the University, I also

taught the Italian language at the Art Academy, where I held two yearly courses, one for the staff and one for the students.

At the time, higher education system in Latvia was being reformed. University or Art Academy staff were mostly still the same as during Soviet times and their main activity was teaching. I do not know if any of them were involved in research. If this was the case, it was not publicised. Actually, many of them, especially the youngest, were obliged to accept a number of jobs outside the university, either in schools or as private tutors, in order to make ends meet, since the wages they got from their university job was insufficient to face the changes of a society undergoing a swift transition to a market economy.

In spite of this, I remember being extremely surprised of the number of students who wanted to learn Italian. In a matter of months I had courses with hundreds of students, all eager to learn the language and in love with Italy. What they knew of Italy was quite limited, for they had to rely on the very few Latvian translations of Italian books and on what the Soviet Union had allowed to be translated into Russian. Italy was, in their eyes, an exotic land, the quintessence of a Mediterranean country and the picture of it they had was based on the art of the Renaissance, Italian opera and the classical music tradition and, in a more popular vein, an Italian TV series on the Mafia that had been a great success before the end of the Soviet regime. Although I took advantage of this unexpectedly huge interest in my country, in order to keep attracting students to my courses, at that time, I started considering the way my Latvian students and colleagues represented Italy. Their picture did not

correspond with mine and, while I did my best to teach them aspects of Italy they did not know, I went on asking myself how those piecemeal images of Italy my students had could attract so many students to my courses.

Although I never had the opportunity to attend to a lecture held by other colleagues, I have the impression that my approach to teaching a foreign language was instrumental in the success that Italian courses had at the University of Latvia in the 1990s. Not only was I a native speaker of Italian (the presence of native speakers in any of the languages taught was very limited), but I did not teach the language through a grammar-translation approach. This was still a widespread practice among my colleagues. As, little by little, the department made more modern aids available, such as a television set and a video-recorder, I was able to use clips I recorded from Italian TV to teach the language and give them an updated outlook on Italian society.

Between 1997 and 2000, I was in Italy again. Here, I resumed my job as teacher of English, specialising in ESP, this time at a senior secondary school (years 11-13) preparing students to the job of computer programming (*Istituto tecnico commerciale ad indirizzo programmatori*). The bulk of the curriculum was related to the language of computers; a part of it dealt with the language of commerce and trade. Teaching ESP to older students was easier compared to my first job as a teacher of English. In fact, many of my students had already acquired some competence in English, therefore they were better geared to face instruction in ESP.

In 1999, I was contacted again by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They offered me a post as a lector in the UK, at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth (UWA). On arriving there, at the end of January 2000, it was immediately apparent that the circumstances of my job would be completely different from those experienced in Latvia. First of all, I found myself on a modern campus with state-of-the-art equipment in terms of laboratories, libraries and facilities. Italian had been taught for several decades within the Department of European Languages, and although the Italian section was very small (one permanent full-time member of staff, one temporary contract full-time member of staff and one part-timer, apart from me) and there were few students and their numbers were declining, the organisation of work was much more structured and consolidated than in Latvia, where I was more or less free to 'invent' a way of giving Italian lectures to an increasing number of students. Most members of the academic staff at the UWA were active in research.

In spite of the modern approach in the teaching of the language, that made wide use of an up-to-date language and computer laboratory, and despite the introduction of a new module in the second year to teach students the history and culture of modern Italy, which combined lectures with on-line material, the section continued having difficulties in attracting new students. Staff resources were also very limited and sections of the department specialising in other languages carried more weight. My own circumstances also changed in 2004, when the Italian Government decided to rationalise the staff they put at the disposal of UK universities and transferred me to the University of Bath.

At Bath, Italian was part of the Department of European Studies, and students could choose whether to study the language as part of a degree in Modern Languages or International Politics. At Bath there was a steady intake of about 40 new students of Italian every year and for most of them Italian was part of a joint honours degree in languages. Within the first two years, students covered all the structures of the Italian language and they had a wide choice of content modules either in Italian politics and history or in cultural studies (literature and cinema) throughout the course. Contrary to my experience at the UWA, Italian was the second most successful section of the department, after French, followed by German and Russian. Spanish had been just introduced and was rapidly growing, but at the time of the end of my contract in the summer of 2006 it still did not have finalists.

The two departments where I worked in the UK did not differ very much in terms of the equipment or the teaching they offered, and yet the results were very different. This observation was a further spur for this research on the teaching of Italian in British universities. Although the universities and the departments of Italian where I conducted my fieldwork were not the same ones where I worked, one of them happens to be in England and the other one happens to be in Wales.

1.3 The nature of this study

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study of this kind involving classroom-based, qualitative research on the teaching and learning of Italian at undergraduate level, at British universities, and the first to involve close

analysis of the discourse exchanged between teachers and students. I am not aware of any other study of Italian teaching/learning that has taken account of talk about language <u>and</u> culture in the university classroom.

Because of my interest in the ways in which language and culture are discussed, evoked and represented in the foreign language classroom, I chose to design the research as a detailed study of language teaching and learning in action, building on the now well established tradition of classroom discourse analysis. I therefore audio- and video-recorded and transcribed in full the talk exchanged between two Italian teachers and their students in three classrooms in two different universities. I also observed the classes that I recorded and I carried out interviews with the teachers and students (my data collection procedures are described in detail in Chapter 6). The interviews, observations and fieldnotes formed an integral part of the data for this project and the insights gleaned from this part of my study (as well as my own lived experience of working in Italian departments in different universities) contributed to my analysis of the video-recorded data. The research presented in this thesis is therefore best described as an ethnographically-informed study, with primacy given to discourse analysis as an analytic approach.

In addition, I should add that my analysis of the transcripts of classroom talk (in English and Italian) and of the interview and observational data also draws on library-based research and archival work I conducted on the history of Italian teaching outside Italy and on the development of institutions and networks with the aim of promoting Italian language and culture. In this thesis,

I endeavour to take account of this wider, social, cultural and discursive context as well as the ebb and flow of the talk in the three participating classrooms.

1.4 Research questions

The research questions guiding the study were as follows. There were two overarching questions and a number of specific questions linked to them:

1. What views of language and language teaching and learning inform the classroom practice of the teachers?

    a) What views of language and linguistic variation are expressed by the teachers?

    b) What ideas about language teaching and learning guide their practice?

    c) Are there differences in teaching/learning practice and, if so, how can these be explained?

2. How is culture talked about in the three classes?

    a) What dimensions of culture are evoked by the teachers?

    b) What images of Italy and Italian-ness are being constructed for the students?

    c) How are these images evoked in and through the teachers' discourse?

    d) What identities do the teachers take on in talking about culture?

e) To what extent is there explicit talk about the cultural diversity within the classes?

1.5 Outline of the thesis

The thesis has been organised into 11 chapters. These chapters are organised into three parts as follows: Part I on 'The global and historical context of the study' includes Chapter 2. It deals with the representations of Italy and of Italian-ness that have been constructed over time, throughout the process of the building of the Italian state. It also describes the institutional networks for the spread of Italian language and culture, which were set up as early as the second half of the 19th century by the Italian government and it shows how these institutions and networks changed, as Italy was transformed from a country of emigration to a country that was repositioning itself as a major player within a global political and cultural arena. Finally, it gives an account of the situation of the teaching of Italian as a second language (L2) in the UK (including university level teaching) and compares it with the results of a study on the spread of Italian as a foreign language worldwide published at the beginning of the twenty-first century (De Mauro et al., 2001).

Part II on 'The research context' is made up of 3 chapters (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) which present a review of the different interdisciplinary strands of research literature relevant to this study and the lines of analysis presented in this thesis. In Chapter 3 the focus is on the connection between language and culture and on language learning/teaching as a means of engaging with difference. This

perspective has become more and more relevant, as people's increased mobility throughout the world has made the encounters (and potential clashes) between members of different communities easier and more common. In Chapter 4, I look at another area of research literature, namely that of classroom discourse, with particular reference to modern foreign language classes. More specifically, I investigate how discourse and interactional practices construct classrooms as contexts for teaching and learning. Here I consider different strands of research, from conversational analysis to interactional sociolinguistics, micro-ethnography and, more recently, linguistic ethnography. Finally, Chapter 5 deals with two strands of research literature: first, that dealing with teacher knowledge and beliefs; and second that dealing with the notion of identity and looks at the way in which participants' identities are negotiated in the foreign language classroom. Through this review of relevant literature, I conclude that 'identity', like 'culture', is a 'verb', following Street (1993); that is, it is continually constructed, de-constructed and re-constructed in interaction. I also point out that each participant in language classroom interaction, teacher and learners, takes on different identities in the ongoing flow of classroom talk. Finally, I consider the foreign language class as a privileged context for the generation of third spaces and hybrid identities, since a substantial proportion of exchanges are likely to be made in L2, or even an L3 or L4 when students are already bilingual.

Part III includes five chapters (Chapters 6 to 10). In Chapter 6, I give an account of the research methodology. Here I describe the design of the project and the specific research methods that I adopted. I outline each of the research

phases in turn: the fieldwork and the data collection, and then, the data transcription and analysis. I also discuss the way in which I designed the study so as to take account of ethical considerations. In Chapter 7, I give a detailed description of the context of the study: the two universities where the study was carried out and the Italian studies curriculum. I also give a description of the departmental facilities, and the classrooms where my recordings took place. Then I introduce the teachers and the students involved in this study. Finally, I briefly present the teaching materials used by the two teachers in the three classes I observed and recorded. Chapter 8 looks into the detail of three teaching events that were analysed in this study. I describe how each of the events unfolded, step by step. The aim of this part of the thesis is to set the context for the data analysis chapters.

The data analysis is presented in two consecutive chapters, Chapter 9 and Chapter 10. In Chapter 9, I examine the ways in which the teachers' views of language and language teaching/learning were revealed by the classroom talk I audio- and video-recorded, transcribed and analysed. I also show how different identities were taken on by the teachers in talking about the Italian language. In Chapter 10, I focus on how different cultural worlds were being constructed in the classroom interactions. I also look at the different identities that were taken on by the participants with respect to different aspects of Italian 'culture'. And finally, I show how, on occasion, 'third spaces' were created in and through the talk exchanged between teachers and learners with diverse backgrounds.

In Chapter 11, the concluding chapter, I present a summary of the findings by revisiting my research questions. I also make recommendations for future research and practice in the teaching of Italian at university level.

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[i] At the time, the Italian school system was organised as follows: Children started at the age of 6. Then, after the first 5 years of primary schooling (*scuola elementare*), they were admitted to middle school (*scuola media* or *scuola secondaria di primo grado*). *Scuola media*, which would last 3 more years, would complete compulsory education. It was during their *scuola media* years that children used to start learning a foreign language (English or French, normally; although a minority of schools also offered German and Spanish as options). At the age of 14, after state comprehensive examinations in all subjects, students could leave school or move on to secondary school (*scuola secondaria di secondo grado*). There were (and still are) different kinds of schools at secondary level, which children choose according to their inclinations, or to the type of preparation and career they want to pursue.

The most academic students are normally directed to a *liceo*, a secondary school preparing them to university. There were 4 different kinds of *liceo*: *liceo classico* (where the subjects included Latin and old Greek), *liceo scientifico* (where students specialised in mathematics and science), *liceo linguistico* (where students studied 3 modern foreign languages) and *liceo artistico* (which focused in particular on art and art history). All *licei* – apart from *liceo artistico* - taught philosophy and Latin.

The *istituti tecnici* (technical institutes) used to provide a more professionally oriented kind of instruction for 5 years after compulsory schooling. Children opting for this kind of school could specialise in business and accountancy, in engineering (mechanics, electronics, etc.), building surveying, agriculture, and so on. All these schools offered instruction in at least one foreign language (English, French, German or Spanish) and the focus was on language for special purposes. After the final state examination (*esame di maturità*) most students looked for professional openings, but could also opt for university.

The *istituti professionali* (vocational institutes) had originally been designed to provide 3 years of strongly professional education after the end of compulsory schooling. Also these kind of schools offered students different specialisations in areas similar to the ones covered by *istituti tecnici* and trained skilled workers, such as electricians, as well as office workers. Students qualified in their profession with an examination set by each school at the end of the third year. At the time when I qualified as a teacher, it was already possible to attend 2 more years after this examination, which led students to a state examination of *maturità professionale* (vocational state school leaving examination), which was similar to the one taken by students in the *istituti tecnici* and gave them the chance to go to university if they wanted.

The *istituto magistrale* was chosen by students who wanted to become nursery or primary school teachers. Although it was not a *liceo* it offered instructions in most of the subjects typical of this kind of schools, such as philosophy and Latin. The main difference was that the final state examination used to be taken after 4 (and not 5) years of study. Students who wanted to go on to university used to have to attend a further year, after their *maturità*.

[ii] The study of a modern foreign language, used to start at *scuola media*, i.e. when children were 10 or 11, for three periods a week. Ideally, the first 3 years of study should introduce students to most of the grammar and provide them with sufficient vocabulary to allow them to express themselves orally in daily situations and to write simple texts. *Scuola media* was compulsory and it catered for academic and less academic students who were put together in classes independently of their inclinations. This led to the fact that, in many cases, the instruction covered only part of the curriculum, because teachers had to try and instruct in the same way students who had a flare for languages and students who were not even interested in

learning. Consequently at the end of this schooling stage the levels of preparation within the same class were usually far from homogeneous.

In secondary school the study of the language was started from the basics again. In a vocational school (*istituto professionale*) the foreign language was studied for 3 periods a week. In the school where I worked at the time, I taught general English in the first 2 years, and business and correspondence in the third. Most students, who were not very academic, were still having great difficulty with the basics of English, when the curriculum that was imposed on them, to start with, was an ESP curriculum.

[iii] My project dealt with a song by Sting, *Children's Crusade* from *The Dream of the Blue Turtles* (1984). The exploitation of the text gave me the opportunity to introduce the students to aspects of British social life, such as the celebration of "Poppy Day" and to speak about the meaning the poppy has in Britain in relation to the commemoration of the dead in the wars. Following the symbolic use of the term *poppy* in the lyrics, I was able to give students information about drugs and discuss this current affairs topic with them. Lastly, I highlighted the use of metaphors in the lyrics and introduced students to this stylistic device, which is typical of literary language.

CHAPTER 2

Italy, Italian-ness and the teaching of Italian in different contexts outside Italy

2.1 Introduction

This chapter traces the links between the construction of the modern Italian state, the gradual creation of a national identity (with distinctive linguistic and cultural emblems) and developments in the teaching of Italian outside Italy. Two broad phases of Italian language education are examined: a first phase in which the main focus was on the language education of Italian emigrants and their children in different parts of the world; and, a second, more recent phase in which the main focus has been on the teaching of Italian as a modern foreign language, to children and to adults.

The chapter builds on the view of language and of language education outlined in Chapter 1. Language teaching and learning are seen as social and cultural practices that are embedded in the social and political history of particular nation-states. They are also seen as practices that are imbued with cultural meanings and bound up with identity. This theoretical framing will be discussed at greater length in Part II of this thesis. It is anticipated briefly here,

so as to draw attention to the nature of the links that I am making between the historical details in the different sections of this chapter.

In section 2.2, I give a brief overview of the political and ideological processes involved in the construction of the modern Italian nation-state and in the forging of a national identity. My account spans over a century and a half of nation-building, showing how Italian-ness, Italian 'culture' and images of Italy were constructed during different periods of Italian political history. Then, in section 2.3, I turn to the field of Italian teaching outside Italy. Here, I will trace the development of language education policy and the gradual creation of a network for the diffusion of standard Italian. I survey the range of institutions involved in the promotion of Italian language and 'culture' and I identify the different categories of Italian teachers appointed to these institutions.

In section 2.4, the focus shifts to the context where this study was carried out, to Italian teaching in Britain. Here, I focus on the teaching of Italian at university level in Britain, setting this provision within the broader context of modern language teaching and learning. I also provide a brief overview of the history of Italian Studies, concentrating, in particular, on the 19th and 20th centuries. In section 2.5, I document the recent decline in provision for Italian teaching in Britain, in most educational sectors, including the university sector. This decline in the British context is then contrasted with the global spread in the teaching of Italian as a foreign language.

2.2 Constructing Italy and a national identity: a historical outlook

The construction of a modern nation, with a unifying national language and 'culture' has been a major problem within the Italian peninsula, since the founding of the Italian state, back in 1861. This problem was only partially settled, after the Italians learned to accept differences within different regions and social groups and consider them as a source of enrichment, rather than a constraint on the achievement of national unity. Despite some recent socio-political manifestations, such as the appearance on the political scene of parties and movements, like the *Lega Nord*[i], which stressed the differences between Italian citizens and even seemed to foster ideas of secession, most Italians do now perceive themselves as being part of a single nation – albeit one characterised by considerable diversity. The few recent attempts to legitimise the prospect of secession did not meet with widespread popular consensus, and failed. The *Lega Nord* has since modified its calls for an independent state of the north (called *Padania*) and now champions a more widely acceptable form of devolution in Italy's overall political programme. (Doumanis 2001: 167-169).

However, for centuries, the very existence of an Italian national identity was questionable. Italy itself was nothing more than 'a geographic notion' as Metternich put it (Prince von Metternich, quoted by Tosi 2001: 1) rather than a real nation. From as far back as the end of the Roman Empire, in fact, Italy had gone through a long process of geographical and socio-political

fragmentation. Political re-unification was established in 1861 with the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy, but it was only after 1866 that the Venetia was annexed to this new Kingdom (Doumanis 2001: 92). After WWI, the areas of Trento and Trieste were added to the territories of the Kingdom, completing the definition of the boundaries of the nation (Clark 1996: 203).

Social unification was another thing. The different peoples who came to be called 'Italians', almost overnight, in 1861, had been, for centuries on end, part of a myriad of different states – some little, some medium-sized – which had been part of very diverse cultural worlds and ruled by different monarchs: from the Spaniards to the Austrians, from the Papal rulers to the French. When Massimo D'Azeglio made his notorious statement "with Italy made, we must now make the Italians" (Dickie 1996: 19), he was able to condense in a sentence the very heart of the problem, which the Italian monarchy, and later the Fascist regime tried to tackle unsuccessfully. It was eventually during its Republican era that Italy was finally able to achieve a more relaxed attitude towards nationhood, renouncing the nationalistic tendencies of the past that had led to the repression of distinct cultural forms which were seen as deviating from the natural 'norm'. This was an era when Italy was further developing and modernising its industrial base and becoming a fully fledged western political power.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will try to illustrate how Italian-ness has been identified and represented during different political eras in Italy, and

how a sense of national identity has been imposed on a people who, for a long time, did not have one, and scarcely showed any interest in acquiring one.

2.2.1 The rise of the Italian nation-state and the creation of emblems of identity

Looking back to the 1800s, the construction of an Italian national state was a bet with many odds. It took more than the ideals of a handful of patriots, a would-be king, an irregular army with its irregular commander[ii], and a few ideologists and intellectuals fishing back into history, to justify the existence of a nation-state; one that had not been there since the end of the Western Roman Empire in 472 A.D. By the mid 19th century, however, this was pretty much all the region which we now call Italy had to rely on, in order to achieve its independence as a national state.

From a political point of view, the claims for the existence of Italy were thus fed by the glorious past of the Roman Empire, which, at its peak, dominated over the Mediterranean and much of Western Europe. It was then difficult to even identify what borders the new national state should have, because while the Empire was still there, the borders had constantly shifted, comprising areas and regions that had been part of other nation-states for a long time, and, even within the peninsula, fragmentation – political, cultural and social – was the reality of the situation on the ground (Duggan 1994). The North-East was directly under Austrian rule, and the Austrians indirectly controlled other

large regions, like Emilia and Tuscany; the North-West was, at least culturally, akin to France. The centre of Italy had, for centuries, been the territory of the Catholic Church. The Church could not only count on enormous wealth, but also on very strong political and moral influence. All those in authority who called themselves Catholic had a good reason for intervening in favour of the Pope, should his rule come under threat. The South was ruled by the Spaniards, according to standards which had changed very little from the days of Feudalism (Ibid.).

Democracy was a more or less an unknown concept. The struggle to persuade several absolute monarchs, who ruled within the peninsula, to pass statutes or constitutions, had ended with the defeat and the elimination of 'revolutionaries', first in the 1820s and later the 1830s and in the 1840s. In fact, these struggles can hardly be defined as revolutions. They were mostly local in character, especially the ones in the 1820s and 1830s, and were promoted and led by few intellectual patriots (Holmes, 1997). They were spurred on more by idealism than by fully-fledged ideas on what they wanted to achieve. Even by the second half of the nineteenth century, when the arguments in favour of a united Italian 'nation' had started to circulate well beyond the circles of the secret societies where they had originated, there was still quite a lot of confusion with regard to the form that the new national state should take, if it were achieved, and strictly centralised monarchy, which eventually emerged, was certainly not an option which, had been widely favoured.[iii]

I turn now to the cultural resources and emblems of identity that were drawn upon in the construction of an Italian national identity in the nineteenth century. They included language, along with the cultural heritage of the Renaissance, including literature and fine arts. It is not that these were reasons for unity, but they were emblems and cultural resources that were drawn upon in imagining the nation.

In the early 1800s, Italian was mainly used in literary genres. Only a minority of the population inhabiting the peninsula had access to this literary language, owing to widespread illiteracy. The majority of people living within the boundaries of modern Italy were landless rural labourers, who communicated in their own local dialects (Duggan 1994; Tosi 2001). Nationalistic ideals tended to be put forward by a minority of intellectuals, who drew on a series of cultural symbols – the Italian language, for example, or the great achievements of the Italian Renaissance. These cultural symbols were associated with only one part of the north of the peninsula, Tuscany and the area of Florence in particular, where the Italian language had been developed in written form through the poetic work of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio in the 1300s, and where the language flourished in the following two centuries. In that period, the economy and the arts and literature had experienced a tremendous impetus under the patronage of the rulers of the small city states of the peninsula. If in the 15th century, when many other nation-states appeared in Europe, the economic and cultural power of the Medici family in Florence had extended to the point where a larger 'Italian' political unit

beyond Florence had been founded, it would not have comprised central and southern Italy. It would have remained a northern political unit. In other words, it would have left out central and southern Italy, where local populations were only marginally interested by the phenomenon of the Renaissance and certainly remained unaffected by its political implications. However, no larger political unit was founded in the 15th century and so no standardised national language emerged, unlike other areas of Europe. Indeed the written language associated with the literary tradition founded in Florence, took its own course alongside the different spoken language varieties in the different regions of the peninsula. As Tosi (2001: 1) puts it:

'the spoken language of Florence gradually evolved and changed, as did the spoken languages of other Italian cities, but at the same time the literary tradition continued to be modelled on the prose and the poetry of the three great Tuscan writers'.

In the following centuries the debate between supporters of the literary model and those who were in favour of everyday usage of the language went on. The debate became known as the *questione della lingua*. The fact that Italy's political unification did not come about until the second half of the nineteenth century had two consequences: On the one hand, literary rather than educational considerations were prevalent in the *questione della lingua* debate until unification. On the other hand, the absence of a distinct national spoken language allowed Italy to become politically and geographically unified, while preserving striking cultural and linguistic diversity within the population (Ibid.).

So, when Italy came to be united under the Savoy Kings in the second half of the 1800s, the nation, as a political unit stretching the whole length of the peninsula, had to be 'invented' from scratch. The linguistic and cultural elements at the disposal of the new rulers to construct the 'nation' were, to say the least, limited. These elements did not appeal to the whole of the population.

2.2.2 Constructing a unified state (1861-1922)

From several historical accounts of nation-building in Italy, it seems that the way in which Italy became united in 1861 and the very territories it came to be made up of, had not been predicted even by the political architects of the new nation (Duggan 1994). The most important actor in the creation of a new state, indeed, was Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, who served as Prime Minister in the Kingdom of Sardina, the north-western kingdom ruled by the Savoy Dynasty. Cavour's aim, in the mid 1800s, was to enlarge that state so as to create a wider Italian one, comprising most of today's northern Italy. Cavour had moderate political views and was not in favour of extending Italy to the centre and south of the peninsula. It was only those who espoused more radical patriotic views who wanted to incorporate the centre and the south. However, his plan for the creation of a Kingdom in northern Italy failed in part, due to the fact that his ally, Napoleon III in France, pulled out of the secret pact assistance in case of an Austrian attack on the Piedmontese state. The war against Austria, in 1859, only resulted in the annexation of Lombardy

to the Kingdom of Sardinia, leaving the *Veneto* under Austrian rule. This, in turn, caused Cavour to make concessions to the Radicals, allowing, and secretly supporting, Garibaldi's expedition to Sicily. Garibaldi's expedition led to the annexation of southern Italy and the incorporation of other central and northern states into the new Kingdom of Italy. The new Kingdom thus took on a radically new shape and extension.

Almost overnight, the King of Sardinia found himself King of Italy, of an Italian territory that had not been anticipated in the expansionist policy put forward by his ministers. The new King found himself ruling over people who lived far away from his homeland, and who were also culturally very distant from him. The Savoy family were, in fact, culturally closer to France than to Italy, let alone southern Italy. They were totally unprepared to represent the diversity of people they had come to rule over[iv].

The first major political move of the Savoy monarchy was relocate the capital city southwards, from Turin, to Florence, and then to Rome, in 1871, when the Popes were confined to the Vatican (Clark 1996). Having the capital in Rome was felt to be so important, that not even the break of diplomatic relations with the Papacy saw any concessions from the Savoy Kings. The Pope refused to acknowledge the new Kingdom and forbade Catholics to participate in the politics of the new Italian state. The long period of 'political frost' between the Italian state and the Vatican came to be known as *the Roman Question.* it would not be resolved until 1929, when a Concordat was established between

the then Fascist Italian State and the Catholic Church. This 'political frost' had a massive negative impact on the process of the construction of nationhood in Italy. In fact, politically, it prevented the Catholic majority from actively participating in the building of the nation. The new Italian Government had underestimated the consequences of the *Roman Question.*

One crucial outcome of these complex political developments was that the definition of Italian-ness came to be primarily northern. It was gradually imposed by the new rulers. As a result, considerable hostility to the new monarchic order developed in the South. In some areas this took the form of *brigandage*[v]. The response of the central government was, more often than not, a repressive one. This, in turn, triggered the consolidation of practices, within southern society, that led to what we identify today as Mafia activity (Ibid.).

In addition to military conquest and the centering of political control in Rome, national institutions were created during this period of Italian history. This was the period that saw the introduction of basic schooling and compulsory military service. However, universal primary schooling and military service were imposed, without taking the needs and expectations of people in different areas, or their living conditions into account. This led to further tensions between the state and the people, especially the people of southern Italy. In Sicily, in particular, as well as in other parts of southern Italy, the introduction of compulsory military conscription met with very strong

opposition from the locals. For them this obligation was a novelty brought about by the adoption of the Piedmontese statute. They could not understand why they should serve in the army of the 'new rulers' and found this obligation unacceptable. Conscription meant that young males, whose contribution to the poor livelihood of their rural families was so important, had to leave and face an intimidating and even humiliating experience within the ranks of the army. They were more often than not unable to communicate with their commanders and fellow soldiers, since they could not speak anything but their local dialects. They had also never had the chance to read and write in the new national language. These difficulties in communications constituted a key problem within the Italian army at least until the 1st World War[vi]. So, many young men of the south, rather than serving in the new national army, fled, became deserters, or joined a new lawless element of society. This led to a state of civil war in the south of Italy, which was defined as a war against brigands by the Government. However, as Duggan (1994) points out: 'In reality, the unrest and lawlessness in the South were as much the result of political and social protest as of crime' (Ibid.: 138-139).

The introduction of compulsory primary schooling had lights and shadows. As Doumanis (2001) has observed: 'Laws making two years of schooling compulsory were meant to overcome expected obstruction from the illiterate classes' (Ibid.: 102), but the financial resources of the new Kingdom were insufficient to ensure that the rules for providing primary education to Italian children of any background could be enforced and that the bureaucratic

structure at the base of the educational system could work. The major problem of poorer families, especially in the rural areas of the south, was that they 'could not afford to do without the free labour that children provided. Nor were they easily convinced that education was worth-while' (Ibid.) However, new primary schools were established in the country and, between 1871 and 1911, illiteracy in standard Italian decreased by almost 50 percent overall (from 68.8 percent to 37.9 percent). But while there was considerable improvement in literacy at a national level and while there was growing prestige connected with competence in standard Italian, in the early 1900s, some areas of southern Italy still displayed levels of illiteracy well over the 65 percent mark (Ibid.).

Compulsory primary schooling contributed to the spread of standard Italian, providing the basics of literacy to many children, who, only a few years earlier, would not have had any access whatsoever to education. There were, however, more difficulties in embedding the system of primary schooling in some regions than in others. Moreover, at that time, compulsory education was for only two years; too short a time in order to complete the bold task of *making Italians* through schooling. As Doumanis (2001) pointed out this was 'only possible when retention rates were noticeably improved under Fascism' (Ibid.: 102). Nevertheless, the creation of a 'national' education system and the introduction of compulsory military service served as a means of spreading the use of standard Italian and of legitimizing it as a symbol of national identity.

2.2.3 Italian-ness and nationalism: Italy in Fascist times

The attempts by the early governments of Italy to 'make Italians' were hampered by all sorts of difficulties. The enormous economic disparities and striking social and cultural differences within the country were not bridged, in spite of the tremendous industrial development Italy underwent in the late nineteenth century and the attempt to introduce social reform in the first decade of the twentieth century. Industrialisation affected the north of the country almost exclusively, thus leaving living conditions unaltered in the rest of the country. Moreover, Giolitti's programme of social reform was only partially carried out, owing to the weakness of his government[vii] (Holmes 1997).

Italian society was becoming more complex. New social and political movements came into the national political debate. In 1909 Pope Leo XIII relaxed the prohibition on Catholics taking part in Italian politics. They could now stand as independent candidates in general elections, although the formation of a Catholic party was still forbidden. Faced with the mounting success of the new Socialist Party (founded in 1897), Giolitti tried to cooperate with both the Catholics and the moderate socialists to implement his reforms, but the weakness of his government majority, along with the difficulty of mediating between opposing political views, made his task almost impossible (Ibid.). The Nationalist movement was born in 1910. Initially, it was a cross-political organisation, whose members were

representatives of a broad spectrum of opinions, from the extreme left to the conservative right. However, the nationalists soon shifted towards right-wing political views and identified themselves with the interests of heavy industry. They bitterly criticised Giolitti's attempts at reform and at broadening the liberal base of the state, branding him as 'weak'. His 'weakness' was seen as a hurdle to the development of national vitality, which, according to their view, was emblematically embodied in industrial expansion (seen as a necessary condition for the later greatness of the Italian nation) (Doumanis 2001).

Italy's participation in WWI was certainly urged by nationalistic feelings. The political élites felt that 'to remain a Great Power, Italy had to intervene' (Ibid.: 128). Nevertheless, the majority of public opinion was very doubtful that any good could come out of the war, and 'Italian society became very divided over the issue' (Ibid.:128).

The society that emerged from the war was even more divided and embittered than the one that had started it. It was the desire to find an alternative political order to the Liberal Government that had led Italy into the war, which fuelled mass nationalistic ideas. As Holmes (1997) has argued: "Italian nationalism did finally emerge from the Great War as a mass phenomenon" (Ibid.: 273).

It was the need for law and order in a bitterly fragmented society that eased the way to the coming into power of Fascism. Fascism represented a hope for reconciliation through stabilisation. Mussolini founded the movement in 1919.

Initially it mainly attracted urban deracinés united around the support for radical change in rejection of socialism. Fascist opposition to socialism made use of widespread violence, but the post-war liberal government tolerated it, as it proved to be effective. The parliamentary opposition (consisting of the socialists and the Catholics) was too divided for alliances to be formed so as to curb the mounting influence of Fascism in the country. Meanwhile, the effectiveness in their struggle against socialism made it possible for the Fascists to count on the support of a mass base among the urban and rural petite bourgeoisie. In other words, there was a complete absence of resistance to the Fascist rise to power and when, in November 1922, Mussolini led the *March on Rome*, state institutions had already surrendered to Fascism. The king virtually capitulated to Fascist violence and illegality, and instead of calling for army intervention against Mussolini, asked him to form a government (Ibid.).

The Fascist period was, of all the periods of modern Italian history, the one in which the commitment towards nation-building was most intense. There are several reasons for this, but the main one was that Fascism, apart from being a political movement, was also a political philosophy which comprised all dimensions of human life and activity. Its central focus was on the nation-state. This meant that there was little opposition to Fascism in Italy, not only because Fascism was imposed via a dictatorship, but, also because the only life perspective Fascism could conceive of was one in which *being Italian* was

synonymous with *being integrated into the Italian State*, i.e. *being Fascist* (Doumanis 2001).

The Fascist regime in Italy aimed at the construction of a harmonious society, in which the state could mediate and filter off all possible conflicts among classes and categories. This entailed a sort of omnipresence of the Party in all aspects of life, even the most personal ones. The regime had a cross-class appeal. The creation of a Ministry of Popular Culture in 1937 (or *Miniculpop*, a term which sounds quite Orwellian) provides evidence of the importance that the regime attached to this issue. In earlier times, the term 'culture' in Italy had always been used to refer to *high culture* and been associated with elitist milieux. Given the appropriation of the term 'popular culture' in this way by the Fascist state, the term has come to have a particularly negative resonance for Italian intellectuals, especially those who have ideas that were vehemently opposed in the regime.

The policies which were devised to construct a sort of state-sponsored social system during the Fascist era had resounding names, such as *productivism* or *corporatism.* The aim was to make Italians a nation of producers, totally committed to the success of the state, irrespective of their position in the social scale and to create seamless unity across different social groupings (e.g. institutional work-related and professional groupings).

This utopian and authoritarian view of Italian society was relatively short-lived. However, given the penetration of the Party into all levels of life, some contact with these discourses was unavoidable. Therefore, it is highly likely that these ideas had some effect on the way Italians imagined themselves, although not as much as the policy designers had hoped, at least in terms of involvement in and commitment to this particular political ideology.

All this has to be considered within the wider frame of the turn towards nationalist ideology, actually born in the early 19th century elsewhere in Europe and in Italy after the end of the 1st World War. The meagre results obtained by the representatives of the Government at the Peace Conference in Versailles, reinvigorated the Nationalist Movement. At the conference, Italy had claimed that its borders should incorporate the areas of Trento and Trieste. However, this claim was not taken into consideration. The nationalist, poet Gabriele d'Annunzio called this outcome Italy's *mutilated victory*[viii] (Ibid.: 137-138).

Fascism developed in this context. First of all, it emerged as a response to the weakness of a discredited Liberal government, which led Italy into the WWI conflict through a secret treaty with Britain and France, against the consent of the majority of Italians and the Prime Minister himself. Secondly, Fascism began to be considered favourably by those opposed to socialism, because through *squadrismo*[ix] it was able to intimidate and almost eliminate socialist activism. In the two years immediately following the end of the war, the

biennio rosso (red biennium) took place, with generalised strikes and factory occupations. At that time, socialism was becoming a major force within the political scene, and the possibility that Italy could follow the same path as Russia was real. This posed a serious threat to those on the right of Italian politics.

Something more would have remained of Mussolini's attempt to 'make the nation', if Mussolini had not wanted to take his *Great Nation of Warriors* into the 2nd World War. Mussolini would not renounce his belligerent dreams, but Italy was not a nation of warriors, and was totally unprepared for a conflict of massive proportions. So the Italian army went from defeat to defeat, and in the end, when Mussolini was not confirmed as the leader of the party, and when the king was slow in making a decision about withdrawal from the war, Italy was plunged into civil war and total confusion until the allies eventually liberated the country, marching up from the south of the peninsula (Ginsborg 1990). The Italy that emerged from war wanted to wipe the Fascist era out of its history and the signs and icons of this period of Italian political history were eliminated at a stroke, leaving behind little more than the ashes of destruction wrought by the war.

2.2.4 Italy from 1945 onwards: post-war reconstruction, economic revival and cultural change

After the war, successive Republican Governments abandoned nationalistic rhetoric altogether, as a way of distinguishing themselves from the Fascist

regime. The fact that the Fascist regime had tried to render culture 'popular' was not forgotten. There were clear shifts in the representation of Italy and Italian-ness. First, in the immediate aftermath of the war, Italian art, film and literature projected an image of a wrecked country, shattered by the war, and destroyed by twenty years of totalitarian politics. This was the Neo-realist epoch in Italian cultural history. Through these images, exported around the world by the films of Rossellini, Visconti and De Sica, Italy set out on a journey of reconstruction.

By the late 1950s and 1960s, the Italian economy had been turned around and a modern design-conscious image of Italian society had been created: the world of Fellini's *Dolce Vita*. Italy was now a Republic and for the first time since its constitution as a state, a much wider swathe of the population was involved in post-war re-construction. However, Italy was still far from being the economically advanced country it is today. It still displayed strong disparities, between social classes, and between its northern regions, which were swiftly developing a modern industrial environment, and its southern ones (Mack Smith 1997).

This led to massive migratory flows from the countryside to the cities, and from the south to the north of the country: people who had had very little in common for centuries now had to come together, to face the difficulties of earning a living and to secure a better future for their children. For the first

time there was a real need to find elements that could unite them, rather than highlighting the differences between them.

On this ground the language flourished also. At the end of the war, 13 percent of Italians were still illiterate and few people had full mastery of standard Italian, in its written or spoken forms; even among 'the more privileged classes, Italian was rarely spoken with confidence in all domains and for all purposes' (Tosi, 2001: 12). Between the 1950s and the 1960s, the State extended provision for compulsory schooling (Ibid.). This ensured that, in the following decades, a much higher proportion of the population left school with a working knowledge of standard Italian, in the north and in the south of the country. The status of standard Italian was further consolidated by the spread of the mass media, television in particular (Ibid.). Today the national language is used and mastered by almost all of the population, although the dialects have not died out. The dialects were considered to be detrimental to the construction of national unity in Fascist times. However, in contemporary Italy, they are no longer perceived in that way. They are actually thought of as a form of 'added value', giving the Italian people an identity as citizens of the nation but also a distinct regional identity. Certainly, the spread of competence in standard Italian, provided common ground for Italians to build their sense of Italian-ness as citizens of Italy, and, at the same time, more confidence in asserting and dealing with regional differences.

Given that these changes were taking place in the socio-linguistic order in Italy in the second half of the twentieth century, it is then interesting to consider the representation of Italian-ness abroad. The migrants who left Italy before or after the war were very seldom competent in standard Italian, and they mainly spoke a dialect (Ibid.). The new Italy was built in their absence and the effects of the promotion of standard Italian through schooling and the media began to be felt after the main waves of emigration. However, from the 1960s onwards, there was growing concern in official educational circles in Italy about provision for the education of emigrants and, in particular, about providing access to standard Italian. In the section that follows, I chart in some detail the development of an infra-structure for the education of Italians 'abroad'. Here, I will just note that alongside this infra-structure, there was also a growing literature about the education of the children of the emigrants (Tosi, 1984). Whilst this literature called for the extension and improvement of the facilities for the language education of the descendants of Italian migrants in Europe and elsewhere, it also tended to represent the linguistic and cultural resources of the migrant workers and their children in deficit terms. Concepts such as 'semi-lingualism' and 'semi-illiteracy' gained currency. Being 'semi-lingual' meant having an 'inadequate grasp' of standard Italian and, at the same time, an 'inadequate grasp' of the national language of the country of settlement. Teaching standard Italian to children in Italian communities in Argentina, Australia, Britain, Canada or Germany thus came to be seen as compensatory education. Giving children access to

standard Italian was represented as a means of enhancing their life chances and also opening up opportunities for a return to their country of origin.

Meanwhile, Italy was experiencing substantial economic upturn. It had a growing industrial base and its early entry into the European Economic Community (the former EEC) had opened up new markets for Italian exports. With the spread of wealth across a wider span of Italian society and with the expansion of media influence, a new consumer culture was being created. As I will show in more detail below, and in the subsequent sections of this chapter, these economic and cultural changes led to a gradual shift in the representation of the Italian language, in the teaching of Italian outside Italy and a shift in the representation of Italian-ness in this context. Thus, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, greater emphasis was being placed on language education policy, on the teaching of standard Italian as a prestigious modern foreign language and on language provision for a wide range of audiences, not just on the teaching of Italian as a language of cultural heritage for the descendants of emigrants. The language had now come to be seen as a 'commodity' for export, along with the products of the Italian manufacturing industries and with different aspects of Italian design.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Italy gradually built for itself a reputation in design and an image of refinement and elegance that was divulgated by the glossy pictures of expensive magazines. The sophisticated and stylish character of the products for which Italy began to be admired and

appreciated abroad were, of course, mainly reserved for the wealthy classes and for exclusive export markets. As Sparke has pointed out, the story of Italian design is a complex matter and an important aspect of contemporary Italian culture as a whole, 'requiring a general discussion of the transformations of the Italian economy and of the political status quo'. (Sparke, 1988: 15-16).

The first designers had been trained during the Fascist period, which, despite all its shadows, had created the first links between the Italian artistic tradition and modernity. The driving force behind the design work of this period was, of course, an attempt to create a narrowly defined essence of Italian-ness. The advent of democracy in the post-war period gave designers the liberty to experiment with new forms and designs. The application of design in industry had already been started in Fascist times and was further developed and steered to new export markets in the wake of the industrial liberalism that marked the first two decades of post-war Italy. 'Italian style' became an icon of the new post-war Italy. The film industry helped to export this new image. Films like *Roman Holiday* were marketed all over the world and took with them powerful images of Italy. In *Roman Holiday*, for example, Gregory Peck drives Audrey Hepburn around Rome on a stylish Vespa. *La Dolce Vita*, the famous Fellini film, disseminated a potent image of the new consumer society in Italy. Some commentators on the development of Italian design during this period have argued that design was not only a reflection of economic success, but also contributed to it. Sparke (1988: 125) puts her case as follows:

Design played a central role in the transformation of the Italian economy from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. Not only did it constitute an important form of market penetration, it also succeeded in creating, both at home and abroad, an appropriate visual symbolism for the conspicuous consumption that was so essential to Italy's economic achievements. The individualism and elitism of Italian goods made them highly desirable and competitive in the European market, and this was true of even the most technologically advanced products.

During the 1970s, Italy's economic standing was briefly shaken by the loss of international competitiveness and by the oil crisis. But by the 1980s, the Italian economy had stabilised and Italy was also gaining considerable international standing politically. Steady increase in investment, productivity and export performance led the country's GDP growth. This enabled Italy 'to become the fifth world power in 1987, overtaking Great Britain (Dunnage 2000: 197). By the end of the twentieth century there had also been major cultural changes in Italy. A more materialistic and secular society had emerged, much more cosmopolitan and urban. With greater distribution of wealth, Italians began to travel abroad more for leisure. Tourism to Italy also increased. In addition, the final decades of the twentieth century saw a new kind of work migration on a global scale, sometimes referred to as 'technological migration' (Ministero degli Affari Esteri 1996: 25), as middle class Italians moved across the European Union to seek employment opportunities or as the employees of Italian companies moved to new locations outside Italy.

Last, but not least, Italy has now made the transition from a country of emigration to one of immigration. The significance of these changing population flows for this study lies in their impact on thinking about the

teaching of the Italian language and of Italian 'culture' both in Italy today or outside Italy, in European Union countries or further afield.

2.3 Teaching Italian outside Italy: the development of language education policy, institutions for the promotion of Italian and the changing value of Italian on the 'linguistic market'.

This section will present an overview of the institutions that have been set up outside Italy to promote the spread of Italian language and culture both within the network of Italian schools in countries different from Italy and within the schooling systems of those countries. As I will mention later, the network of Italian educational institutions outside the Italian borders started to be developed from the second half of the nineteenth century, at first especially in Mediterranean countries and in Latin America, as a response to the first great migratory flows between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. More Italian schools were opened in other areas of the world throughout the twentieth century, as more and more Italians emigrated to seek their fortunes in the diverse corners of the globe, or, more recently, to support the children of Italian 'technological emigrants', who, from the 1970s, began to be sent to developing countries to carry out orders received by Italian companies in connection with the development of infrastructures in those countries (Ministero degli Affari Esteri 1996: 25).

It must be pointed out that, since the 1980s, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has endeavoured to respond to the positive trend involving the study of Italian outside Italy. This is borne out by the increase in the number of Italian Cultural Institutes and *lettorati*, which have been set up around the world. The hypothesis put forward by the authors of the most recent survey of the demand for Italian L2 worldwide, *Italiano 2000*[x], is that the standing of Italian, as a language studied and spoken outside Italy, has changed significantly in the last two decades and that some new theory-building is necessary to try and explain this change (De Mauro et al. 2001: 15-16). In this study the researchers have elaborated a theoretical model. The three driving forces behind the unexpected success of Italian L2 are what they call, somewhat obliquely, '*sistema Italia*', as well as the '*spendibilità sociale delle lingue*' (or the 'social spending power of languages')[xi], and the *language market* (Ibid.: 16).

With *sistema Italia* they refer to 'the interrelation among the economic-productive, political, social and cultural dimensions' of the country (Ibid.: 16). The authors appear to be referring to Italy's changing place within the world system, to its enhanced economic and political position in the global order with the implications that this has had at a social and cultural level within and outside Italy. Such changes have affected the position of the country at an international level and 'are reflected in the the image, which the Italian language-Italian culture link has for foreigners' (Ibid.: 16).

One of the decisive factors that intervene in the learners' choice of what modern foreign language to study is what the drafters of *Italiano 2000* call the *spendibilità sociale* of that language. This term comprises a whole range of meanings, from a merely instrumental one, i.e. the usefulness of an L2 to fulfil the needs of day-to-day communicative interactions, to a generally 'cultural' one, which considers the learning of an L2 as a means to foster 'overall individual growth' (Ibid.: 16). As De Mauro et al. (2001) observed, the instrumental *spending power* of a language is directly affected by

the number of native speakers and the extent to which they are present in different parts of the world, hence the likelihood of needing to establish communicative exchanges with them; the degree of knowledge of other languages that these [native-] speakers may have; the need to set up exchanges of economic or productive nature, where the economically strong[er] actor [of the communicative exchange] is also the one whose language is used for communication purposes; the [communicative] exchanges about goods and asset which are intrinsically connected to the socio-economic and cultural identity of that language (Ibid.: 16) (My translation)

The concept of *spendibilità sociale* of a language itself has different layers of meaning. It involves the dimension of social interactions, the dimension of inter-cultural exchanges, and, last but not least, one which is more specifically linked to the teaching of the language. This is, in fact, a factor that potential learners have very clearly in mind and is decisive in motivating them when they choose what foreign language they want to learn (Ibid.: 17).

The third factor driving the spread of Italian L2, as identified by the authors of *Italiano 2000* is the 'language market', a term in which the word 'market' is used in a metaphorical sense. This expression refers to the system through which the languages spread at an international level, as they are learned by students outside the countries where those languages are used as native

languages (Ibid.: 17). The authors of the study carry on saying that the international spread of languages does not only result from their 'intrinsic semiotic identity' (Ibid.: 17). The presence of a system which brings in new connotations to the value attached to a particular L2 is, in their opinion, equally, if not more important for the enacting and development of their spread. Such new connotative meanings are created through 'the social and productive dynamics of the native speaker's communities; the institutional policies for the promotion of the spread' of that language and culture; and the ability of different 'societies to propose' and assert 'their own social and cultural identities in terms of reference points, of prestigious and successful models' (Ibid.: 17). The authors of *Italiano 2000* conclude by pointing out a consequence of this concept of 'language market': the processes connected to the spread of languages at an international level are not neutral and do not merely depend on linguistic factors. The international success of a language is directly proportional to the abilty of the socio-cultural and linguistic system behind that language to propose something worth obtaining attention and being valued outside its primary context of use (Ibid.: 17). Since the 1980s Italian as an L2 seems to have continually and steadily grown in its ability to attract students and learners all over the world and in many countries, from the USA to the United Kingdom, from Japan to East Europe, it is now among the four or five most studied foreign languages (Ibid.: 17).

At the beginning of *Italiano 2000*, the authors recalled the presentation of a previous survey on Italian L2, at the end of the 1980s, at a convention held in Rome (Baldelli, 1987)[xii]. They remembered how all participants in that

convention had been utterly surprised not only because Italian seemed to appeal to a much larger number of foreigners than any of them would have expected, but also because such a systematic study, which had been conducted on a world scale, had been promoted and carried out, thus originating the occasion for the first ever convention of subjects and bodies – including institutional ones – involved in Italian L2 and for discussing and reflecting on their activity (De Mauro et al., 2001: 29). Apparently, they had underestimated the scale and potential of their field of work and of the network of institutions and individuals engaged in it, and had overlooked the impact that Italian language and culture had in other cultural contexts. It was time to redefine Italian as a foreign language in the wake of its increasingly prominent role on the worldwide scene. Italy as a nation-state had to gear up with appropriate policies and measures, if it wanted to profit from an exceptionally positive trend in the area of linguistic and cultural diffusion. The 1980s convention in Rome marked, in a sense, a turning point in the perception that Italy had of the relevance of investment in the spread of its own culture and language abroad.

However, the response of the Italian state to the positive new trends in the teaching of Italian appears to have been rather uneven. One of the criticisms of the state network of cultural institutions abroad that was put forward by the authors of *Italiano 2000* (when talking about the organisation of language courses) was that a clear and uniform line of action seems to be lacking in the pursuit of objectives, so that the organisation, the planning, the marketing of

cultural products all appear to be left to the initiative of individual Cultural Institutes or of their directors (Ibid.: 84).

2.3.1 The first Italian schools and classes outside Italy

The policy of promotion of the Italian language abroad was – and still largely is – moulded on the needs of Italian nationals and their descendents abroad. As I indicated above, the network of institutions aimed at the diffusion of Italian outside Italy's boundaries was started in the late 19th century and its reform and adaptation to the changing needs of its users was, to say the very least, slow and marginal.

The first Italian schools abroad were founded from 1889 onwards. Between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, when the first substantial migration waves of Italian citizens towards foreign countries took place. The setting up of Italian schools in the countries of emigration, initially mainly South American and Mediterranean countries, was one attempt by the then Italian Kingdom to provide support for the emigrants (Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 1996).

However, it was in Fascist times that the promotion of Italian culture and language had a major impulse. In 1926, the Kingdom of Italy set up the Italian Institutes of Culture and, in 1940, the first comprehensive law for the

regulation of the network of bodies and institutions aiming at the diffusion of Italian language and culture was promulgated. It read as follows:

Art. 1 The Government of the King can found, maintain and subsidise schools and other Italian educational and cultural institutions abroad. […]
Art. 4 The setting-up, modification and dissolving of schools maintained by the State is decided by decree by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with the Minister of Finances […]
Art. 12 The institution of Italian Cultural Institutes abroad, with the aim of favouring the diffusion of Italian language and culture and the development of Italian intellectual relationships with foreign countries, will be decided through a decree by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with the Ministers of National Education and of Finances. […]
(*Testo Unico* (comprehensive law) 12.2.1940) (My translation)

This law, though modified and integrated with several other subsequent ones, still remains the basis of the cultural initiatives of the Italian state abroad.

It is striking that, for a very long time, the state failed to acknowledge that any transformation in the functions of the Italian schools and cultural institutions abroad may have taken place and considered the role of the schools to be that of supporting the communities of Italian origin in foreign countries. This is confirmed by the following legal statement, namely, articles 1 and 2 of the law of 3 March 1971 no. 153, where it states that:

Art. 1 […] the Ministry of Foreign Affairs promotes and enacts school initiatives, as well as school support, professional training and specialization activities aimed to emigrated Italian workers and their families.
Art. 2 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs […] sets up:
a)   preparatory classes and courses with the aim to facilitate the integration of the family members of Italian workers in the schools of host countries;
b)   integrative courses of general Italian language and culture for the family members of Italian workers who attend local schools in host countries, corresponding in level to the Italian *elementary* and *middle schools*;
c)   *popular school* courses for Italian workers;
d)   nursery schools and crèches. (Law 3.3.1971, n. 153). (My translation)

In sum, the setting up of new courses at various levels, as late as in the 1970s, was meant to either favour the integration of emigrant Italian workers' children in local schools, or to help them keep their cultural links with their

country of origin, if they were already attending a foreign school in the host country, or to prepare Italian workers for Italian school exams, in case their schooling had not been completed while they were in Italy. There was no mention of a non-Italian audience. At the beginning of the 1970s, therefore, the 'audiences' of Italian abroad were still considered to be strictly Italian, while Italian itself was definitely not considered as a language which could have a 'market' beyond the communities of Italians, living and working abroad and their children (Cirvelleri, 1993). The lack of any provision in this respect makes us wonder whether there was any awareness that this could become the case. Many emigrant Italians were 1st or 2nd generation and could therefore still speak, more or less fluently, in their national language or, more often, in one of the national dialects. In such a context it is even debatable whether it is correct to use the term Italian L2, to refer to the projects promoted by the educational institutions and courses set up by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in foreign countries.

From the time when the Italian state was originally established in 1861, all responsibilities regarding the promotion of Italian language and culture had come under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With the advent of the Republic after WWII this remained the case and the nature and tasks of the institutions also remained unchanged. Moreover, the personnel who worked in Italy and in foreign countries, in the sector of cultural promotion, remained largely the same as those that the 1940 law had set up. Below, I will

review the most important bodies, which constitute the network of Italian cultural promotion abroad.

2.3.2 The founding of Italian Cultural Institutes

Italian Cultural Institutes were founded in 1926 in order to 'promote the diffusion of Italian language and culture and develop intellectual relations with foreign countries' (Ministero degli Affari Esteri 1996: 17). In the 1950s a couple of pieces of legislation were passed.

The first one was a Ministerial Decree (24.07.1950) which better defined, on a conceptual level, the competences of these bodies, and from which the "Statute of the Italian Cultural Institute" was later extracted. The second one was Circular no. 42 of 22.06.1955. This contributed to a clarification of the functions of the directors of these bodies, who, according to the law, should perform the functions of 'cultural managers' (Ibid.: 13).

In May 1978, a new Circular of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted the need for a comprehensive law on Cultural Institutes and stated that these institutions are 'offices directly depending on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (Ibid.: 13). It also stressed that further, improved coordination, direction and initiative on the part of the Central Administration were necessary, in order to 'implement closer contact and more effective interaction with Italian communities' (Ibid.: 13). This statement provides evidence that, as late as in

1978, the focus of the *Direzione Generale per la Promozione Culturale* ('General Directorate for Cultural Promotion') within the Ministry was still on the communities of Italian origin in the world, rather than the spread of Italian among foreigners.

The latest law on the organisation of the Italian Cultural Institutes was passed at the end of the 1990s and it further reformed these institutions. The law specified the role of the key personnel working in these institutions. The role of the Directors was, for example, to represent their Institute and maintain relations with cultural institutions and key contacts in the host country. They are now responsible for the cultural activities carried out by the Institutes. They direct the planning and coordinating of activities and services, under the sole, direct control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, mainly through Italian Embassies or Consulates. (Ibid.: 20). The specific activities of the Directors were defined as follows:

'To this aim [the Director] draws up every year a plan of activities, promotes initiatives and events which can adequately represent the wealth and contemporary character of Italian culture in its various forms, ensures adequate and specific cultural and linguistic activities with particular reference to Italian communities.' (Ibid.: 20) (My translation)

Directors are also directly responsible for the rest of the personnel, who are chosen from staff in the General Directorate for Cultural Promotion of the Ministry and include officers dealing with all aspects of language and culture promotion, as well as administration, library and public relations staff.

According to a study by Baldelli[xiii], the first survey ever on the spread of Italian L2 outside Italy, even in the law that reformed the Italian Cultural

Institutes, in the early 1990s, the main target of specific cultural and linguistic activities, (i.e. language and culture courses) remained, in the legislators' minds, Italian nationals and their descendants in foreign countries, although the legislators did make a reference to the need to promote and disseminate contemporary Italian culture in its fullness, through the organisation of events such as conferences, film shows, and exhibitions relating to Italian art and literature, or the setting up of libraries in each Institute.

At present there are 93 Italian Cultural Institutes throughout the world, which according to data collected by the authors of *Italiano 2000,* organise about 4,200 language courses for more of 55,0000 students worldwide (see also the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, www.esteri.it). The most recent statistics on the provision of language courses organised by the Institutes are those presented in *Italiano 2000.* They refer to the situation in 1999 (De Mauro et al. 2001). At that time, there were 90 Institutes in 59 different countries throughout the world (Ibid.). However, only 63 Institutes out of 90 responded to the questionnaire they received from the authors of the research (Ibid.). The results of the survey therefore do not cover the whole of the network of Italian Cultural Institutes which were active in 1999, but nevertheless supply a good indication of what was going on at the time. As far as the provision of courses is concerned, Europe (both EU and non-EU) had the lion's share, with courses taught in 33 out of 51 Institutes. On a percentual basis, however, other continents, where Italian Cultural Institutes were less numerous, were more active: Italian was taught in over 71 percent of Institutes in Asia, 87.5

percent of those in north America, and in 100 percent of Italian Cultural Institutes in Australia and the Middle East. Africa was the one continent where the spread of the teaching of Italian L2 had been slower (Ibid.).

2.3.3 Italian schools and Italian medium instruction outside Italy

As indicated earlier, the first Italian schools outside the Italian territory were founded back in the late nineteenth century. The network of Italian schools abroad has developed and become more comprehensive throughout the twentieth century. As I have shown in the earlier sections of this chapter, for most of the last century, Italy continued to be a country of emigration and the tradition started by the government of the Kingdom of Italy was carried on and enhanced by the Republican governments. Expansion has continued steadily up to the present. At the time of writing, there are 181 Italian schools and 116 Italian sections in foreign bilingual, international or European schools all over the world (information obtained from the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: www.esteri.it). Italian schools abroad can be state-sponsored or private. The former are completely financed by the Italian Government, which also caters for the Italian personnel. They are selected through competitive examinations similar to the ones for the recruitment of the *lettori*. The Italian state also provides support for a number of private educational institutions. This contribution is made financially and/or by sending Italian teachers to work in such institutions. The educational credentials issued by

both state schools abroad and by legally recognised private schools have full validity in Italy.

Italian is also one of the teaching languages in six of the ten European Schools present in six EU countries, one of which is at Culham in England (de Mejia, 2002). Furthermore, Italian is one of the languages represented in the network of International Schools, although the majority of them today are English Language International Schools (Ibid.). Italian sections are also reported to be particularly frequent in French *lycées* (www.esteri.it). Finally Italian is taught as a subject or in bilingual sections at other schools (*scuole straniere*)[xiv] which are more common in Central and Eastern Europe (Ibid.).

There is a total of 297 institutions outside Italy where about 30,000 students are taught through the medium of Italian, from nursery to secondary level (www.esteri.it). Already in 1996, there were relatively few students attending these schools who were of Italian descent (the 'foreign' pupils made up about 60 percent then, and account for around 80 percent at present) (Ibid.). Yet, according to the 1996 report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cited above, the the aims of the Italian school institutions abroad were still stated as follows: "the schooling of children of Italian nationals who are temporarily resident abroad; the preservation of the cultural identity of the children of emigrant Italians" and, only stated as a third point, "the promotion and diffusion of Italian language and culture in foreign environments" (Ibid.: 27). However, as I noted earlier, there has now been a clear shift of emphasis. The

Ministry appears to have taken on board the results of the studies it commissioned itself on the spread of Italian teaching and the audiences for Italian abroad and has started to re-set the priorities of its cultural policy.

In the last few years, particular effort has been put into the integration of courses of Italian language and culture into the curricula of foreign school systems. This effort has already paid off, especially in countries outside Europe. On the basis of a few positive initiatives, an increasing number of agreements have been signed between Italian Consulates and state or local authorities in different countries, especially in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, the United States and Australia, countries where many Italians emigrated in the past, and where substantial communities of Italian heritage are present even now. Today 59 percent of such courses are either integrated in the school system of the host country or are part of the regular school timetable. As the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports, most agreements envisage that the Italian state will contribute both technically and financially to the training of local teachers of Italian and the provision of multimedia tools (www.esteri.it).

2.3.4 Courses of Italian language and culture for students of Italian origin.

Apart from the network of Italian schools outside Italy and the non-Italian schools where Italian is taught as a curricular subject, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with the General Directorate for Emigration and Social

Affairs runs courses of Italian language and culture for the children of Italian nationals who reside outside Italy (Ibid.). These courses were set up in areas where there were no Italian educational institutions and therefore the children of Italian emigrants were educated within the schooling system of the country where their families resided. In the year 2000, the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that there were 28,484 such courses worldwide.

Some non-Italian schools, where the demand for the teaching of Italian was too low or where the organisation of educational activities was extended enough to justify the creation of curricular courses in Italian, started, therefore, to offer extra-curricular courses in the language, often called *corsi integrativi* (supplementary courses). In some cases, these courses are run either at lunch time or immediately after the end of the curricular lessons (*doposcuola*). In other cases, classes are run within the school day and pupils who attend them are withdrawn from other lessons (*corsi inseriti*) (Powell, 1989). *Extra*-curricular courses in Italian are organised mainly in European countries. Originally, their main aim was that of enabling the children of Italian descent to preserve contact with their cultural heritage.

These courses are state-sponsored. The management of the courses is entrusted to headmasters from the Italian state school system, who are selected through a national competitive examination (Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 1996). In contrast to the staffing of Italian educational institutions outside Italy, only some of the teaching staff for such courses are selected from the

permanent body of teachers in the Italian state schools. The rest of the teachers are usually recruited locally (Ibid.). They are often Italians who are living abroad and have a relevant qualification or are studying towards such a qualification. In other cases, these classes can be taught by foreign nationals who are qualified teachers of Italian. In the latter case, they frequently are members of staff who teach another foreign language in the school which is offering the extra-curricular courses, and thus have Italian as part of their overall portfolio of qualifications.

2.3.5 The 'Lettorati' in foreign universities

Language assistant posts, known as *lettorati*, have now been created in foreign university departments all over the world and are entirely financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which especially since the publication of the study by Baldelli in 1987, has come to consider supporting the teaching of Italian at university level of increasing strategic importance. The *lettorati* were set up by the law of 1940 mentioned above, but it was in the last two and a half decades that there has been an unprecedented expansion of these posts. In 1974 there were only thirty all over the world. There were one hundred and seventy five by 1996 (Ministero degli Affari Esteri 1996: 22). At present two hundred and seventy two *lettorati* are active in the universities of eighty seven different countries on all five continents (information obtained from the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: www.esteri.it). Twenty of them are in Africa, forty seven in North and South America, thirty four in Asia, eleven

in Oceania and one hundred and sixty in Europe. Evidently, since the appearance of the first studies on the diffusion of Italian L2 and the changing motivations of students of Italian, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has become more and more aware of the strategic value of the *lettorati* as outposts of Italian culture and language at foreign universities worldwide.

The *lettori* are chosen from among the permanent personnel of Italian state schools who have a minimum of 3 years experience in teaching and at least 2 examinations in Italian in their university curriculum. The selection procedure used to involve very demanding competitive examinations at national level. The formula for these examinations has been changed several times over the years, but until the last examination, held in 2001, they were aimed at ascertaining that the candidates, were not only fluent in Italian and at least one of the foreign languages required to participate in the examination[xv], as well as having a good knowledge of Italian literature, history, language history and so on. Candidates were also expected to be proficient in the teaching skills and techniques needed to perform the job of Italian teaching wherever they were sent. It is not infrequent, in fact, for *lettori* to be sent to departments where they are the only Italian speakers, and have therefore to set up courses from scratch. In other cases, like in Britain, they are inserted in well organised departments, where they must be ready to take up academic jobs, although most of them have not had any prior specific experience.

Unfortunately, the last competitive examination consisted only of a reading comprehension exercise in one or more foreign languages. This suggests a tendency to overlook additional professional credentials that the school personnel selected to go abroad to teach Italian language and culture at university level might have. Indeed, at the end of their period of appointment, which used to be of 7 years and has recently been reduced to 5, the *lettori* return to Italy and are re-integrated into a state school, as regular teachers. The professional skills and knowledge about foreign educational systems acquired by these individuals is therefore largely wasted, because no institutional mechanisms have yet been put in place, within the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Education to take full advantage of them.

2.4 The teaching of Italian at university level in Britain

Modern languages have never been subjects enjoying particular popularity at academic level in the UK. The fact that Britain was for a long time at the lead of a world empire fed for centuries the conviction that it was the others who were supposed to learn English, and not the opposite. This, in turn, led English to become the most widely spoken foreign language in the world, thus reducing even more the feeling of need for modern foreign language instruction in the country.

Another factor which delayed the setting up of degree courses in modern foreign languages in Great Britain and which contributed to the idea that

foreign languages were less important and prestigious subjects to study than others was that the teaching/learning of languages at university level was derived from the academic tradition in the teaching of classical languages, so that, for a long time, modern languages were considered as a simplified or even corrupted emanation of the classical ones and it was virtually impossible for them to achieve the same ranking and reputation as the subject from which they were originated in the academic world (Boria and Risso, 2007). The fact, then, that the methodology used in teaching modern foreign languages was, for long years, the same that had been used in providing classic language instruction reinforced the idea that rather than being and end in itself, language instruction was a means to an end. For centuries, Greek and Latin had been studied in order to gain access to the great classics of literature and the means and purposes of pedagogics in classics were simply transferred to the educational practices employed to study modern foreign languages. Although the debate whether language instruction should be considered a means or an end has been a long-lasting one in Great Britain (Towell, 2000) the view that studying a foreign language should be connected to some sort of practical aspect for the student has never really died out in the UK. This 'utilitarian trend' has played a role in reducing the interest in the study of languages – such as Italian – whose study was not immediately instrumental for gaining access to fields such as those of business or trade (E.R. Vincent quoted in Boria and Risso, 2007: xvii). It is, therefore, not surprising that Italian as a university subject was developed and systematised relatively late,

and that its fortunes as a subject of study were linked to the historical and political vicissitudes of Italy.

Unsurprisingly, it was in the 1500s – following the cultural and political developments of the Italian Renaissance – that Italian came to be considered an essential aspect in the instruction of any well-educated person in England. Therefore, many wealthy British families hired Italian intellectuals as tutors for the education of their younger members, following the example set up by the Royal Family, who, in the late 1500s, appointed Giovanni Florio as tutor of Italian at the court of Queen Anne (Boria and Risso, 2007: xiv). Florio was an Italian Protestant, who had to flee from Italy because of persecutions following the Counter Reformation. In spite of the fact that the Renaissance failed to lead to the formation of an Italian nation state, Italian tutors did not disappear completely in the following centuries when, however, Italian was challenged by other foreign languages (in particular French) as an essential subject to complement the education of the wealthy. What saved Italian was on the one hand the fact that Italy remained an unmissable destination in the Grand Tour from the 18th century onwards, which had established itself as a custom for the young people of aristocratic British families. The success of opera was another key factor. In this respect, the literary activity of Paolo Rolli was particularly influential (Ibid.: xv). Rolli was appointed tutor to the Royal Family in the early 1700s and wrote numerous librettos for the Royal Academy of Music, thus effectively contributing to a revival of cultural relations between Italy and Great Britain. In the same century, another Italian

man of letters and a linguist, Giuseppe Baretti, who also became a member of the Royal Academy, published a famous dictionary in 1760, which was used well into the 20th century (King, 1925: 53). The 18th century was also the period when the first attempt at introducing the study of modern languages into the higher education system was made in Britain. In 1725, in fact, the Government funded 3-year experimental courses in Modern History and Modern Languages (including Italian) at Oxford and Cambridge. The aim was that of training skilled diplomats and civil servants who could serve the state at a time when political developments had put Britain in competition with France for the control of southern European regions, such as Italy and Spain (Firth, 1929: 2-3). However, this project did not give rise to full degree courses in modern languages. Some foreign language instruction was offered at university level, but mainly as a complement to major subject or as an extra-curricular subject (Boria and Risso, 2007: xv).

It was only in the 19th century, when the *Risorgimento* which eventually led to the constitution of the Kingdom of Italy, that Italian started again to elbow its way within the academic world. When the first revolutionary struggles in Italy failed, several intellectuals who had played a part in them were obliged to seek refuge abroad. This led a few Italian expatriates to Britain, some of whom became involved in scholarship and academic teaching. In 1828 Antonio Panizzi became the first professor of Italian in Britain at the newly established University of London. This post came at a time when the Italian revival, which had reached its peak in Britain in the early years of the

Restoration, was already declining, so Panizzi, who was very keen to promote Italian language and culture in Britain. However, he did not have the chance to promote Italian as much as he wanted, and finally left the university and took up a job as a librarian at the British Museum (Dionisotti, 2002). Nevertheless, something was moving in the field of modern languages in general and in that of Italian in particular. In 1856, another Italian patriot who, like Panizzi had fled from Italy, Aurelio Saffi, became a teacher of Italian at Oxford University.

 As a whole, the 19th century was a time of positive development of higher education in Britain, with many colleges obtaining the status of universities. This led to the first structured degree courses in modern languages: the first university in Britain to set up a degree course in modern languages, in 1884, was the University of Cambridge (where the teaching of Italian started in 1909), followed, in 1903, by the University of Oxford (Limentani, 2000: 172). However, within the higher education curriculum, modern languages were still perceived to be lower-rank subjects and had a reputation of being mainly subjects for women students (Howatt and Smith, 2002: x-xiii).

In spite of the difficulties involved in developing the teaching of Italian at higher education level, the Italian revolutionary ideas that circulated during the *Risorgimento* attracted the interest of many British politicians and intellectuals and marked a new interest in Italian culture in Victorian Britain. In particular, the popularity of Italian opera music spread the knowledge of

and appreciation for Italian language and culture, so that these became "not just the preserve of the few aristocrats who could afford the Grand Tour" (McLaughlin, 2000: 5). This new climate favoured also the institutionalisation of Italian Studies through university education.

At the beginning of the next century, a new impulse for the spread of the teaching of Italian at university level came from a private sponsor, Arthur Serena, a shipbroker of Italian descent, who, in 1918, funded a number of new chairs of Italian in four universities, such as Oxford, Cambridge, Birmingham and Manchester. Serena's contribution aimed at promoting a wider knowledge and understanding of modern Italy in Britain (Limentani, 2000: 157). This move helped Italian Studies to achieve wider visibility and a higher reputation within the British academic world and stimulated scholarship. In 1937 the first ever British journal dedicated to research in Italian language and culture – *Italian Studies* – saw the light and in 1938 the Society for Italian Studies was founded.

The second half of the 20th century witnessed a relatively rapid development of Italian Studies as a higher education subject. The number of degree courses offering Italian multiplied in Britain. Italian Studies as an area of academic activity achieved remarkable research success despite the fact that relatively few students were recruited into it. This trend was highlighted by Nigel Vincent (a leading scholar in the field and a historical linguist) in his

contribution to an international conference in Italian Studies, at Cambridge, in 1953 (Vincent quoted by Boria and Risso, 2007: xvii).

The increase in the number of degree courses in Italian was steady until the end of the 1970s. In the 1980s, Mrs Thatcher's government introduced a rationalisation plan which reduced the number of higher education institutions offering degree courses where Italian could be studied. In the 1990s, however, Italian benefited both from the upgrading to university status of many former Polytechnics and a new funding system which favoured minority languages. Further support came from the education policies implemented by both conservative and labour governments from the 1990s onwards which aimed at increasing the number of university students in general.

In the last ten years or so, however, following the recent decline in secondary school language learning provision, there has been a drop in the number of degree courses in Italian offered nationwide. A recent Research Review in Modern Languages led by the LLAS Subject Centre, University of Southampton (Kelly et al., 2006), in partnership with the University Council of Modern Languages shows that between 2000 and 2007 the number of degree courses in Italian listed by UCAS passed from 66 to 37, a reduction of 44%. Data published last year by the Society for Italian Studies (2010) gave evidence of 41 different higher education institutions in the UK offering degree courses where Italian could be studied to some extent. Most of these are pre-1992 universities. Only 7 of them are ex-polytechnics, while one is a

new university which was founded in 2005. There are only 9 fully-fledged Departments of Italian in the UK. The bulk of the provision of courses in Italian at higher education level is supplied by Italian sections which are part of wider Departments or Schools of Modern Languages. The present situation as regards research in modern languages in the UK indicates that in spite of a decline in the overall number of degree courses the number of active researchers has remained unchanged and that the quality of the research produced is excellent. On the other hand, there are worries for the future. As the number of undergraduates choosing to study languages keeps decreasing, in the future there may well be a reduction in the number of researchers as well.

2.5 Global spread of Italian teaching but decline in Britain

This section refers to an apparent paradox in the international spread of Italian as a second language (L2). The findings of *Italiano 2000* reported a very positive trend in the spread of Italian all over the world, including Britain. However, this seems to clash with the presentation of an overall critical situation for the present and future of modern foreign languages in Britain. This paradox, as I am going to explain, is more apparent than substantial. However, it provided me with the starting point for my study and led me to frame it as one in which the teaching of Italian is viewed as a socio-cultural activity, embedded in different social and historical contexts.

2.5.1 The international success of Italian L2

In February 2002, I was conducting my fieldwork at one of the two Universities in which this study is based. It was early in the morning and I was waiting for one of the tutors, to follow her to a class that I was going to video-record. I was sitting in front of the 'Italian main board', in a corridor of the department, when a photocopy of an Italian newspaper article put up on the board caught my eye. It was an article by Edoardo Sassi which had appeared in *Il Corriere della Sera* on 22nd of February 2002 (Sassi, E. (22.02.2002) '*Sempre più stranieri studiano l'italiano*'). 'More and more foreigners study Italian', the title claimed. Taking a closer look I found out that it reported on the newly completed study, *Italiano 2000*, mentioned above (De Mauro et al., 2001). According to this study, the article claimed, there had been an increase of 40 percent worldwide in the number of students of Italian L2 between 1995 and 2000, and Italian was, by now, the fourth most studied language in the world.

This news surprised me greatly. Having spent two years in the UK teaching Italian at university, I had developed quite a different perspective: that of Italian being a language which was struggling to keep its position within foreign language departments in universities throughout Britain, where, on the whole, Italian sections were on the decline, with a number of them under threat of being closed. As I saw it at the time, Italian was a language which

was certainly suffering more than others from a generally negative trend, in this country, in the study of foreign languages.

The newspaper article by Edoardo Sassi explained that these booming figures in students of Italian were the result of a new way of looking at Italy and its language on the part of foreigners, and of the emergence of a new set of motivations for embarking on the study of the language. Until the 1970s, foreign students' main motivations for approaching the Italian language was an interest in the aspects of high culture associated with Italy. In other words, courses of Italian L2 mainly catered for students who were in the first place students of art history, music and literature with a particular interest, for example in Humanism and the Renaissance, the heritage of the Italian musical tradition, or the great poets and 'the fathers' of the language, Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio.

However, according to the results of the study presented in Sassi's article, new motivations for the studying of Italian were emerging and were beginning to challenge the leading position traditionally occupied by high culture: While 32.8% of interviewees were still indicating that 'Italian culture' was their main source of interest with regards to the study of Italian, among the new motivations, 'work' scored an impressive 22.4% and was second only to 'personal reasons' (25.8%), like, for example, having an Italian partner. These figures intrigued me and led me to the original study, *Italiano 2000*, by De Mauro and colleagues (De Mauro et al., 2001). According to these authors,

their findings appear to reflect Italy's changing position within the world system. Contacts with people from different countries have become easier and faster with the increase in travel worldwide and with the increasingly global reach of communication technology. And, last but not least, the economic development of Italy and its position on the international market has created a need for increasing numbers of people to know some Italian, to work either with or within Italian companies.

De Mauro and colleagues (2001) recorded a significant increase in the number of students in all continents with the exception of Africa. Particularly striking were the figures referred to for Asia and Latin America, where the number of students had grown by between 40% and 100%, between 1995 and 2000, but elsewhere too a trend upwards was confirmed. They also documented a general tendency for fewer students of Italian descent to choose to study Italian, as compared with the past (Ibid.).

So, there was a considerable discrepancy between this reported data and my own perception the status of Italian L2, built on my personal experience as a teacher of Italian in Britain. I therefore turn now to the specific realities of the British context and to the reverse trend in the fortunes of Italian teaching and the teaching of modern foreign languages in general.

2.5.2 The decline of Italian L2 in Britain

The main context for my study is a British one and it presents very different evidence from the positive trends documented in *Italiano 2000*. In this country the falling number of students of Italian at university level is in line with a downward trend in the study of foreign languages in general. This trend is reported in a review, commissioned by the Nuffield Foundation, on the state of health of languages in the British education system: this is Kelly and Jones' *A New Landscape for Languages* (2003).

In their review, Kelly and Jones draw attention to two main trends in modern foreign language education in Britain in the twenty first century. They say: "on the one hand, more students than ever are adding language skills to their portfolio, while on the other hand fewer students are choosing to specialise in languages" (Kelly and Jones 2003: 2). This fact has led, in Britain, to a decline of the traditional providers of language education. Alternative forms of provision, such as short courses are emerging. This trend seems to be developing at a rapid pace, although as yet, we have no systematic studies to turn to. The evidence provided by Kelly and Jones (2003) was not based on research, but rather on consultation. Theirs was a policy review rather than a research report.

Certainly, the fact that the British government has recently made the study of a language no longer compulsory for pupils over the age of 14, has been a

blow for modern foreign language learning and teaching in this country, including Italian. Although the provision for Italian as a curricular subject has traditionally been extremely low in British schools (Powell, 1989), at university level, many students with an A-level in another language – more commonly in French – used to be attracted to studying Italian, within the framework of a joint honours degree in modern languages. According to Kelly and Jones, 'the demand for A level languages has been declining steadily from the high point it reached ten years ago' and French, though remaining the most popular option is reported to have dropped by a third in the last five years (Kelly and Jones, 2003) Such decline in the popularity of language at A-levels is, now therefore, likely to have an impact on the number of students choosing to study Italian at higher level. The fact that the number of candidates who sit A-level examinations in Italian has remained more or less stable, over the last five years (Ibid.), in fact, may be considered as comforting news. However, although stable, the numbers of secondary school pupils specialising in Italian remain very low, and Italian sections in British university departments have to rely on recruiting a majority of *ab initio* students in this subject.

Between 1997 and 2001, the number of admissions to degrees in modern languages in the UK has decreased by around one quarter. Kelly and Jones (2003) emphasise that this trend has to be set against the overall rise in student numbers in the same period and they draw the following conclusions. They say that: "the number of students entering higher education has risen by 9

percent overall. Language degrees have lost nearly a third of their market share" (Ibid.: 11). Needless to say, the languages that have traditionally been less widely studied, like Italian, are the ones that run the highest risk of disappearing altogether from modern language departments, as the collapse in student intakes obliges British universities to use resources in an economically more rational way. There has already been an overall reduction in the number of departments providing language degrees and a decline in the range of languages these departments offer. Less widely studied languages are losing out in this process, and, as Kelly and Jones (2003) point out, Italian, as one of them, is now 'restricted to a narrower range of universities' (Ibid.: 24).

Within this rather negative scenario, there are more positive trends emerging. Kelly and Jones (2003) note the increasing interest among students in combining language study with the study of another subject. They say that: 'there has apparently been buoyant demand for language study as an optional or subsidiary addition to studies in other disciplines' (Ibid.: 12). The study of languages is now commonly combined with a variety of other subjects, from business to law and politics. This suggests that there has been a sea change in Britain in the way languages are viewed by the general public. As Kelly and Jones put it, the study of a foreign language has increasingly come to be considered as a form of added value within a person's education, "rather than seen as an academically valued subject in its own right" (Ibid.: 22). This seems to explain not only the trend represented by new degree schemes in combination with a modern foreign language, but also the success of language

AS-level examinations, at the expense of traditional A-levels. The knowledge of languages, in comparison to the study of other subjects, is increasingly seen by the British as an 'extra' or, as Kelly and Jones put it, as a "luxury item" (Ibid.: 23). As the status of English has been increasingly enhanced as a language of global reach (Pennycook, 1994) the status of other European languages has declined in Britain.

One observation made by Kelly and Jones (2003), in the review they completed as part of the Nuffield Enquiry, is pertinent to the present study, so I will include it here. Kelly and Jones had the following to say about what they see as a 'growing elitism' in language learning.

"The figures [of the percentage of students achieving each grade in language A-level examinations, between 1988 and 2001] would suggest that there has been a growing elitism in languages. It is likely to be in part an academic elitism, which encourages the more able students to tackle A level languages, and provides them with better and more focused teaching. It may well be compounded by an element of educational elitism in which languages are more concentrated in academically more successful schools. The greater emphasis on languages in the independent sector is well known, and it may be that language specialist schools are having some impact on A level results, though their numbers are relatively small' (Ibid.: 22).

So, increasingly, a different kind of British student is now being oriented towards language study, and, at the same time, modern foreign language learning is being constructed as a social and cultural practice most suitable for the elite, for those who are able to travel or work beyond Britain on graduating from University. The risk for Italian, then, is that it may become considered as an elitist language within an elitist disciplinary group. This could make its position even more marginal than it already is, within the languages studied in Britain.

One final point from the Nuffield report on languages also merits attention here and that is the point about the increasing differentiation in the provision of languages. As fewer pupils take a language at school leaving level and as greater numbers of students take languages as supplementary subjects, there may be more opportunities for the study of minority community languages and less widely studied languages (Ibid.: 36). Of course, as mentioned earlier, Italian has, over the years, had two different statuses within the language curriculum in Britain. On the one hand, it has been one of the less widely studied modern foreign languages; and, on the other hand, it has been taught in mainstream schools and in local community centres as a minority community language, to the descendants of Italian migrant workers (Tosi, 1984; Cervi, 1991). This new trend towards students taking languages as supplementary subjects could open up new opportunities for students for whom Italian is a heritage language, but this, again, begs the question of the curriculum content: what images of Italy and what linguistic content would be appropriate in materials aimed at this group?

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, until relatively recent years, the efforts made by the Italian government to spread the standard language and 'high culture' of the country outside Italy were mainly conceived of as being in support of the maintenance of a particular linguistic and cultural heritage within the communities of emigrants. The classes that were organised, in local community contexts or in local schools, tended to represent Italian as the

'minority language' of a marginalised social group. Powell (1989) draws attention to this problem in his account of Italian teaching in the late 1980s in Britain. When discussing the provision of *corsi integrativi*, supplementary courses provided in British schools for children of Italian descent, he states that these courses rooted in parents and pupils the idea that Italian was only a minority language. Pupils were thus discouraged from taking further forward the study of the language as a realistic alternative to that of French or German (Powell, 1989). Powell (1989) also laments the limited attention given to Italian in the modern foreign language curriculum, despite the fact that Italian was much more widely spoken in Britain than French or German and that many more British people had family ties with Italy than with France or Germany.

2.6   *Conclusion*

In this chapter, I began by tracing the historical links between the political and ideological processes involved in the construction of the Italian nation and the development of standard Italian, along with other aspects of Italy's cultural, archaeological and literary heritage as emblems of the nation. I also showed how new images of Italy and Italian-ness were created in the second half of the twentieth century, during the period of reconstruction after the devastation of World War II, and how new motivations for the learning of Italian as a modern foreign language began to emerge, especially in the last two decades of the century.

At the same time, I stressed the fact that Italy has long been a country of emigration and that emigration was at its height in the immediate post-war years. Few of the migrants who left the war-torn regions of Southern Italy during this period had had access to standard Italian, especially in its written form. As a consequence of this, the main focus of Italian education and cultural policy abroad was on the teaching of standard Italian to emigrants and to their children. The nature and content of teaching materials reflected this particular mission.

However, a major turning point came, towards the end of the 1980s, when Italian education and cultural policy began to shift towards provision of more support for the teaching of Italian as a modern foreign language and when attention began to turn towards those for whom Italian had instrumental value (e.g. for work or travel). The teaching of Italian as a language of cultural heritage continued, but it was no longer seen as the main purpose of Italian teaching 'abroad'.

In the third section of the chapter, I provided a brief historical overview of the development of different institutions and categories of staff for the teaching of Italian outside Italy. Some of this section drew on the findings of a major survey of Italian teaching outside Italy, *Italiano 2000*, carried out by De Mauro et al. (2001). This survey provides evidence of the remarkable growth of interest in the learning of Italian in different parts of the world, especially in Asia and South America.

In the fourth section I considered the history of Italian Studies as a distinct area of research and teaching at university level in the UK.

In the fifth section, I then contrasted this rather positive, general trend towards greater interest in the learning of Italian, with the situation in Britain, where this present study was carried out. I noted the downward turn in the study of modern foreign languages in the British context, explaining this with reference to the continued rise of English as a language of global communication. Then, drawing on the recent Nuffield Enquiry into the state of language teaching in Britain (Kelly and Jones, 2003), I provided an overview of some of the issues arising from the current trends, focusing in particular on issues relevant to the teaching and learning of Italian at university level in Britain.

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[i] The *Lega Nord* (or *Northern League*) was born as a new political party in 1991 as the result of the fusion of several regional *leagues* within northern Italy. What all these local political movements had in common was a rejection of the highly centralized system of governance in Italy, which they saw as a constraint on the economic progress and the well being of Italian northern regions. They claimed that only a fraction of higher and higher taxes paid to the State by northern citizens were used for the benefit of northern Italy, the economic engine of the country, while most of this money was squandered by the inefficient administration of southern regions, which received substantial contributions from the government in Rome to boost their development. In 1992, the first general election in which the party participated, the *Lega Nord* obtained a surprising success (3 million votes) and 81 party candidates became members of Parliament.

The social and political situation in Italy at the beginning of the 1990s undoubtedly favoured the striking success of the *Lega Nord*. Italians, and Northerners in particular, were worried about the potential for political instability,

and economic destabilisation. The parties which had ruled Italy since the beginning of the Republican Era were increasingly showing a weakness and inability to deal with the power they still had. This was the prelude to their end. This was brought about by the Milan judges' investigations that started just a year later, leading to the *Tangentopoli* scandal and resulting in the end of the First Republic. These investigations unmasked a widespread network of bribery and corruption which ruled the Italian political system and exploded like a bomb in the very hands of its perpetrators, the major political parties and politicians on the Italian scene.

The *Lega* took advantage of this situation. Being a new formation it had not been involved in its *dirty* politics of the previous decades and could present itself to the electorate as a clean force in favour of a radical change of the system. Its leader, Umberto Bossi, spoke a language altogether different from the rhetorical and abstruse one used by the politicians of the First Republic. He knew what keys to strike, and did it in an effective way, making sure that everyone could understand him clearly, using simple, sometimes aggressive words and painting himself as the champion of a battered North.

In 1994, in the first general elections of the Second Republic, the *Northern League* joined the centre-right coalition headed by Silvio Berlusconi and his new party, Forza Italia. The coalition won the elections and the *Lega Nord* entered the Government for the first time. After a centre-left Government between 1996 and 2001, the centre-right coalition has now returned to the Government and the *Lega* is represented in it with 3 Ministers.

[ii] Garibaldi and his thousand Redshirts, who managed to conquer southern Italy, which was at the time a Spanish dominion, under the Bourbon Kings.

[iii] The idea of an Italian state that seemed to be most likely to be achieved at this point was that of a federation of Italian monarchies, presided over either by the Pope or by the King of Piedmont and Sardinia. The Kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia was the only one where, after the revolutions of 1948-49, the constitution had not been revoked and therefore stood out as a champion of democracy in the eyes of the patriots. The idea of a centralised state was put forward by Giuseppe Mazzini, perhaps the most important ideologist in the Italian Risorgimento, but in his view Italy had to be a Republic from the outset and not a monarchy as it was from 1861 to 1946 (Doumanis 2001: 57-63).

[iv]There are a number of literary examples that show how difficult it was for new Italians in every corner of the peninsula to accept and even understand the implication of their new status as citizens of the Kingdom of Italy.

Speaking of the problem of the South belonging to the rest of Italy soon after the unification, in Tomasi di Lampedusa's novel *Il Gattopardo* (*The Leopard*) there are some memorable pages. Take for example the encounter between the Sicilian prince, Don Fabrizio, and a Piedmontese official, which happens in the central chapter of the novel. The Piedmontese official had been sent to Sicily from Piedmont. While the official is waiting to be picked up not far from the prince's villa, he feels anxious and worried because of all the stories about the brigands that he had heard while at home. Moe (2002) provides a vivid account of the thoutghts running through the mind of this Piedmontese official. 'He is momentarily reassured by the words *Corso Vittorio Emanuele* [a street named after the Piedmontese king of Italy] painted in blue letters on the side of a house before him. But this sign of his king's authority on the island is ultimately "not enough to convince him that he is in a place which is, after all, part of his own nation"' (Moe, 2002:1)

Alessandro Manzoni's experience, provides an example from a northerner's viewpoint of the difficulty to adapt to the new cultural order. Manzoni was one of the protagonists in the debate on the *questione della lingua* in the 19th century. A strong supporter of spoken Florentine as a model for Italian as a national language, Milanese Manzoni wrote and re-wrote several times his masterpiece, the novel *I Promessi Sposi* (*The Bethrothed*) and spent some time in Florence in order to 'rinse his clothes in the river Arno', as he put it. The difficulty of adapting the language to the model he had in mind for a national one is attested by the fact that his novel went through several drafts. He edited out the French influences typical of the Lombard variety of Italian he used to speak.

[v] There are several historical essays on this topic (e.g. in Dickie, J (1999) *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes in the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900* New York: St Martin's Press). There are also some narrative accounts which provide a useful way to understand both the phenomenon of brigandage and the *Southern Question* from the point of view of disappointed southern patriots. See for example M. R. Cantafulli's *La Briganta;* A. Banti's *Noi Credevamo* and F. Jovine's *Signora Ava.*

[vi] Holmes in his *Oxford Illustrated History of Italy* refers to the linguistic impact of WWI on united Italy and to the difficulties of communicating effectively within the ranks of the army (Holmes 1997). During WWI, for the

first time in the history of the Italian masses, Italians at the front, side by side in the trenches, needed to communicate effectively in a common code. This aspect can be seen also in a famous film by Monicelli, *La Grande Guerra* ('The Great War') (1959).

[vii] Giolitti was the Prime Minister from the beginning of the twentieth century until the outbreak of WW1. This period of Italian history is often referred to as the 'Giolitti Era'. Giolitti resigned when the Italian participation in the war was secretly decided by the Minister of War and the King. This was made possible by a royal prerogative to conclude treaties without parliamentary interference.

[viii] D'Annunzio rejected the arrangements made at the Conference of Versailles. Together with a group of Nationalists he occupied the Italian speaking Istrian city of Fiume (Rijeka) until Istria was actually annexed to Italy, in a dramatic reversal of the decisions made at the peace conference at the end of WWI.

[ix] Soon after WWI groups of Fascist thugs plundered the Po Plain, in northern Italy, disseminating terror and death among socialist organisations, which were trying to improve the living and work conditions of the rural workers in that area.

[x] De Mauro, T. et al. (2001) *Italiano 2000: Indagine sulle motivazioni e sui pubblici dell'italiano diffuso fra stranieri* (*Italian 2000: a survey on the motivations and the audiences of Italian as a foreign language*) Roma, Siena. This report was based on research commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the end of the 1990s and based at the University of Rome (La Sapienza) and the University for Foreigners in Siena. The research was led by Prof. Tullio De Mauro from the University of Rome 'La Sapienza'. The other members of the team were Prof. Massimo Vedovelli, Dr. Monica Barni and Dr. Lorenzo Miraglia from the University for Foreigners of Siena.

[xi] The term *spendibilità sociale dell'Italiano* ('social spending power of Italian) has been introduced into the analysis of Italian L2 only in the 1990s (De Mauro et al. 2001: 17). I do not feel I have the authority to propose an English translation of the term. Therefore I will continue to use it in Italian throughout this chapter. The translation I give in brackets, here, is only an attempt to give a form in English to a complex concept that needs to be explained even to Italian readers.

[xii] The Italian Language in the World: A survey on the motivations for studying Italian.

[xiii] Baldelli, I. (ed.) (1987) *La lingua italiana nel mondo: Indagine sulle motivazioni allo studio dell'italiano* (*The Italian Language in the World: A survey of the motivations for studying Italian*) Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana.

[xiv] The literal translation '*foreign schools*' does not do justice to the Italian term as it is used in the book quoted at the end of the sentence, due to the awkwardness of the connotation that the term 'foreign' has in English in this context. For this reason I left the term in Italian.

[xv] Examinations ascertain the candidates' knowledge in one or more of four languages, English, French, German and Spanish. The world is divided into linguistic areas. Some countries, where none of the four languages tested in the examination is spoken as national language, belong to so-called linguistically 'mixed areas'. The Ministry has arbitrarily decided that proficiency in either of two or three of the languages tested qualifies a candidate to work in those countries. For example, candidates who can speak and write either English, French or German are eligible for a post in most of the ex-Soviet Union countries; to teach in Brazil, competence in either Spanish or English is required, and so forth.

CHAPTER 3

Language and culture in modern foreign language teaching and learning

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the research literature on language and culture in the foreign language classroom. In section 3.2 I consider the theme of the construction of culture in and through language. In section 3.3 I look at different views of culture within modern foreign language curricula. Section 3.4 deals with essentialist conceptualisations of culture, such as stereotypes and cultural models. The focus of section 3.5 is on how cultural worlds are constructed within a language classroom and on the notion of 'culture as a verb'. Finally, in section 3.6 I examine, compare and contrast the meanings of three terms that can be easily confused: 'cross-cultural', 'intercultural' and 'multicultural'.

3.2 The construction of culture in and through language

Kramsch (1993: 3) discusses what she calls 'dubious dichotomies', such as separating the teaching/learning of language and culture, and the 'skill versus content' dichotomy. Although, in principle, the teaching/learning of language

and the teaching/learning of culture should coincide, in practice, they are often dealt with as two quite different things, whereby the educational process concerned with language is seen as teaching/learning a skill, while the one concerned with culture is seen as teaching/learning contents. This fact is echoed by the administrative organisation of courses where modern foreign languages are taught. At the academic level, for instance, language modules and 'cultural' modules are kept apart, and normally taught, by different staff. Moreover, 'content' modules are often taught by more senior and experienced lecturers and language modules are normally entrusted to younger staff. This shows that there is also a question of status attached to the teaching of one or the other kind of modules and that teaching 'culture' is generally considered to be more prestigious than teaching 'just' language.

In fact, the separation between cultural content (culture) and the form in which it is conveyed (language) is totally arbitrary and artificial. Indeed, language use is inseparable from the creation and the transmission of culture, because the very form in which culture is communicated defines and constructs what is being communicated.

Kramsch (1993) and other applied linguists – e.g. Roberts et al. (2000) and Pennycook (2001) – working from a critical postmodernist perspective have also critiqued the view of culture as a fixed, monolithic entity characterising the society that speaks a given language. This view underpins the crystallisation of culture into what is usually referred to as a society's 'high

culture'. It is these images of culture that are internationally projected by the political institutions and national 'cultural' agencies representing a given society.

Talking specifically about Italy, in chapter 2, I showed that there is no such thing as an unequivocal Italian cultural identity, as with any other nation, but particularly in the case of Italy, since the Italian nation-state was a relatively late creation within the European context. The culture of a society – local, regional or national – is continually re-defined and re-elaborated in the dialogue going on between the various voices that speak within it. The need for symbols of national unity, which was felt by the successive Italian Governments throughout the nation-building process, as emblems to justify the coming together of people with very different backgrounds and even languages, is still a present reality in today's Italy, as the words of President Ciampi's speech to the nation on new year's eve 2005 testify. Approaching the end of his mandate, the President stressed how in the previous five and a half years he had striven to promote symbols such as the Italian flag or the Italian national anthem as emblems of identity of all Italians, both the ones living in Italy and the many making up the communities in different countries all over the world. Furthermore, the century-long tradition in governmental policies to sustain the maintenance of the knowledge of standard Italian among Italian nationals abroad and, later on, its spread among non-Italians – that I reported on in chapter 2 – underscores the importance attributed to the

language in the creation of cultural identity and cultural belonging, in the perception of Italian institutions.

De Mauro et al. (2001: 12) give a useful definition of language as culture, which can perhaps be used as a starting point to build a continuum of cultural dimensions, all contributing to the idea of culture, as well as to bridge the dichotomy between language and culture which I referred to in the introduction to this chapter.

Language is culture in the sense that it produces forms of identity in which individuals and groups recognise themselves. Such [identity] forms take on different characters, according to the social histories of the different communities: literary manifestations are opposed to common uses of the language only thanks to the interplay of the relationships between social groups, who have been attributed, as a consequence, values (such as prestige, cultural status, social status, etc.) that differ from one group to the other. Moreover, nobody questions the autonomy that each semiotic code has in the creation of its own identity, in its own processes for the creation of sense; similarly no one questions the existence of links between the various codes, so that it is not possible to conceive of the semiotic universe as simply made up by the juxtaposition of these codes. (My translation).

De Mauro et al. refer to the multiplicity of meanings that have been attributed to the term 'culture' and show that cultural practices and cultural values are shaped in different ways in different social and historical contexts. They also note that such practices and values are not straightforward, for they also overlap and blend into each other. They are not merely juxtaposed. Diverse voices are heard in any social group, be it local, regional or national, and the definition of the culture of the social group unfolds over a considerable period of time. The process through which signs and symbols are used to define and re-define a 'culture' and a 'cultural identity' never stops, new dimensions are continually taken into this process of identification. The result is that 'culture' has ever-changing, situated meanings.

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3.3 Culture in the MFL class: From a humanistic to an anthropological view.

Within modern foreign language curricula, as indicated in the previous section, traditionally, 'culture' was identified with 'high culture' – i.e. with the literary, artistic and scientific knowledge associated with a 'people' (the entire population of a nation) – or, at most, with 'civilisation'- i.e. the uses, the customs, the traditions and the socio-political institutions associated with the people of a particular nation. Even within the traditional representation of a culture in modern foreign language classes, it is possible to distinguish a narrow and a broader view of 'culture': with the narrow view being only that of 'high culture' and the broader view being that of 'civilisation'. However, even the broader view of culture, including the teaching of civilisation, has come to be viewed as inadequate in the teaching of modern foreign languages.

Working within the tradition of translation studies, House (2002: 93) distinguishes between two different conceptualisations of culture that are apparent across disciplines: the 'humanistic' and the 'anthropological'. The first conceptualisation by and large corresponds with what I have referred to as 'high culture' and represents culture in terms of a well-defined collection of masterpieces which constitute the 'cultural heritage' of a region or nation, as manifested in the visual and performance arts. House distinguishes between these different views of culture as follows:

> Two basic views of culture have emerged: the humanistic concept of culture and the anthropological concept of culture. The humanistic concept of culture captures the 'cultural heritage' as a model of refinement, an exclusive collection of a community's

masterpieces in literature, fine arts, music etc. The anthropological concept of culture refers to the overall way of life of a community or society, i.e. all those traditional, explicit and implicit designs for living which act as potential guides for the behaviour of members of the culture. Culture, in the biological inheritance, involves presuppositions, preferences and values – all of which are, of course, neither easily accessible nor verifiable.

As we see in the quotation above, House' anthropological concept of culture includes "behaviour", "habits", as well as "presuppositions, beliefs, perceptions and values". The term 'context of culture', originally introduced by Malinowski (1922) a British anthropologist, has been taken up in the field of sociolinguistics and is still widely used. House's second definition echoes this and other foundational concepts in sociolinguistics. For example, Fowler explains culture as 'the community's store of established knowledge' (Fowler, 1986: 19). More recently, Kramsch (1993) wrote about the context of culture as the backdrop of institutional and ideological knowledge, mutually shared by speakers in speaking events, and by writers and readers in the production of texts which 'allow people to make sense of the world around them' (Kramsch 1993: 42).

Hymes (1972) also foregrounded cultural knowledge in developing the concept of communicative competence. For Hymes, communicative competence included not only mastery of language form, but also the 'tacit knowledge' of people socialized into a particular cultural tradition have about 'appropriate' ways of speaking, reading, or writing in different cultural contexts. With reference to spoken language, the different facets of 'communicative competence' were characterized by Hymes (1972) through the much cited mnemonic: SPEAKING. This stood for:

S – Settings

P – Participants

E – Ends

A – Act sequence

K – Key

I – Instrumentalities

N – Norms

G – Genres.

However, the anthropological breadth of Hymes' concept of communicative competence has not always been fully understood by language educators who have developed communicative approaches to language teaching and learning.

Roberts et al (2000: 9) draw attention to this in a recent review of approaches in language teaching and learning. They argue that the communicative method tends to take on a socio-linguistic rather than a socio-cultural perspective. It tends to concentrate on variation in linguistic behaviour, without taking due consideration of the cultural knowledge and practices which underlie the significance of this behaviour. This means that whatever the aspect of learning students may be engaged with in the modern foreign language classroom (be it grammatical rules, political institutions, or the literature of the foreign language they are studying) they will have very limited opportunities to relate what they are doing with the cultural practices and values with which they are already familiar or with the modes of thinking, feeling, interacting and evaluating they normally adopt in everyday life, when they use their L1,

within their habitual social contexts. These authors argue that considering language as a socio-cultural practice has fundamentally changed discourses about language teaching/learning. At the same time critical cultural awareness has become indispensable for students wishing to achieve linguistic competence.

3.4 Stereotypes and cultural models

As we saw in the previous section, there have, in recent years, been calls for new ways of thinking about culture in the MFL classroom: one that includes a full range of dimensions of cultural phenomena, i.e. not only 'high culture'; or the political and institutional worlds in a given society, but also popular culture – such as pop music, the media, sports, etc. – social life and social issues – such as gender, class, religion, ethnicity, etc. – and everyday cultural practices in local lifeworlds – shopping, cooking, eating, leisure activities, behaviours, etc. Language teaching/learning itself is also now viewed as a socio-cultural practice, in which teachers and students co-construct representations of culture, e.g. Italian 'culture', French 'culture' and so on.

What is more difficult to teach and learn in the language class is what Luk and Lin (2007: 34) call the 'ideological and mental view of culture that refers to how culture can be understood cognitively through investigating people's beliefs, values and reasoning systems'. And yet, it is only by including a comprehensive, complex view of culture in classroom practice that we may hope to 'capture how people understand and interpret the world or universe

around them with a shared but tacit set of assumptions' (reference to Garfinkel, 1967, in Luk and Lin, 2007: 34).

The risk involved in the adoption of an oversimplified conceptualisation of culture is that of falling prey to cultural stereotypes. O'Sullivan et al (1994: 299-300) define stereotyping as a process whereby 'diverse and complex ranges of phenomena' are simplified and organised 'into general labelled categories'. Luk and Lin refer to this as the 'essentialization of culture' (2007: 34). In the MFL class such simplified form of categorisation can orient students to an uncritical view of the target culture, one based on preconceived assumptions and ideas, prejudice and rigid, generalised judgements, and to simplistic approaches to interpreting the way other people live, act and interact. Such an approach to 'the other' would only make communication difficult. However, in many textbooks, stereotypes are used as a starting point for a critical discussion.

Gee (1996) proposes a similar conceptual construct to that of cultural stereotype, namely that of 'cultural models'. Gee (1996) defines cultural models as simplified representations of the world which leave out complexities. For example, complex world events or local events are sometimes made easier to grasp through relatively simple narratives. Sometimes, groups of people are represented as if they were homogeneous entities, ideas and activities are described as typical cases, including only what is central to them in the picture, while leaving out the aspects that are thought

to be marginal (Ibid.). Although cultural models, like stereotypes, are often evoked in student/teacher interactions, it is now generally agreed that the labelling of people and events through generalised categories should be avoided. For example, group membership is all too often assigned to individuals, in singular terms, although they may well participate in different social groups and social networks. As Luk and Lin (2007) note, these plural affiliations were already identified in sociolinguistic research such as that carried out in the 1980s, in Belfast, by Milroy (1980). Milroy noted that her respondents claimed membership of several social networks based on family, profession and religion. In more recent sociolinguistic research, and in other related social sciences, such multiple affiliations are captured in the plural notion of 'communities of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger 1998; Eckert, 2000; Barton and Tusting, 2005).

3.5 The construction of culture in the MFL classroom: Culture as a verb

As I indicated in section 3.2 above, culture is now viewed as being plural and situated in nature. It is also seen as being fluid and changing and, far from having a fixed essence, it is believed to be continually under construction in different contexts.

As Roberts et al (2000) put it, "culture is a verb", it is "'doing' rather than 'being'" (Street, 1993; Roberts et al, 2000: 54-55). It is this active and dynamic view of culture which Kramsch (1993: 1) has in mind, when she

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warns us that "culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing". Indeed she asserts that culture is "a potential source of conflict" which is ready to ambush good language students, who are competent speakers of an L2, but who may yet struggle to "make sense of the world around them" (Ibid.). A further angle on this conceptualization of culture is that offered by Ochs (1997) when she says: "members of society are agents not bearers of culture" (Ibid.: 416). The view of culture informing this thesis is also a dynamic one. It is seen as involving the negotiation of meanings in situated socio-cultural practices. Such negotiations could take place in any social context, but here I am concerned with the language classroom.

3.6 The MFL class: Cross-cultural, intercultural or multicultural?

The terms 'cross-cultural', 'intercultural' and 'multicultural' are also relevant to this study. They are also widely used in the literature on second and foreign language education. So, in this section, I will consider some of the ways in which they have been used.

3.6.1 The terms 'cross-cultural' and 'intercultural'

According to Kramsch (1998) the terms 'cross-cultural' and 'intercultural' are often used interchangeably to denote "the meeting of two cultures or two languages across the political boundaries of nation states" (Ibid.: 81). The

terms are applied to situations when people who define themselves as belonging to one specific national group are seeking knowledge and understanding of another national group, including knowledge about the language of the other. Applying the term 'cross-cultural' to modern foreign language teaching, Kramsch (1998) says: "In foreign language teaching a cross-cultural approach seeks ways to understand the Other on the other side of the border, by learning his/her national language" (Ibid.: 81).

Despite the one-nation-equals-one-language principle underpinning the original use of the terms, Kramsch (1998) notes that, when applied to foreign language teaching, the broad aim is to engage with difference.

Writing in the late 1990s Austin (1998) tried to formulate a distinction between the terms 'cross-cultural' and 'intercultural'. He suggested that the act of moving in and out of two bordering cultures should be referred to as 'cross-cultural', while the term 'intercultural' evoked conscious action towards the "achievement of understanding" (Luk and Lin, 2007: 35). This is a helpful and not widely cited distinction. It evokes the notion of negotiation and exchange of perspectives. Building on this aspect of the term, Roberts et al (2000) propose the term 'intercultural speaker', which is defined as: "intermediaries, mediating between potentially conflicting behaviour and belief systems in their own and others' social lives" (Ibid.: 29-31). This concept does not do away with difference, but faces it, takes responsibility for engaging with it and includes the intercultural speaker's own cultural

knowledge. Given that cultural difference is becoming a more and more salient aspect of contemporary social life, with globalisation and increased transnational population flows, this reflexive view of the language learner is highly relevant and it offers new directions for pedagogy. The terms 'cross-cultural' and 'intercultural communication' have been used with reference to the activity of language teaching and learning and they have also been used with reference to learners' lived experience of communicative encounters in social and cultural contexts that are not familiar to them.

3.6.2 The term 'multicultural'

The term 'multicultural' has also been used in the context of language education. Traditionally, it was used to refer to the demographic characteristics of school and university classrooms. And, of course, outside of education, it was also used to describe whole neighbourhoods, cities or countries. The term was first introduced in the late 1970s (Martin-Jones, 1989), during a period when a pluralist ethos was evident in many Western countries, such as the UK.

Some uses of the term 'multicultural' relied on a rather essentialised view of culture and of cultural traditions and practices, but in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the widespread use of the term served as the first major challenge to the one-nation-one- culture principle. Since then there has been a growing awareness that there is a multiplicity of cultures within any nation, any region,

any neighbourhood and, in any local school, university or classroom. Indeed, in the wake of globalisation, university classrooms have also become spaces where students and teachers with diverse cultural and national origins meet and work together.

Kramsch (1993) was one of the first researchers to draw attention to the diversity of intake to university language classes, and to the particular cultural and communicative challenges this poses. Holliday (1999) took this idea further, highlighting further dimensions of diversity, such as generational differences (teacher vs. students, or classes which include mature students). To account for these multi-faceted dimensions of difference, not just in educational settings or language classes, but in society more generally, he proposed the concept of "small cultures". A small culture paradigm attaches 'culture' to small social groupings or activities wherever there is cohesive behaviour. Such paradigm is in contrast with the notion of large cultures, a paradigm referring to prescribed ethnic, national and international entities. Resorting to small cultures as the location for ethnographic research and an interpreting device avoids culturist, ethnic, national or international stereotyping (Ibid.). For all the researchers I have cited above, culture is seen as being continually cast, recast, negotiated and renegotiated in local neighbourhoods and classrooms. The focus is on teaching and on language learning as a means of engaging with differences, whether it be across small or large 'cultures'.

3.7 *Conclusion*

Since this study is investigating talk about language and culture in the modern foreign language classroom, this chapter has been devoted to a genealogical account of the development of ideas about culture in the cognate fields of applied linguistics, translation studies, sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. In this final section of Chapter 3, I will briefly foreground the concepts and theories that have proved to be most useful for the project that I have undertaken.

Firstly, my study is underpinned by the critical, post-modernist approach put forward by Kramsch (1993) in her seminal work on culture in language education. Another important reference point for this study has been the work of Roberts et al. (2000), who characterised culture "as a verb" (2000: 54-55), drawing on similar post-structuralist and post-modern views of culture. It is this dynamic view of culture that guided my analysis of the talk in the university-level Italian classes involved in this project. Instead of approaching 'culture' as a fixed and unchanging essence, I started from the premise that I would find that ideas about Italian culture would be continually negotiated and renegotiated in and through the talk exchanged between teachers and students. This is why I adopted the terms "Doing Italian" in the title of this thesis: I wanted to emphasis the active and situated nature of the meaning-making around language and culture that goes on in university language classes.

The second point to foreground here is that I found House's (2002) distinction between 'humanistic' and 'anthropological' conceptualisations of culture particularly useful, since it enabled me to capture the contrasting ways in which the teachers in this study talked about Italian culture. As I proceeded with my analysis, I found that I needed to develop House's two-way distinction into a broad continuum. (Details are given in Chapter 10, section 10.2) . Nevertheless, her original distinction gave me a valuable starting point.

The third point I would like to foreground here, before moving on to the next chapter, relates to Kramsch's (1993) prescience in drawing attention to the increasingly diverse intake to university language classes. The increased global mobility of students, particularly through schemes like the Erasmus programme, has clearly altered the composition of university language classes. The classes in my study were no exception. So, engaging with difference and achieving intercultural understanding turned out to be a significant dimension of the communicative practices that I observed and recorded in the classrooms in this study. The notion of 'intercultural speaker' proposed by Roberts et al. (2000) and the definition of 'intercultural communication' offered by Austin (1998) proved to be particularly relevant at the data analysis stage, since, as I will show in Chapter 10 and again in the concluding chapter, there were moments in the classes I observed where the participants openly engaged with cultural difference.

CHAPTER 4

Discourse practices in the language classroom

4.1 Introduction

Classroom-based research on language has, in the last 30 years or so, prioritised the investigation of the role of talk and interaction in terms of its socialisation potential. As Cazden has put it, it has been seen as "the process of internalization through which human beings become members of particular cultures, learning how to speak as well as how to act and think and feel" (Cazden, 1999: 63). Such research stems from studies which were carried out in the 1970s and which have, since then, been enriched by new strands of social science, such as, conversation analysis (CA), interactional sociolinguistics, micro-ethnography and, more recently, linguistic ethnography. What these research fields have in common is that the focus of their investigation is talk-in-interaction: they consider meanings as being situated in the 'here and now' of discourse exchanges. Furthermore, as Martin-Jones, De Mejía and Hornberger have observed, "within this tradition of work the contexts for teaching and learning are not taken as given but as being constituted in and through everyday discourse practices and interactional routines and therefore continually open to change and negotiation" (Martin-Jones, De Mejía and Hornberger 2008: xiii).

4.2 The IRF/IRE models

The 'Initiation-Response-Evaluation/Feedback' model has been one of the most influential contributions within research on language and education. The main focus is on turn-taking in classroom conversations. The methodology involves close analysis of audio- and video-recorded material and transcripts of the interaction between numerous participants in classes. The main aim is to "uncover how the participants themselves undertake the analysis of ongoing talk and engage in the sense-making process in interaction" (Mori and Zuengler, 2008: 16). What classroom research has looked for in talk-in-interaction is the recurrence of structures or patterns which organise the participants' turns in spoken exchanges and the value of such structures to the participants as they mutually construct and continually interpret each turn in the talk-in-interaction.

The IRF model was proposed in its original form, as a three-part structure of classroom-based discourse, by Sinclair and Coulthard in 1975, here at the University of Birmingham. A similar model was also developed by several North-American scholars (McHoul, 1978 and Mehan, 1979, among others). In the North-American work a greater emphasis was placed on the role of the teacher in evaluating the learners' contributions, hence the wording of the model as 'Initiation-Response-Evaluation' (IRE). Thus, scholars working in different contexts agreed that the recurrent pattern in teacher/student interaction was one in which the teacher 'initiated' the exchange, the

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student(s) 'responded' to this initiation and expected a final 'evaluation' comment or 'feedback' from the teacher. This model has been acknowledged and taken on by researchers working within disparate theoretical frameworks and there is broad consensus that it is a regular sequence occurring in classroom talk.

The IRF/IRE models have been applied in studies of large secondary school classes or in large primary classes, for example in post-colonial contexts, where teachers exert considerable authority and where interaction is highly routinised due to class size. The model is less applicable to the study of interaction in university classes, particularly the seminar-style sessions which were the focus of this study. Moreover, studies of university-level classroom interaction are relatively rare in the research literature.

4.3 Interactionist approaches to the study of classroom discourse

In a parallel development, at the end of the 1970s, researchers of classroom discourse shifted the main focus of their study to the dynamic practices of interaction in talk. The development in diverse social disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology and linguistics, and in particular the seminal work of Erving Goffman (1967, 1981) and Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) gave rise to new methodological approaches in this field, notably interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982) and microethnography (Erickson, 1982). Both interactional sociolinguistics and microethnography are influenced by

the work of Hymes (1968, 1974, 1980) and his establishment of the field of ethnography of communication. Hymes attempted to build a bridge between the tradition of research in anthropology – which, in his opinion, did not fully exploit the findings of research in linguistics to help explain and understand the importance of culture and context, while at the same time, linguistics still had not understood the potential that an ethnographic approach could add to description and analysis of language. Creese (2008: 230) effectively summarises Hymes' contribution to the interactionist turn in sociolinguistics.

For Hymes, what was needed was a general theory and body of knowledge within which diversity of speech, repertoires, and ways of speaking take primacy as the unit of analysis. Hymes' argument was that the analysis of speech over language would enable social scientists to articulate how social behaviour and speech interact in a systematic, ruled and principled way.

These approaches put an emphasis "on the role of *contexts*, or the spatio-temporally bounded moments, in understanding and interpreting interlocutors' interactive practices and resources" (Luk and Lin, 2007: 41). Those doing ethnography of communication are engaged in observation and interviews as well as analysis of talk.

The interactional sociolinguistic approach, developed by John Gumperz (1982), took on board the contributions of diverse social and scientific disciplines and constructed itself around the view that social identities, meanings, and values and even contexts are "locally created and negotiated among the group of interactants" (Hall, 1995: 210). In educational settings, this approach aims at investigating classroom interaction in detail and, to do

so, makes wide use of audio-recording. Recordings are, then, carefully transcribed, interpreted and analysed by researchers. After reaching an interpretation, this is normally verified with the participants, who are asked to listen to the analysed recordings, so that the researcher's and the participants' interpretation of the interaction coincide as much as possible.

Gumperz's concept of 'contextualization cue' (Gumperz, 1982) has been particularly influential in the analysis of classroom discourse. Gumperz defines 'contextualization cues' as follows: "Surface features of message form which [...] speakers (use to) signal and listeners (to) interpret what the activity is, how semantic content is to be understood and how each sentence relates to what precedes or follows" (Ibid.: 131). It is a comprehensive notion, which takes into account not only the choices made by the speaker on the phonological, syntactical or lexical level, but also includes non-verbal markers of discourse such as movements, facial expressions, as well as prosodic and paralinguistic features. Therefore, interactional sociolinguistic studies of classroom discourse look at how teachers and learners make use of contextualization cues and rely on their background knowledge to construct meanings. As Martin-Jones (2000) puts it, with reference to studies of bilingual classroom talk:

"these cues and knowledge resources are seen as the key means by which participants in bilingual teaching/learning encounters negotiate their way through an interaction, make situated inferences as to what is going on and work out their respective discourse roles" (Ibid.: 2).

A teacher can use a contextualization cue to index that he or she is passing from one stage to the next stage in a lesson, to distinguish between the lesson

and an aside, to change footing, to flag up the different voices which echo in what they are saying, and so on. Very frequently, when a contextualisation cue is used in the classroom it is accompanied by a non-verbal element – a gesture, a posture, a different way of establishing eye-contact with the students. So, contextualisation cues sometimes come in clusters. As Martin-Jones (2000) has observed with reference to language teaching and learning and the use of more than one language in the classroom: "This [the clustering of cues] may well be a distinctive feature of bilingual classroom discourse, particularly in situations where teacher talk predominates" (Ibid.: 3).

Auer (1984, 1990) took the idea of contextualisation cue further and, in his research on bilingual codeswitching (or "code alternation" in his terms), he made a useful distinction between "discourse-related" and "participant-related" code alternation (Auer, 1984). The first type of code alternation, when used as a contextualisation cue, serves as a means of demarcating "different kinds of utterances or stretches of discourse within an interactional sequence" (Martin-Jones, 2000: 3). On the other hand, participant-related code alternation, when used as a contextualisation cue, is hearer-oriented, i.e. it takes into consideration the linguistic competence or preferences of the recipients in the interaction. For this reason, these types of participant-related cues are particularly frequent in classrooms where participants display diversified levels of competence in the language being used for teaching and learning and different backgrounds or cultural contexts of reference. In

language classes in particular, teachers make ample use of codeswitching (or code alternation). As Martin-Jones (2000) has put it:

"participant-related codeswitching occurs when teachers provide translations, reformulations, clarifications and explanations for learners", when they try to check the students' understanding, stimulate them to active contribution, or when they link "the cultural content of lessons" to the "learners' lifeworlds outside the classroom" (Ibid.: 3).

4.4 Microethnography

Microethnography developed alongside the early work in interactional sociolinguistics and shares with it the concern with the situated and sequential nature of classroom discourse. The main difference with interactional sociolinguistics is in methodology, in that microethnographic work relies heavily on video technology, as well as audio technology, to gather data. This is because in microethnographic analysis non-verbal features of classroom exchanges are given even more emphasis than in interactional sociolinguistics. Indeed, microethnographic research relies on extremely detailed and elaborate transcriptions of video-recorded data, in order to give full account of the occurrence of non-verbal cues.

Microethnographic studies turned out to be particularly effective in illuminating the "cultural congruences (or incongruences) which emerge in interactions between teachers and learners" (Ibid.: 4). Creese (2008) amplifies this point: she says that microethnographic work "has shown that people do not just follow cultural rules but actively and non-deterministically construct what they do" (Creese, 2008: 231-232). Interactants cannot necessarily count

on a completely shared set of references to help them interpret what is being said.

Since the early studies, in the 1970s, (conducted by scholars such as Erickson, 1975 and McDermott, 1977), and later on through the seminal contribution of Erickson and Schultz (1981), microethnographic work has shown how participants socially influence each other in face-to-face conversation in educational settings, by creating context and making sense of each other's activities. This early work also drew attention to non-verbal behaviours of listeners which occur alongside the verbal behaviours of speakers. Speakers' and listeners' actions are observed in detail, "including the noting of interactional rhythm and cadence" (Garcez, 2008: p.259). Early microethnographic studies also shed light "on mutual, simultaneous and successive influences among participants in interaction, the construction of labile situated social identities, and the management of culture difference" (Ibid.: p.259).

The main thematic foci of the microethnographic approach are set out by Mehan (1998: 247-249) as follows:

1. The study of face-to-face interactions as environments revealing of processes (building processes of cognition as well as social structures, seen as socially constructed and locally organised in social situations) for the production and reproduction of culture in classroom settings.

2. The "context-specific nature of human behavior" (Ibid.: 249).

3. The analysis of the ways in which learners from disadvantaged background juggle their adjustment to the rules of interaction at school, in order to appear socially competent and worthy to obtain access to opportunities of social promotion offered by the educational system.

4. Grounding the idea that human learning is social and it is constructed through guided assistance.

In other words, microethnography "removed social structures from a disembodied external world and relocated them in social interaction" and "took cognitive structures out of the mind and related them in interaction" (Ibid.: 254). In so doing it proposed "a new paradigm for understanding inequality" (Ibid.: 254).

Among more recent contributions within the microethnographic approach to classroom discourse analysis, I need to mention research by Bloome, Caster, Christian, Otto and Shuart-Faris (2005). The authors consider contemporary issues of gender, race, identity and power relations inside and outside the classroom, while dealing primarily with classroom literacy events. They open a window on contemporary socio-cultural processes and look at the complex negotiation of multiple identities by participants as they create new meanings and social relationships through the use of the cultural, linguistic, social and economic tools at hand. In so doing they also showed how complex, ambiguous and indeterminate classroom interactions can be. Finally, microethnographic work has been essential in highlighting pedagogical issues, such as the necessity to mediate "cultural discontinuity" (Mehan, 1998: 249)

and the advantage of organising classroom talk-in-interaction in a varied and flexible way.

4.5 Sociocultural approaches

One of the key concepts in sociocultural approaches to classroom interaction is that of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), originally theorised by Vygotsky (1986,1994), and further developed by many other authors, who gave it different names (e.g. Bruner, 1990 called it "scaffolding"). As Hardman (2008) explains, ZPD is "the zone between what a learner can do unaided and what he or she can manage with expert assistance" (Ibid.: 253). ZPD or scaffolding are terms that can refer to situations when somebody is learning on their own or when they are given support by other participants or cultural objects in the discourse. In classroom discourse this construct sheds light on the students' active role in interactions, showing that they do not simply passively absorb knowledge from the teacher, but contribute to sense-making in exchanges initiated by the teacher.

The theories on 'voice' and 'dialogue' developed by Bakhtin (1935/1981, 1953/1986) had a strong impact on the sociocultural approach to classroom discourse analysis. Bakhtin recognised that the language people use is full of other people's voices. Speakers incorporate in their own talk traces of the utterances of parents, teachers, friends, the media and so on. He also pointed out that humans communicate through recurring "patterns of language form

and use, content themes and evaluative perspectives that emerge in a specific sphere of human activity" (Maybin, 2008: 89). Bakhtin called these patterns "genres" and argued that they are recognisable in the revoiced elements of individual talk – because of the choice of particular grammar structures, prosodic traits, vocabulary and so on. This means that "every word comes to us already used, filled with the evaluation and perceptions of others, and their meanings are acquired from the arrangement of their uses against the predominant conventions" (Hall, 1995: 212). Therefore, there are socio-historical and socio-political backdrops to interactions, which strongly determine discourse practices and influence the meaning making process.

Goffman's work (1974, 1981) was instrumental to the sociocultural turn taken by approaches in this field. In particular, the Bakhtinian notion of 'revoicing' became central to Goffman's sociological analysis in his de-construction of the "traditional linguistic model of speaker-listener roles" (Maybin, 2008: 83). Looking at the "speaker" he distinguished the roles of the 'animator' – the speaker who actually produces the utterance; the 'author' – the person who determines the wording of the utterance; and the 'principal' – whose role is that of determining the views expressed in the utterance. On the listener's side, he distinguished the roles of 'addressed recipient', an 'official audience' or 'unofficial bystander', depending on whether the listener was supposed to hear what was being said or not. These distinctions are relevant to the ideas about identity, positioning and stance, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.6 Research on classroom talk about texts

Most research on the in-class use of thextbooks or other printed teaching materials, such as worksheets, has been school-based, and not university based, as in this study. Nevertheless, the themes emerging from this research are of relevance to this study. The main focus of the early work in this field was on the nature and source of the authority carried by textbooks and other similar texts. In an early contribution to the literature, De Castell and Luke (1989: 413) described the textbook as "an authorised medium that conveys to pupils legitimate knowledge". The main source of the textbook's authority was seen as lying outside the classroom, with curriculum authorities, with local or national governmental departments of education and/or with multinational publishing companies (De Castell, Luke and Luke, 1989; Apple and Christian-Smith, 1992). Other scholars investigated the specific ways in which the everyday practices of teaching and learning were organised around the material presented in textbooks in different classroom contexts (e.g. Baker and Freebody, 1989).

In later work, there was an interest in the ways in which the different texts used in classrooms represented the social world (e.g. Barton 1994; Lee 1996). However, as Maybin and Moss (1993) have observed, it is the talk that goes on around texts that gives them meaning, so the representations of the social world constructed in classroom texts are not necessarily taken up by readers in an uncritical fashion. As a result of this growing interest in meaning-making

around texts, the research lens was gradually narrowed so as to take account of different kinds of talk around texts, and to the fact that they are continually "inspected, dissected and analysed in various ways" in classrooms (Barton, 1994: 58). In particular, there was a focus on the teacher's role as mediator of the different kinds of texts used in classrooms (Barton, 1994; Maybin and Moss, 1993). This role of teachers in 'unpacking' texts with and for learners was found to be particularly evident in bilingual classrooms where there was frequent bilingual talk about monolingual texts (e.g. Martin, 1999).

Bilingual talk is also a characteristic feature of foreign language classrooms, such as the ones I am concerned with in this study. So, focusing in close detail on the bilingual (Italian/English) talk exchanged between teachers and students about the different kinds of texts used in their university classes should enable me to gain insights into the ways in which they construe the content of the texts and their purpose in using them. I anticipate that, sometimes, the students will collude with the 'readings' of the texts being used by the teachers and with the teaching/learning activities developed around the texts by the teachers, and that, on other occasions, there will be resistance to these 'readings' and these activities, since in universities there is usually more scope for critical thinking and dialogue between teacher and students than in schools.

Of course, the texts used in foreign language classes differ from the texts used in other areas of the curriculum. As Valencia Giraldo (2008: 270) has noted:

"In language classrooms … the textbook is invested with characteristics features that distinguish it from other types of texts". Dendrinos (1992) was the first to conduct a detailed analysis of language textbooks, their characteristics and their underlying ideology, concentrating in particular on textbooks for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). She distinguished between two broad types of EFL textbooks: those that focused on the language as an object of study and on the grammatical patterns of the target language, and the functionalist texts, based on functional-notional approaches to syllabus design. The latter focused primarily on different types of speech acts. Dendrinos (1992) also showed that, in these different types of textbooks, the design and layout tended to be rather different and generated different kinds of classroom-based teaching/learning activities.

In many educational systems around the world, textbooks play a key role in defining school-based curriculum content and teaching/learning methodology. However, at university level, there is usually less control from outside the classroom as to the nature and scope of the curriculum content, including the language curriculum. This was certainly the case in the university classes that provided the main focus of this study. The teachers were able to exercise their own judgement about what textbooks or extracts to use in their Italian classes. And, as I will show in chapters 9 and 10, they also prepared teaching materials of their own, with particular pedagogical purposes in mind.

4.7 Linguistic Ethnography

Linguistic Ethnography (LE) emerged as a distinct approach in classroom discourse (and discourse in other contexts) in the UK, in the late 1990s. The Linguistic Ethnography Forum (LEF) was then founded in 2001 under the aegis of the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL). As Rampton (2007) explains in a paper which appeared in a special issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, LE combines established procedures from linguistics for describing and analysing structures of language and discourse with fine-grained ethnographic analysis of the context: namely, the contingencies and cultural aspects which give meaning to all phenomena.

Rampton (2007) outlines the main assumptions underpinning Linguistic Ethnography as follows:

1) that the context for communication should be investigated rather than assumed. Meaning takes shape within specific social relations, interactional histories and institutional regimes, produced and construed by agents with expectations and repertoires that have to be grasped ethnographically; and
2) that analysis of the internal organisation of verbal (and other kinds of semiotic) data is essential to understanding its significance and position in the world. Meaning is far more than just the 'expression of ideas', and biography, identifications, stance and nuance are extensively signalled in the linguistic and textual fine-grain.
(Ibid.: 585)

LE is not a clearly defined discipline or individual approach, but rather "an orientation towards particular epistemological and methodological traditions in the study of social life", as Creese (2008: 232) points out. Researchers working in this way share aspects of theory and method with other social scientists who have an interest in language. As Rampton (2007: 585) notes: "researchers meeting under the aegis of the UK Linguistic Ethnography

Forum are likely to share with a lot of sociolinguists worldwide, as well as linguistic anthropologists in the US."

LE, therefore, brings together several different scientific traditions, tools for research and views of human reality: interactional sociolinguistics (IS) (and its social constructionist view of the world as produced through the social and tempo-spatial activities of everyday life); new literacy studies (NLS), and their view of literacy as socially grounded and, as guided by social values and ideololgies; critical discourse analysis (CDA), which has its deep roots in systemic functional linguistics, which derives from Malinowski's influential ideas on language and culture and which probes the relationship between texts (spoken or written) and context; neo-Vygotskian research on language and cognitive development which tends to consider culture as knowledge structures, while marginalising the context to the background of the analysis; and, last but not least, applied linguistics for language teaching whose contributions have also been important, as Creese (2008) notes, "in shaping applied linguistics agendas through its attention to communicative competence in EFL teaching and teacher education" (Ibid.: 235).

The convergence of such different strands of research has not been without tensions but it is seen as worthwhile by Rampton, as shown below:

[R]esearchers pursuing LE remain committed to the view that the combination of ethnography, linguistics and discourse analysis is particularly well-suited to understanding the intersection of communicative practice with social and cultural process, and the development of 'regional'[i] research provides major opportunities to compensate for the relative lack of security. (Rampton, 2007: 595).

A variety of other research traditions, from conversational analysis to post-structuralist sociolinguistics and from urban sociology to US linguistic anthropology have contributed in different ways to the definition of the scope and interests of LE. U.S. linguistic anthropology of education (LAE) in particular, has many points in common with LE, in that they both stress "the complementarity of anthropology and ethnography with linguistics" (Creese, 2008: 236). Other points of commonality include the fact that both LAE and LE have been strongly influenced by the work of Hymes and Goffman; they both look at the creation and imposition of language ideologies in educational institutions; they both are interested in the impact that language ideology and metapragmatics have had on institutional social identities and, as Creese (2008) observes, the way that these identities "are interactionally accomplished and shifted in schools" (Ibid.: 236).

LE aims to use discourse analytic tools creatively in order to open new interpretive perspectives on the study of the social use of language. According to Rampton (2007) this can happen through cross-fertilisation between methodological approaches in linguistics and ethnography. "*[E]thnography*", he says "*opens linguistics up*" in that linguistics can profit from the processes of reflexivity typical of ethnography, whereas "*linguistics (and linguistically sensitive discourse analysis) ties ethnography down*", in the sense that it can profit from the well-established set of tools and processes for empirical analysis provided by linguistics (Ibid.: 596).

If such theoretical and methodological foundations are to bring new perspectives to the role that language plays in social life, through new creative ways of looking at issues of literacy, ethnicity, identity, ideology and language teaching, they can also be used to explore the mediation of cultural difference in different settings and may lead to the development of novel, more flexible and reflexive perspectives on culture. This is what Roberts et al. (2000) have in mind in their conception of 'culture as a verb', which I have already referred to in the previous chapter. These authors claim that a variety of views of the world and of culture – the functional, the constructivist, the cognitive, the symbolic and the critical – all concur to give shape to the ethnographic idea of 'culture as a verb'.

The cognitive view is useful in helping students focus on the cultural models implied in language … The critical view is important … in pushing students beyond interpretation to explanations of cultural practice which include the dimension of power … It is also useful in helping them to be reflexive about their own ethnographic writing – about their own interests and commitments – and see their own writing as ideological. … It is the symbolic/semiotic view of culture which is drawn on most heavily – the focus on meanings and the interpretation of meanings. But Geertz's notion of culture as action is taken further here. (Ibid.: 54)

To sum up, LE incorporates ethnographic methodology, already developed as a research approach in a number of fields – from anthropology to sociology and education, – and it has chosen to combine it with linguistic approaches to discourse and text. This interdisciplinary move has the potential to contribute in an original way to wider endeavours in social science.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered the ways in which research into classroom discourse has developed over the last three decades or so. As in Chapter 4, my

approach has been to survey the broad sweep of developments in thinking about the nature of classroom discourse and about approaches to the study of the talk exchanged between teachers and students. In this final section of the chapter, I will foreground those concepts and approaches that have been most useful to me as I have been carrying out this project in university classes where Italian was being taught.

I did not make use of the early IRF or IRE models of classroom turn-taking since, as I indicated in section 4.2 above, these models are more relevant to the study of interaction in large, teacher-led classes of the kind found in primary or secondary schools in some countries and they are less relevant to the study of smaller, seminar-style university classes. However, there were two developments in the tradition of classroom discourse analysis that did prove to be useful in analysing the data gathered in my study. The first of these was Mehan's (1979) insight regarding the importance of the evaluative component of the three part exchange structure in classroom discourse. As I will show in Chapter 9, the teachers in my study engaged in regular evaluation and correction of students' contributions. One of them placed particular emphasis on accuracy of linguistic production. The second development was the emergence of a strand of research on classroom discourse studies which takes account of talk about texts in the classroom. As I show in Chapters 8 and 9, a good deal of the talk in the university Italian classes that I observed and recorded in this study was oriented to teaching materials or textbooks:

teachers and students either talked about these texts or made connections between the worlds represented in these texts and other worlds.

The discourse in the classes that I observed and recorded was largely teacher-led and text-oriented but my attention focused primarily on the situated ways in which meanings, values and identities were being constructed by teacher and learners, in the ebb and flow of the talk about the teaching materials selected for each activity. Since this was my main focus, an interactional sociolinguistic approach was most appropriate, given its emphasis on the situated and sequential nature of meaning-making and on the importance of taking account of the ways in which participants in classroom conversations make sense of and react to each others' contributions. And, as I have shown in Chapter 3, I was also interested in investigating the ways in which cultural difference was interactionally negotiated (as well as being talked about), so again an interactional sociolinguistic approach helped me to pursue this line of enquiry.

So, this study built primarily on the foundations laid by interactional sociolinguistics, while drawing on some elements of classroom discourse analysis. Despite considerable time constraints, described in Chapter 6, it was also informed by some of the principles associated with ethnographic work. Thus, for example, interpretation and analysis of audio and video-recordings of classroom talk were combined with observation, informal conversations with teachers and extensive use of fieldnotes. I also took account of

participant structures and the composition of classes in interpreting transcripts

of classroom interaction.

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[i] The term *regional*, here, refers to Bernstein's distinction between 'singulars' and 'regions' in his study on the recontextualisation of disciplines within the organisation of academic knowledge in British higher education (1996) where he contrasts the concept of 'singulars' – i.e. single disciplines – with that of 'regions' – i.e. larger disciplinary units into which different singulars are recontextualised.

CHAPTER 5

Understanding and researching teacher ideologies and identities

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review two other strands of research, one in applied linguistics and one in sociolinguistics. As I note below and as I explain in more detail in section 5.6, each strand of research guided a different dimension of my analysis of the data gathered in this project on university level teaching of Italian. The first strand of research, in applied linguistics, pertains to language teacher knowledge and beliefs. This research has also come to be known as the investigation of teacher cognition and, in section 5.2, I provide a brief overview of insights gleaned from studies of this kind. The research has been carried out at different points in the developmental trajectories of language teachers: as learners, as teacher trainees and as in-service teachers. The research reviewed in this section is particularly pertinent to the interpretation and analysis of the data presented in Chapter 9.

In section 5.3, I turn to a distinct strand of research, in sociolinguistics, relating to the concept of identity. My use of the plural in the main sub-heading for this section – *Understanding identities* - signals my orientation to post-structuralist and post-modern views of identity. In this central section of the chapter, with four sub-sections, I trace the development of thinking in sociolinguistics, from a social constructionist approach to identity to the turn to post-structuralism. I also consider different facets of identity construction that have been considered by researchers in this area,

focusing on research that is of most relevance to classroom-based researcher and to the construction of different teacher and learner identities.

Section 5.4, focuses in on identity construction in the context of second and foreign language teaching and learning and on recent conceptualisations of identity in this field of research. Section 5.5 links the discussion of identity construction in the language class with the earlier discussion of culture, in chapter 3, from a post-modern perspective. Here, I make reference to the seminal work of Bhabha (1994) on 'third spaces' and to Kramsch's (1993) extension of that concept to the context of foreign language learning. The final part of the chapter, section 5.6, foregrounds the concepts covered in this chapter which proved to be most useful in the analysis of the data gathered for my study.

5.2 Understanding and researching teacher knowledge and beliefs/ideologies

5.2.1 Understanding teacher knowledge and beliefs

When teachers teach they do not simply implement curricula designed by others. Indeed, they constantly have to make choices and decisions in order to present what they want to teach to their students, in a way which is practical and personal and which takes account of the constraints posed by the context in which they act. To do so they draw on knowledge, assumptions and beliefs which they developed throughout their experience as learners, as student teachers and as professionals. This includes beliefs about language and beliefs about methods of language teaching and learning. This "unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching" (Borg, 2003:

81) constitutes the field of investigation of teacher cognition research. This line of research rests on the conviction that understanding the thoughts, the knowledge and the beliefs that frame what teachers do is essential to make sense of teachers and teaching. Equally, in teacher-training programmes, taking the "unobservable mental dimension" (Borg, 2009: 163) of learning processes into account is important to "make adequate sense of teachers' experiences of learning to teach" (Ibid.: 163). This field of research, which was first initiated over 30 years ago, has become increasingly concerned with issues in second and foreign language teaching since the mid-1990s. Borg (2006) reviewed over 180 published studies in the field of language teacher cognition and showed that the field has now gained widespread recognition within applied linguistics.

Language teacher cognition research addresses a number of themes related to the developmental trajectory of language teachers, as students, as trainees and as in-service teachers.

Lortie's (1975) notion of 'apprenticeship of observation' refers to the knowledge, beliefs and cognitions that teachers develop during their experience as learners, well before they start teacher training. Borg (2003: 81) maintains that there is ample evidence that such cognitions "continue to exert an influence on teachers throughout their career". Borg (2009) refers to a number of studies which illustrate the impact of cognitions formed during the apprenticeship of observation on teachers. Most of these studies focus on pre-service language teachers (e.g. Farrell 1999; Warford and Reeves, 2003), or on teacher trainees during their practicum (e.g. Johnson 1994, Numrich

1996). However, practising teachers have also been the focus of this kind of investigation. For example, one of the teachers participating in a study by Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers (1997) justified not abandoning completely formal grammar teaching with reference to her belief that it had worked for her when she was a student (Ibid.: 252). What emerges from studies in this area is the importance of prior cognitions in shaping conceptualisations of language teaching. Borg (2003) draws the following conclusion from his reading of these studies: "programmes which ignore trainee teachers' prior beliefs may be less effective at influencing these" (Borg, 2003: 81). His reasoning here is that teacher learning is a process which works by re-organising prior knowledge in the light of new input and experience.

As indicated above, one strand of research within the field of language teacher cognition focuses on pre-service teachers during their practicum (e.g. Numrich, 1996; Farrell, 2001). The value of this research is that it highlights the nature of the challenges that teacher trainees face at the beginning of their experience, the strategies they use to deal with such challenges and the principles that guide their instructional decisions. Insights from this research provide useful pointers for teacher educators as how to support trainees during their practicum.

Another aspect studied by researchers in the field of language teacher cognition is the impact of pre-service teacher education. A particularly revealing study in this area was the one by Gutierrez Almarza (1996) which gave rise to a distinction between cognitive change and behavioural change.

While all the trainees in the study used the teaching method they were taught to use in their training programme during their practicum, in later interviews some of them declared that they would not adopt it after the end of their practicum, because they were not entirely convinced of its effectiveness. So, while teacher education may have an impact on certain student teachers, others may just temporarily adopt the behaviour required for positive assessment for the duration of a course.

One final line of investigation in language teacher cognition, and the one most relevant to the study presented in this thesis, is that which focuses on the cognitions and practices of in-service teachers. The main concern, here, is to make sense of the knowledge, beliefs and thoughts on which teaching practice rests. What characterises this strand of research is its conceptual diversity. This is apparent in the terminology used to refer to different cognitive constructs. These concepts often overlap in their semantic scope, so it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between them and this explains why the overarching term 'cognitions' is used in order to refer to them. A comprehensive list of these terms was drawn up by Borg (2006: 36-39). With particular reference to in-service teachers' cognitions, the construct of personal practical knowledge (PPK) is particularly relevant. PPK is knowledge which has been imbued with all the lived experiences of individuals. PPK is particularly likely to have a direct impact on the instructional choices that experienced teachers make in the classroom.

Research in this area of applied linguistics is now raising awareness of the significance of personal cognitions in shaping daily teaching activities and

the persistence of beliefs which shape teachers' professional choices has raised the profile of teachers as professionals. It has drawn attention to the diverse views of language and language teaching held by different teachers. Also, teacher cognition research highlights the importance of teachers' life experiences, biographies and personal development in shaping the kind of teachers they are and in shaping the ways in which they design and conduct the teaching/learning activities in their classes. I turn now to consider the different research approaches that have been adopted in research in this field.

5.2.2 Researching teacher knowledge and beliefs

Borg (2009) considers the range of research approaches employed in studies on the impact of pre-service training on language teachers. Some of these studies are quantitative (e.g. Macdonald et al., 2001; Peacock, 2001; Urmston, 2003); others are qualitative (e.g. M. Borg, 2005; Cabaroglu and Roberts, 2000; Richards et al., 1996). This second group of studies showed that, on the whole, pre-service training does have an impact on teacher cognition, whereas the quantitative studies generally showed the opposite. However, the cognitive changes observed in the case of the trainees in the qualitative studies were not homogeneous. As Borg (2009: 166) puts it, "this suggests that teacher learning in preservice teacher education is a complex process that varies even among individuals on the same program". Therefore to capture some of this complexity, Borg (Ibid.) maintains that a mixed method is needed and that qualitative analysis should complement quantitative studies in research in this area. Borg's suggestion addresses one

big problem posed in researching teacher cognition, i.e. the fact that teachers' thoughts are not observable as such. What he suggests is that data about teacher beliefs is collected through self-report tools (e.g. questionnaires, journals or interviews) and that this data is then checked against what teachers do in the classroom.

Kubanyiova (in press) takes a critical position on what she sees as a dichotomy which sets beliefs in opposition to practice in the methodologies used in teacher cognition research. In her call for increasing the methodological rigour and broadening the methodological repertoire, she is actually advocating that teacher cognition researchers move towards employing research methods typical of ethnographic approaches and classroom discourse analysis. The study presented in this thesis can be considered a humble contribution in this direction.

5.3 Understanding and researching identities

In chapter 3, I tried to show how a complex and multi-faceted view of culture emerges from close analysis of talk-in-interaction and demonstrates quite clearly that culture is the product of situated social practices in local settings (such as the classroom) at certain times in history. This complex view of culture stems from several, different theoretical perspectives, which complement one another, giving rise to a conception of culture as fluid, open and continually under construction, that is culture as a verb. As part of the same broad turn in social theory and in sociolinguistics, identity has also come

to be thought of as fluid, dynamic and changing. As Norton (1997) and Mitchell and Myles (1998) point out, it is also seen as being constructed in and through interaction, in classrooms and in other domains of social life.

Indeed, the concept of identity is central to classroom life and to the building of classroom relations. In the following sections, I will endeavour to present a few of the ideas about 'identity' which have come from the wide range of literature on this subject in the last few years. My aim is to show that, like the concept of culture, the concept of identity has also been substantially developed, especially within the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, sociolinguistics and cultural studies.

In chapter 2 of this thesis, I traced some of the processes involved in the construction of and institutionalisation of a national culture and national identity across the Italian history and looked at key movements in the nation-building process. At that time, an essentialist view of both national culture and identity were prevalent. Essentialist views of culture were also evoked in the nation-building processes of other European nations (e.g. France and Britain). As we saw, the process of nation-building did not work that smoothly for Italy. The quite extraordinary combination of different ideas about the Italian nation state which underpinned the birth of the state, almost overnight, and the huge differences in geographic, social and cultural terms made for a makeshift unity. This made it difficult to impose 'national' cultural and identity categories on the diverse populations that found themselves to be designated as 'Italian' back in 1861. A key preoccupation of many Governments

throughout Italian history has been the construction of identity symbols and totems of Italian-ness.

The particularity of the Italian case in Europe, with reference to the nation-building process, exemplifies the complexity of the task of pinning down identity, not only in 'national' terms, but – as many studies have shown – also in terms of individuals. Hall (1996) was one of the first to criticise the essentialist view of identity and stated that the concept of identity is "directly contrary to what appears to be its settled semantic career" (Ibid.: 3), in that it "does *not* signal that stable core of the self, unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change" (Ibid.: 3).

This complexity is the reason why recent and present literature tends to speak of 'identities' rather than 'identity', to signify that any individual is bound to shift from one identity to others, not only throughout his or her lifetime, but even throughout a single interactional event. This is because identities are seen as continually negotiated, constructed, de-constructed and re-constructed in and through interaction, through spoken and written language. So, echoing Street's (1993) famous definition of culture, we may even dare say that *identity is a verb*.

5.3.1 Identity, positioning and stance

In layman's terms 'identity' is a person's mental model of him or herself, relating to his or her self-image, self-esteem and individuality. As I indicated above, the complexity of this concept lies in its dynamic nature, for human identity develops throughout a person's lifespan and different projections of the self shift through interaction with other humans at given moments in time. Moreover, identity relates to a wide range of personal and social aspects pertaining to the individual, such as gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality, social level, profession, schooling level, or even competence in the language chosen for the interaction in question.

Language is frequently used as a marker of identity and it is also the medium for the negotiation of identities. This is particularly evident in multilingual settings. As Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) put it, "negotiation of identities … takes place every day in multilingual contexts, where different ideologies of language and identity come into conflict with each other, with regard to what languages or varieties of languages should be spoken by particular kinds of people in what context" (Ibid.: 1). In multilingual settings language is also indexical of wider social, political and ideological processes. As Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) observe: the language an individual chooses to use and the attitudes he or she decides to take are strictly connected to "political arrangements, relations of power, language ideologies and interlocutors' views of their own and others' identities" (Ibid.: 1). As a consequence of globalisation, the range of identity options available has now increased greatly

in number and the variety of ideologies we can choose from in order to evaluate the identities we and others take on at a certain time and place has also widened.

At the same time, identities are seen as a product of social interaction, whereby interlocutors, in a particular exchange, project themselves and see the others' projections of themselves according to what they say, how they say it, and the attitudes they take. This process is an on-going one. Interlocutors can, if they feel they have made a *faux pas* of some sort, rectify their position in order to assume the identity they wish or they feel appropriate to assume in that context.

The identities that a person takes on, however, are not always a matter of personal choice. Indeed an identity can be "imposed", "assumed" or "negotiable" (Ibid.: 21). An "imposed identity" cannot be negotiated by people who are attributed it. They may not like it, but they have no choice but to take it for their socio-political circumstances do not allow them to contest or resist it. On the other hand, an "assumed identity" is one that an individual is generally not interested in negotiating, for he or she feels perfectly comfortable with it. In the main, "assumed identities" are the ones enjoying the highest degree of legitimisation and endorsement by the dominant views within a given society. Finally, a "negotiable identity" is one which can be adopted or rejected, as well as valued or diminished within an interactional event. In addition, identity categorisation changes over time and according to the political and social climate at a given moment in history. This means that a

particular identity could have been "imposed" twenty years ago, be "negotiable" now, and "assumed" in ten years.

Two more constructs come up frequently in the discussion of identity and relate closely to other concepts: namely, 'positioning' and 'stance'. Davies and Harré (1990) define positioning as "the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines" (Ibid.: 48). In other words, it is a process through which any individual 'becomes' him or herself in an interaction, by comparing and evaluating him or herself with other participants in the interaction and their views, as "in telling a fragment of his or her autobiography a speaker assigns parts and characters in the episodes described, both to themselves and to other people" (Ibid.: 48). A further distinction is the one between *interactive positioning* vs. *reflective positioning.* The first "assumes one individual positioning the other, while reflective positioning is the process of positioning oneself" (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 20).

The positioning process is an integral part of the negotiation of identities which occurs in many different interactional settings, including educational settings. A study which seemed to me particularly relevant to my work is the one conducted by Dyer and Keller-Cohen (2000) in an academic setting in the U.S.A. The focus of their analysis was on narratives of personal experience constructed in institutional discourse by two University professors, in which they explain "how these identities support the professional expertise they rely

on for teaching (Ibid.: 284). The study aimed to establish a link between the research on the construction of identity in narratives and the one on institutional discourse, which investigates how institutional norms for communication are revealed through patterns and sequences of interaction.

"Analysis reveals that the professors *position* themselves as experts, exploiting the use of pronouns and other referring expressions in addition to self and other *evaluation*, in order to distance themselves from non-expert others" (Ibid.: 283).

The original 'theory of positioning', as formulated by Davies and Harré (1990) considered positioning mainly as a conversational phenomenon. However, the tendency in more recent literature is that of expanding the meaning of this term to include "all discursive practices which may position individuals in particular ways or allow individuals to position themselves" (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 20-21). Such discursive practices are enacted in oral interaction, or in print whenever the positioning of one interlocutor is challenged by the other(s). Moreover, identity negotiation may even take place between individuals who want to re-define their self-representation, without the interaction with third parties in this process (Ibid.).

The second construct often emerging in discussions of identity is that of 'stance'. The meaning of this term is particularly variable and is used in different ways in different fields of linguistics and social science. Finegan (1995) defined subjectivity as being the "expression of self and the representation of a speaker's (or, more generally, a locutionary agent's) perspective or point of view in discourse" (Finegan, 1995 quoted in Kärkkäinen, 2006: 701). Starting from this definition, Kärkkäinen[i], who is

also a linguist, states that although "stance is increasingly gaining ground as a (near) synonym for subjectivity", it slightly differs from this term, in that, "crucially, it brings in the speaker's community and therefore takes into account the larger cultural and ideological dimension". The community is bound to recognise any signs they "associate with a speaker's personal contribution to event-construal" as "stance markers". So, "stances are to be understood as possible kinds of such personal contributions" (Ibid.: 702)

Recent discourse analysis studies and linguistic anthropological research have started to show that it is "not just grammatical categories … [that] are indices of the speaker's point of view or attitude" but that also everyday talk is subjectively (or affectively) marked "at many, if not at most levels" (Ibid.: 702). Stance markers are numerous and range from grammar and syntax structures, to lexical items, to phonological choices in terms of intonation, voice quality, and so on to discourse structures, including codeswitching (Ibid.: 702).

Concerning this, Biber et al. (1999) note that the presence of the communication of subjective details in interpersonal interaction is one of the main characters of conversation (Ibid.: 859); while Bybee and Hopper (2001) observe that, very frequently, utterances are evaluative, because they cast a judgement on somebody or something and they look at the world from the perspective of either the speaker or the interlocutor (Ibid.: 7). This seems point to a shift in the meaning of 'stance' from a subjective – i.e. related to the speaker(s) – to a more intersubjective interpretation, which includes the

hearer(s) as well and enlarges the value of this term to include dialogic and sequential contexts and dimensions (Kärkkäinen, 2006: 703-704).

From this discussion it clearly emerges that the concepts of identity, positioning and stance are highly pertinent to the study of situations where interactants negotiate their identities. The process of identity negotiation will be further discussed in section 5.4. There is, however, another concept that I would like to mention here, as I feel that it is crucial in the discussion around identity and the performance of identity, the concept of 'human agency'. By 'human agency' we understand the ability human beings have to act in the world. This construct is particularly relevant when looking at identities which are being negotiated within a particular moment of interaction.

5.3.2 Researching identities: interactional sociolinguistic approach

From the 1960s to the 1980s, sociolinguistics reflected the influence of social-constructionist views which were taken up in several social science disciplines. Today, social constructionist views about identity are firmly established. Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) observe that, since the 1980s, a transition has been underway in the way social identities are viewed, from predominantly sociopsychological approaches "to ethnographically-oriented interactional sociolinguistics" (Ibid.: 8). They also point out that contemporary ethnographically-oriented sociolinguistics "views social identities as fluid and constructed in linguistic and social interaction" (Ibid.). In addition, they note that social constructionist thinking has been particularly

influential in research in multilingual contexts. In such contexts, the attention has been drawn to the importance of codeswitching "as yet another resource through which speakers express social and rhetorical meanings and index ethnic identities" (Ibid.: 7). This was first recognised by Gumperz (1982) and further developed by other scholars throughout the 1980s and the 1990s. In particular, they mention the well-known theoretical model of identity negotiation by Myers-Scotton (1998), namely the markedness model. Drawing on developments in the field of pragmatics, this model presented bilingual interactions as events in which speakers and addressees negotiate rights and obligations. In such interactions participants are assumed to have a tacit knowledge of indexicality, that is the way in which culturally specific signs (clothing, speech variety, manners, gestures, etc.) point to and help create social identity. Myers-Scotton claims that "speakers opt for a language that would symbolize the rights and obligations they wish to enforce in the exchange in question and index the appropriate identities" (Myers-Scotton, 1998, cited in Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 8). In other words, she is claiming that speakers consciously negotiate their relationships through language choice and codeswitching and this negotiation evokes wider social, cultural and political values. In Myers-Scotton words, "codeswitching patterns may be indicative of how speakers view themselves in relation to the socio-political values attached to the linguistic varieties used in codeswitching" (Myers-Scotton, 1998: 99).

Although Pavlenko and Blackledge recognise the merits of the markedness model, they also point out its weaknesses, in particular they take on board Auer's criticism of it.

Many scholars also acknowledge that identity is not the only factor influencing code-switching and that in many contexts the alteration and mixing of the two languages are best explained through other means, including the linguistic competencies of the speakers (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 9).

Auer's insistence on the need to take account of the influences of speaker's mastery of a language in codeswitching is, of course, relevant to modern language classrooms and to the study of interaction in such classrooms.

5.3.3 Researching identities: poststructuralist and critical theory approaches

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) also trace the development of a broadly poststructuralist and critical theory approach to the negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts. They indicate that this is one which considers linguistic choices "as embedded in larger social, political, economic, and cultural systems" (Ibid.: 10). They also point to the contributions of several authors (Bourdieu, 1977, 1982, 1991; Gal, 1989; Heller, 1988, 1992, 1995a, 1995b; and Woolard 1985, 1989, 1998, among others) over the last thirty years or so in underscoring the role of power in categorising identities. Heller and Martin-Jones (2001) have also taken forward this tradition.

5.3.4 Different facets of identity, viewed from a critical, poststructuralist approach

Pavlenko and Blackledge's five-fold categorisation of identity (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 13-19) is very useful in breaking down this complex concept into its main components and thus helps comprehend its multifaceted nature. The authors discuss the following five characteristics of identities: (1) their location within particular discourses and ideologies of language; (2) their embeddedness within the relations of power; (3) their multiplicity, fragmentation and hybridity; (4) the imagined nature of 'new' identities; and (5) their location within particular narratives. I will take each one in turn below:

Locating identities within discourses and ideologies of language means seeing "identity options as constructed, validated, and offered through discourses available to individuals at a particular point in time and place" (Ibid.: 14). It also means considering the mutually constitutive nature of the relationship between language and identity. While, on the one hand, particular discursive resources within language, such as codeswitching, constitute the linguistic means for identity construction and negotiation, on the other hand, it is ideologies about language which determine, or at least influence, how people use language and how they evaluate others' use of language to index their identities. Thus, in the modern language classroom, language teachers speak in ways which construct their classroom identities as 'expert linguists' and their ideologies about language (e.g. being more or less prescriptive or strict

about students' errors) shape the way in which they evaluate students' contributions to classroom conversations.

The fact that identities are discursive constructions does not make them any less 'real'. This is what Bammer (1994: xvi) means when he speaks of the "palpable experience" of "cultural formations" often eclipsing their "discursive nature".

The idea that identities are *embedded within power relations* is based on poststructuralism and rests on Bourdieu's concept of 'misrecognition' and his theory of 'symbolic domination'. This model sees individuals who are not speakers of the official language or standard variety as 'symbolically dominated' by the group who imposed that language or variety of language. Following Bourdieu, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) argue that the "symbolically dominated group is complicit in the misrecognition (*meconnaisance*), or valorisation, of that language and variety as an inherently better form" (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 10). Misrecognition of the value of a particular language or linguistic variation confirms members of dominant social groups as bearers of higher social, political, intellectual or moral characters, solely because they happen to belong to the dominant group.

Another facet of identities highlighted by Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) is their *multiplicity, fragmentation, and hybridity*. Indeed, identities are constructed like mosaics, whereby each little piece constituting the overall picture corresponds to one facet, or component of identity, such as ethnicity,

race, age, class, gender, generation, sexual orientation, geopolitical locale, institutional affiliation and social status. Moreover, just as stones making up a mosaic have to be cut, so as to fit in the whole picture, each facet of identities "redefines and modifies all others" (Ibid.: 16).

Although the 'mosaic' metaphor highlights the multiplicity and fragmentation of identities, it is, nevertheless, a rather static concept. In a study of identity in social science and in fiction, conducted from a post-modern perspective, Czarniawska (2000) showed how identities change over time and space. Her focus was on powerful discourses about fashion (a semiotic mode for representing identity). She demonstrated how institutions and individuals adjust their identities to what is considered fashionable or dominant within certain spatial and temporal contexts.

This post-modern view of identity, as multiple and fragmented, in which individuals are seen to shift between and adjust to different identity and positioning options, led to the adoption of the notion of hybrid identities. 'Hybridity' is, of course, a direct challenge to essentialist thinking about identity. Instead of assumptions about people having pure or essential linguistic or cultural identities, a post-modern view foregrounds the blending of linguistic and cultural attributes and the creative ways in which individuals forge identities for themselves using the cultural and linguistic resources available to them. The construction of hybrid identities is seen as taking place in local life worlds and in different institutional spaces, in educational institutions, in workplaces and so on. The idea of 'third places' or 'third

spaces' is a related concept. It has its origins in the work of Bhabha (1994). The extensive transnational migration in the last few decades has been the site for Bhabha's exploration of 'third places' as places where "culture's in-between" (Ibid.). I will return to this concept in section 5.5.

Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) fourth facet of identities relates to the imagined nature of 'new' identities. Their use of the term 'new' identities here evokes the turn to culture in contemporary social life and to the multiple resources available for representing the self and for achieving membership of different communities of practice, whether it be football fans or learners of Italian (or both!). In foregrounding this facet of identities, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) are drawing on cultural studies and in particular the work of Hall (1990). They also refer to the work of Anderson (1983) on "imagined communities".

Hall's (1990) discussion of cultural identity and diaspora illuminates the crucial role *imagination* has in the creation of *identities*. Hall shows that a series of tools, such as new language items, forms of visual art and fashion, and literary narratives have helped "create new practices of self-representation and thus new 'imagined communities'" (Hall, 1990 cited in Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 17). With the advent of the internet and new media, the possibilities have now been multiplied yet further.

Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) final facet of identities is that they are located in particular *narratives*. As Hall (1990) puts it, with reference to

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studies of diaspora, narratives "offer a way to impose an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation, which is the history of all enforced diasporas" (Ibid.: 224). When embedded in narratives, identities take on an enriched meaning, for they are not only discursive choices, but they are also the way people position themselves or are positioned by others within the narratives of the past, the present and the future. Within this dynamic perspective of identity, individuals (and/or groups) are seen as constantly adjusting the production of selves, their and others' positioning, revising identity narratives and creating new ones embracing new ways of life and new relations of belonging (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 18-19).

5.4 Identities and language learning

The context of second and foreign language learning is one where language is likely to be a key means of negotiating identities, especially at a time when L2 courses cater for individuals of increasingly diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Language learners are, of course, focused on the need to acquire the very linguistic skills that will allow them to take part effectively in such negotiations. Scholars in the field of discourse and second language acquisition have, since the 1990s, been focused on the relationship between identity and second language development. As Boxer (2008: 308) states, learning a new language "necessarily entails modifying one's self perception in relationship to others in the world". In particular, Boxer proposes the concept of 'relational identity' (RID) as a resource to enhance second language development. The construct of RID was first put forward by Boxer

and Cortes-Conde in 2000 and it built on previous studies of identity (e.g. McKay and Wong, 1996; Norton, 1997). Echoing the post-modern views discussed above, this concept takes account of "the importance of fluid and changing individual social identities and their relation to multiple discourses" (Boxer, 2008: 308). 'Relational identity' which is gradually formed between learners who speak different languages in an SLA setting emerges as a solidarity rapport is created and consolidated among them, which makes them comfortable in mutual interaction. When this happens between learners of a target language and speakers of that language, this leads to increased interaction, and, consequently to further opportunities for language development (Boxer, 2008: 308).

5.5 Third spaces: constructing new identities and cultural worlds

Situating the negotiation of identities within classroom settings brings me back to a point I have already touched on in the chapter on the relationship between language and culture (chapter 3). This also brings me back to Kramsch (1993) and her argument that language study should be considered as "initiation into a kind of social practice that is at the boundary of two or more cultures" (Ibid.: 9). What Kramsch points out is that, for the most part, a Modern Foreign Language classroom is situated in an L1/C1 context, but because most exchanges are being made in L2, which implies also incursions into the C2, this is likely to give rise to a third culture in its own right (a C3) which, using Bhabha's (1994) words is a "culture in-between".

In contemporary MFL classes at university level, we see the simultaneous presence of native and non-native speakers of the target language among the teaching staff, as well as a heterogeneous composition of classes. Staff and students' backgrounds vary in terms of age (mature students, young or senior lecturers), nationality (overseas students, Erasmus exchange students and lecturers, etc.), gender, ethnicity and so on. This means that university classes may be characterised by more cultural diversity than school classes, where all students tend to be of the same (or of a similar) age and from local neighbourhoods. As I said earlier, globalisation and widespread migration have further highlighted this issue.

MFL teaching and learning contexts thus offer very good conditions for the creation of third spaces. First, using a foreign language to talk about values and rules shared by the whole context – be it a school, a higher educational institution, or a wider instruction unit – locates MFL classes on a different level compared to other subjects. In fact, in foreign language instruction, a language (the L2) is used to express values which are typical of the local context where the educational institution is located, a context that normally uses another language (the L1) for communication.

Moreover, the need to develop students' communicative competence makes it possible to experiment with 'unusual', 'flexible' class formats (group work, cooperative learning, etc.) and abandon formats which conform to a more institutional view of classes, where the teacher does the talking in front of the whole class. In addition, when using an L2, teachers and learners of an L2 are

led to consider familiar values from another perspective, and even to apply the values associated with the cultural context of the L2 in their local contexts, in order to build a deeper understanding of them. This mixture of cultural elements from the place where the educational institution is located and cultural elements from the place where the language is used may well create a third place.

Not only teachers, but also students of an MFL can participate in the creation of third places. Indeed, in spite of what they are expected to do, students normally use the L2 to express meanings – both affective and cognitive – which are exclusively their own. In so doing, they defy the attempts by the MFL materials (and those who produce and market them) to decide for them what contents should be appropriately learnt and expressed in L2 classes. Indeed, the cultural industry behind the teaching of modern languages has increasingly come to consider languages themselves as commodities, and students as customers or consumers. Textbook producers devise ever more sophisticated teaching materials, up-to-date approaches and teaching strategies, and students are promised that they will achieve enough communicative and cultural competence to be accepted into the cultural world signified by the L2. Despite the commercialisation of language teaching and learning, textbooks cannot impose interpretations of cultural worlds and identities. As Kramsch (1993) has pointed out: "students will ever find new ways of making their own hypotheses, of understanding (or misunderstanding)" that cultural world (Ibid.: 237).

Sometimes students have to make the best of their limited knowledge of the language to express what they wish to express. At other times, however, they engage in true acts of resistance, and make a deliberate use of language forms (idioms, colloquialisms, etc.) which educational institutions assert to be legitimate property only of native speakers (e.g. Rampton, 1995). The ability to use such language forms, not only gives students personal pleasure, but it can be empowering (Kramsch, 1993: 238-239). Personal pleasure takes the form of personal satisfaction, a reward in return for the personal investment they made in learning a language. On the other hand, students are empowered by the fact that they use the language in the way they want, to express the meanings they want. In so doing they challenge institutional discourse, which had, in effect, rather left them out of the decision making as to how to use the language, as they learn it. Educational settings are indeed more often than not ones where students are the weak parties in the interaction.

Resistance to market logic in language learning transforms learning a language into a practice with a deeper meaning, "a cultural statement" (Ibid.: 237). Students refuse to be considered consumers, reject the idea of languages as commodities, which the institutional world wants to impose on them. Their battle is to impose personal meanings on already available commodities. In so doing, students cease to be consumers and become actors of a process of production, reproduction and circulation of new meanings in between the local culture worlds and the cultural worlds associated with the L2.

5.6 Conclusion

I have had two broad aims in this chapter: first, to interrogate the literature on teacher knowledge and beliefs (section 5.2); and, second, to consider key issues in the study of identity (section 5.3 to 5.5). In this final section, I will foreground those concepts that have been the most useful for the doctoral research project.

As I showed in section 5.2, research on teacher knowledge and beliefs has attracted new interest in recent years and is now widely referred to as research into teacher cognition. It is a rapidly developing area of enquiry in applied linguistics and second language acquisition. For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to note that the term 'cognition' signals its origins in the disciplines of psychology and psycholinguistics. I will return to this point later in this section.

As I indicated in 5.2.1, the value and significance of this body of research is that it has raised awareness, among those concerned with language teacher education and teacher change, of the prior knowledge, beliefs and dispositions that teacher trainees and in-service teachers bring to their work in the classroom. This research on teacher knowledge, beliefs and cognitions is relevant to this study in that it makes it possible to begin to explain differences in the teaching approaches adopted by the teachers participating in this study. As I will show in chapter 9, I was able to provide explanations of differences in approaches with reference to their biographies

and, especially, their language learning experiences and the nature, timing and content of their teacher training courses.

As I indicated in section 5.2.2, a range of research methods have been employed in research on teacher cognition, with some qualitative researchers favouring interview data and extended conversations with teachers and teacher trainees. However, as Kubanyiova (in press) points out, audio-recordings of classroom talk also provide valuable data for addressing questions related to teacher knowledge and beliefs. This is the approach that I have adopted in this study (see Chapter 9 for details). Most of my data consists of audio-recordings of classroom talk and I show how insights into teacher beliefs can be gleaned from data of this kind.

In this study, the main beliefs expressed by the teachers were those that related to: (1) language and language varieties; (2) methods of language teaching and learning. As I will show in Chapter 9, they articulated different degrees of prescriptivism and insisted, to different degrees, on 'correct Italian', they placed different emphases on the use of standard Italian and assigned more or less value to dialects. They also favoured different teaching methods e.g. grammar translation versus communicative language teaching.

While the study of such beliefs and values are construed as part of teacher cognition research and as located within the branch of applied linguistics that has its roots in psychology, within the sociolinguistic tradition espoused

in this study, and particularly within the critical, poststructuralist approaches to language that have guided my research, such beliefs about language, linguistic variation and language teaching and learning are referred to as "ideologies" (e.g. Woolard, 1998). As Woolard has noted, the concept of "ideology" enables us to link macro and micro-perspectives in research on language: "It allows us to relate the microculture of communicative action to political economic considerations of power and social inequality, to confront macrosocial constraints on language behaviour, and to connect discourse with lived experiences" (Woolard, 1998: 27). For this reason and for the purpose of achieving as much consistency as possible in the theoretical framing of this study of university level classes of Italian, I have adopted the terms "language ideology" and "ideologies of language teaching" in analysing the data generated in the study.

As I showed in section 5.3, following the turn to poststructuralism across the social sciences, there has been a wealth of sociolinguistic and applied linguistic writing on the topic of identity. As I have emphasised in these three literature review chapters (Chapter 3-5), this study is underpinned by a poststructuralist approach to language, culture and identity. The following ways of conceptualising identity are therefore particularly relevant to the line of analysis pursued in Chapter 10.

Firstly, I have found especially useful the idea that identity is not a fixed essence, but that it is always being constructed, in and through interaction with others. Thus, in classrooms such as the ones where I did this study,

teachers and students are continually moving in and out of different teacher and learner identities, as they engage in and react to the daily interactional routines. Secondly, linked to this is the useful concept of positioning (Davies and Harré, 1990). In classroom interaction, teachers and students position themselves and others, using different discursive strategies. Thus, for example, language teachers often position themselves as 'experts' or as 'native speakers'. They can also position language learners in various ways: as 'beginners', 'intermediate' or 'advanced learners' or as citizens of a particular country e.g. as 'British', 'Austrian' or 'Japanese'. Thirdly, classroom participants are continually navigating different discourses about identity in their daily interactions with others, and they are positioned as 'citizens' or 'foreigners' or as 'teacher' and 'student'. For this reason, identities are generally thought to be plural. This is captured in my study through the use of the plural form: "identities". Fourthly, I found Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) distinction between three different kinds of identity useful in this study, that is, the distinction between "imposed identities", "ascribed identities" and "negotiated identities". In my study, the institutional identities of 'teacher' and 'student' were clearly "imposed identities". They were, nevertheless, assumed in different ways, with the younger of two teachers moving in and out of the identities of 'teacher' and 'peer group member' and with the older of the two enacting a 'teacherly identity' most of the time.

The final section of this chapter touched on a key concept in studies of language, culture and identity such as mine: that is, the concept of "third

space" (Bhabha, 1992; Kramsch, 1993). In analysing my data, I identified moments in the conversations that unfolded in the classrooms in this study where teachers and students side-stepped the teaching materials and their routine exchanges about forms of language to interrogate aspects of culture together, to engage with linguistic and cultural difference and to enter a dialogue where the institutional asymmetries of the traditional teacher-student relationship were cast aside. During these moments, the processes of identification were more fluid and negotiable.

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CHAPTER 6

Research approach

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I am going to begin by giving an account of the work I did to prepare and carry out the fieldwork in order to collect data for my classroom based project. I will then outline the approach that I adopted to the analysis of the data. The chapter is divided into 5 sections each related to a particular phase or a particular aspect of the work.

In the first section, *Research preparation and the preliminary visits*, I will explain how I prepared to conduct the research fieldwork. In particular I will describe the strategies that I devised in order to collect my data. The second section will deal with the choice of the sites for my fieldwork and with the participants in my research, i.e. the students and lecturers I observed in two different UK universities. I will also give an account of the preliminary visits I made to both fieldwork sites and it will provide a description of my first contact with the tutors that would become my informants in the research. In addition, I will touch on the problems I discussed with them on that occasion. In the third section I will introduce the classes I observed in the two

universities and I will show how they were organized and run. Finally, the last two sections will be dedicated to the description of the actual fieldwork I conducted in the two chosen universities, phase by phase. They will also deal with the problems that I encountered at the various stages of the fieldwork and how I tried to solve them.

6.2 Research preparation

During semester one of the 2001-2002 academic year I prepared for the fieldwork. My first step was the drafting of a project description for the teachers whose cooperation I was going to ask for. I wrote a brief description of the project, the research questions and relevant fieldwork details. A copy can be found in the appendices.

Since this was a piece of qualitative, interpretive research, I needed to use a number of different approaches to data gathering in order to achieve some triangulation and to look at the classroom practice through different lenses so as to get a fuller and more accurate picture. My research design included the following data collection activities:

- classroom observations, some of them audio-recorded and some video-recorded;
- keeping fieldnotes for most of the classes observed;
- interviews with the lecturers to be carried out at a later time.

At this point it was important for me to make a decision about the kind of audio- and video-recording equipment I would use. So I paid a visit to the language lab technician in the department where I worked at the time. I explained to him what I was planning to do and asked for his advice on the equipment to use. The technician

was very helpful and advised me to use a minidisk walkman recorder with an omnidirectional microphone. He also indicated that I could use the departmental equipment. I was able to keep the equipment for the duration of the work involved in the project. As I do not have a minidisk player, the technician agreed to transfer the recordings from disk to cassettes, so that I could transcribe the recorded material at a later stage.

As for the video-recording equipment, I went to see the Information Services Department of the University of Wales at Aberystwyth. They also offered me support and advice in choosing a videocamera for me to use during the fieldwork. We agreed that I would have access to a videocamera, which was rather bulky, but had the advantage of recording directly onto VHS videocassettes, which I could play simply using my home videorecorder.

Table 1 below summarises the range of data gathering strategies I envisaged:

Table 1: Research questions and data gathering strategies

Research questions	Audio- and video-recorded classroom talk	Fieldnotes and researcher diary	Interviews with teachers	Copies of teaching material
1. What views of language and language teaching inform the classroom practice of the teachers?	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. How is culture talked about in the classes?	✓	✓		✓
3. What identities do the teachers take on in talking about language and about culture in their classes?	✓	✓		✓

Once I had determined the scope of the fieldwork, I was ready to go into the field and meet potential participants.

6.3 Gaining access and meeting the key participants

The next step to be taken was that of selecting the universities where the research was to be carried out. I restricted my choice to two universities only, one of them in England and one of them in Wales, both within a reasonable distance from Aberystwyth.

As far as the choice of the English university was concerned, I had the opportunity to make an important contact in the summer of 2001. At that time, the external examiner at the Italian section of the Department of European Languages at the University of Aberystwyth was a Professor of Italian who had just been appointed as the Head of Department in an English university. When I asked her whether she would allow me to do my fieldwork in her department, did she immediately gave me her consent. We agreed that I would get in touch by the end of semester 1 of the following academic year to plan my visits to her department throughout the second semester.

As for the Welsh university, I relied on the help and acquaintances of a senior colleague. He knew the Head of the Department of Italian in one of the Welsh universities and invited me to write to him in order to obtain permission to do my research there. After receiving a more detailed explanation of the kind of work I intended to do, he agreed that I could go ahead with my fieldwork in his department and invited me to e-mail directly the members of staff I would like to involve in the project. I contacted one of them directly and made an appointment with her.

The preliminary visits to both departments were made late in January 2002, before the start of the second term. I first visited the English university (Downtown University). I arrived there in the late morning and went to meet the Head of the Italian section and the Head of the Department (my original contact). During the meeting I described to them the research work I planned to conduct and provided them with the project description I had previously prepared. I also explained that I would be following my university's ethical guidelines and would seek informed consent from the teachers

involved. They looked enthusiastic about my research project and pleased that I was going to work at Downtown University. They agreed with me that the most interesting year groups for my observations would be year one (beginners) and year four, and we discussed the timing of my visits.

I had originally planned to pay a visit a week to each of the two universities on alternate weeks. However, this proved to be impractical, because of the peculiar academic calendar of Downtown University: the Easter break was to be much longer than in the Welsh university (Seaview University). I therefore decided that I should complete my fieldwork first at Downtown University and then at Seaview University, provided the members of the teaching staff at Seaview University, who I was going to see the day after, would agree on this timetable. Also, I had to allow one more day a week of observation at Downtown University, on receiving the timetable, I realized that restricting my presence to one day only would not have been enough for me to observe all the classes that were relevant to my project.

My hosts at Downtown University took me to meet other staff, and particularly three lecturers whose courses might be directly involved in my research. I was also invited by one of them to observe one of the lessons she was giving to final year students. Finally, I was provided with the timetables and discussed with the lecturers which lessons would be most suitable for me to focus on. We agreed on three different lessons: a grammar class with the beginners and two oral classes, one with the beginners and one with the finalists. The two classes with beginners were taught by a

young Italian woman called Francesca. I made it clear to these lecturers, from the outset, that their names would not be used in my research and that I would observe confidentiality.

The visit to Seaview University took place the day after. I drove there in the morning. I was introduced to Jean, an experienced teacher who had taught Italian both in schools and at university. Fortunately, she immediately agreed to accept my presence in her class. I asked Jean if she could take me to see the classroom, where the classes I was going to observe were to be held. I drew a sketch of the room layout and thought about where I would sit as observer. I also considered the best position for the equipment when audio- and video-recording the classes.

The day after, I went to see my senior colleague in Aberystwyth and agreed with him a means of rearranging my teaching timetable, so as to allow me to carry out my fieldwork.

6.4. The classes observed

The preliminary visits to the universities had opened up a number of options for classroom observation. I decided that I would concentrate on the observation of language classes rather than content modules. Although I anticipated that dealing with content classes would provide me with very revealing insight into the construction of culture by the teachers and students and into the image of Italy that the two universities were projecting to their students, I ultimately thought that it would be

even more challenging to look at the aspects of culture that were evoked through the teaching of the language. The final decision about the actual classes to be observed in each university was to a large extent dictated by criteria of practicality[i]. As I could not take off more than one/two days per week from my work, I would have to observe classes given on the day(s) when I was free to go 'into the field'. For this reason, the classes I observed in the two different universities do not match each other exactly. Because of my timetable constraints and because I wanted to focus on language classes, I eventually decided to focus on 2 of the classes taught by Francesca (at Downtown University) and one taught by Jean (at Seaview University). Table 2 shows the classes selected for the study:

Table 2: The three language classes selected for the study

Teacher and university site	First class	Second class
Francesca's classes at Downtown University	Spoken language for beginners	Written language / grammar for beginners
Jean's classes at Seaview University	Language for beginners (written language and grammar)	

6.5 The fieldwork at Downtown University

The first session of the fieldwork started at the beginning of February 2002. I travelled to the city where Downtown University is based on the Sunday and stayed till Tuesday. On Tuesday afternoon I returned to Aberystwyth. This happened for 5 weeks in a row, from 3rd February to the 5th March 2002.

During the first fieldwork visit I did not record the classes, but simply took field-notes. In the second and third week of fieldwork at Downtown university I began recording classes. I started to become more accepted by both the tutors and by the students and felt less of an "outsider". My presence in class came to be seen as more and more routine affair despite the use of the recorder. The fact that the recorder was very small and could therefore easily go unnoticed played an important role in this respect. Also my relationship with Francesca the young teacher who taught the beginners, took a more and more friendly turn. In weeks 4 and 5, I video-recorded the two beginners' classes.

All the staff at Downtown University, including people who were not directly involved in the research project, like the head of the department or even the secretaries, were helpful and friendly. This made my fieldwork there rather enjoyable. I had the impression that they were happy to help me and to have me there. I was on friendly terms with most of them and the Head of the Department even organized a farewell dinner party for me in her house, in the final week of my work there. This was attended by almost all the staff in the Italian section.

The fieldwork at Downtown University was productive and interesting. My initial impression of the department was confirmed. The Italian section was very well organized and run. Everybody from the head of the section down to the last part-timer was hardworking and very committed to their work. On the contrary, the air of light-heartedness and enthusiasm that prevailed throughout the department made my stay

there quite memorable. As for the relationship of the staff with me as a researcher, I had the impression that they were comfortable about being observed and I sensed that they were sincerely hoping to learn things about their work that could help them improve it.

6.6 The fieldwork at Seaview University

The fieldwork at Seaview University had to be organized in a slightly different way in comparison to my fieldwork at Downtown University. First of all, I planned to visit Seaview University for one day a week (on Tuesdays) rather than for two days a week. The reason for this was to give me time to make up the hours for my own teaching in Aberystwyth. Secondly, I drove to the city where Seaview University was based, rather than going by train. This was a necessity, owing to the poor train connection between Aberystwyth and the Welsh town I had to go to, but this meant also that I could not count on the train journey as valuable time to complete my research diary or to go through the material that I collected during my fieldwork. Thirdly, the fieldwork sessions could not be organized over 5 weeks in a row, because of the 3-week Easter break that came between week 2 and week 3 of the fieldwork. Lastly, and most importantly, I had to change my fieldwork plans while actually conducting the fieldwork, due to an emergency beyond my control (the illness of a colleague), which arose in the department in Aberystwyth. This meant that I had to do additional teaching.

On the first visit to Seaview University I sat in a finalists' oral class and observed Jean's beginner language class. I also took fieldnotes.

In addition, I had the opportunity to talk informally with Jean before and after the class. She spoke openly to me about her views of language teaching and learning. She indicated to me that she was not happy about the shift towards an emphasis on communicative language teaching and felt that the discipline stemming from a close emphasis on grammar had been lost with the current generation of students.

The relationship I built with the tutors at Seaview University was very good, I was made to feel very welcome. The Seaview University tutors were, on the whole, older and more experienced than their counterparts in Downtown University and clearly very accomplished linguists with an excellent command of Italian.

6.7 The gathering of textual data

During my fieldwork at each university, I also gathered textual data. This included copies of handouts, pages of the texts talked about in class and documents relating to the Italian Studies curriculum in both universities.

6.8 Research ethics observed in this study

For the design of the research of this study, I took into account the code of practice and the ethical procedures of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning at the

University of Wales, Aberystwyth. These were very similar to those of the University of Birmingham where my doctoral research is now based. I also followed the 'Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics' published on the world wide web by the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL 1994; 2004) and the 'Recommendations for good practice in Applied Linguistics student projects' (2001) (see Appendices). Below, I will list some of the principles common to all these codes of research practice. These are the principles I have adhered to in carrying out this study:

1. Educational researchers should aim to avoid fabrication, falsification or misrepresentations of evidence, data, findings or conclusions.

2. Educational researchers should aim to report their findings to all relevant stakeholders and so refrain from keeping secret or selectively communicating their findings.

3. Participants in a research study have the right to be informed about the aims, purposes of the research as well as about plans for the publication of findings. Participants will need to give their informed consent before participating in the research.

4. Participants have the right to remain anonymous. Their confidentiality should be respected at all stages of the research process.

5. Honesty and openness should characterise the relationship between researchers, participants at all stages of the research process.

6. Participants should have the right to withdraw from a study at any time.

7. Wherever possible, final research reports should be made available in accessible form to participants, and they should have the opportunity to comment on them.

(School of Education and Lifelong Learning. University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2002).

As the above codes of practice recommend, I have used fictitious names for the two universities involved in this study. I have also used fictitious names to refer to the students and the teachers, and I will share the final results with the teachers and with

the university departments hoping that this will help create awareness of the issues that have arisen about from this study.

6.9 Data preparation

My first task on completion of the fieldwork was run through and select for transcription audio- and video-recordings of the classroom talk in those lessons that I had been able to record and observe. The lessons that I selected for transcription were:

- The spoken language class for beginners led by Francesca at Downtown University (one lesson transcribed).

- The written language/grammar class for beginners led by Francesca at Downtown University (one lesson transcribed).

- The language for beginners class (spoken and written language/grammar) led by Jean at Seaview University.

The transcripts are included in the Appendices. I followed a dramatic script format for the transcription, with each conversational turn being distinguished and justified to the left margin. The names of all the participants were kept confidential by adopting fictitious names. All switches into Italian were marked in italics and followed by translations in bold.

As I transcribed the video-recordings I added to the transcript any significant instance of non-verbal communication or classroom activity. After this, I read through the relevant sections of my fieldnotes and of the diary that I kept while I was doing the

fieldwork. Where particular notes or diary entries threw more light on the episode captured in the transcript, I added further notes to the transcript.

6.10 Data analysis

The main aim in analysing the data was to address my research questions. So, I went through the transcripts, systematically coding all the instances of talk about language and talk about culture. I further categorized all the instances of talk about culture according to the different dimensions of culture that were referred to (see Chapter 10, section 10.2 for details).

I then went through the data again with the aim of identifying extracts where the talk revealed the teacher's view of language teaching/learning and I checked my fieldnotes and my researcher diary for details of conversations I had had with the teachers which had thrown light on the ideas about language teaching/learning which conformed the classroom practice.

I then read through the transcripts with a view to identifying moments where the teachers were clearly taking on particular identities, in talking about language or about culture. Lastly, I focused on the contributions made by the students in the three classes and on the ways in which these contributions were elicited by the teachers.

I had hoped to go back to the two teachers when I had completed my preliminary analysis of the data and to check with them the lines of analysis that I was pursuing.

Unfortunately, since the data transcription and data analysis took me several years, as a part-time student, when I tried to get in touch with the two teachers, they had moved on from their posts.

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[i] I also observed the following classes:
  a) A finalists' written language class (which I video-recorded and transcribed, but did not analyse;
  b) A finalists' oral class, which I was not allowed to record.
I finally made the decision to focus just on beginners' classes. Moreover, Francesca's and Jean's classes contrasted well.

CHAPTER 7

The context of the study: two universities, two teachers and three Italian classes

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will give an account of the two universities, the two teachers and the students in the three classes where I collected the data for this case study. My description will be as detailed as possible, but, for ethical reasons, I will avoid all information that could lead the reader to the real identity of the universities, the teachers and the students involved in this research. I will describe the teachers' styles of teaching and the composition of the classes. I will also take a close look at the teaching materials used and activities devised by the teachers for these classes. This chapter, together with chapter 8, where I go into the ways in which the classes I observed unfolded, are meant to provide an introduction to the data analysis chapters.

7.2 Two British Universities where Italian is taught

As already stated earlier in this thesis, the two universities where this case study was set are located in two different countries of the British Isles, one in England and one in Wales. Throughout the study, the first one will be referred to as Downtown University and the second as Seaview University. Downtown University and Seaview University have some traits in common. Both universities are of similar size, were founded in the early 1920s and have been

recognised to be very active and successful centres in modern foreign language teaching/learning.

7.2.1 Downtown University: Facilities, location and organisation.

Downtown is based in a large English city, which is lively, cosmopolitan and culturally diverse. It is a leading university with world class research in several fields, including the arts, science, medicine, law, education, biology and social sciences. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Downtown University attracts students from a wide social, ethnic and international spectrum. The university also prides itself on having very high completion rates. The combination of these facts makes the university attractive for students and makes that city a thriving location for young people, where, during term time, there are over 10,200 students. At the time of writing, Downtown University offered more than 140 undergraduate programmes, 100 postgraduate programmes and some 400 certificate and general interest courses in its 7 faculties.

The Italian Section is part of the School of Modern Languages. At the time when the fieldwork was conducted there were eight members of staff teaching Italian: one professor, two lecturers, one *lettrice*, and four language teachers. One of these teachers was Francesca. Her beginners' classes were included in this study. I am, of course using a fictitious name to refer to this teacher, so as to preserve confidentiality.

The University campus is set on a hill, on the edge of one of the most popular parks in the city. It overlooks the city centre, which is about one mile away. It is a compact campus and students can walk to the different teaching buildings in few minutes. The buildings reflect the styles of the different periods when they were built, starting from the early 19th century to the late 20th century. The campus includes some listed buildings, as well as some modern, high-rise ones, which offer panoramic views of the city and the surrounding area. It is in one of these high-rise buildings that the main offices of the Italian department are based.

The study facilities available to students of Italian include a library with a stock of books on a variety of Italian-related topics, i.e. Italian language, history of Italian literature, poetry, drama, fiction, prose, satire and humour, as well as several reference works and a number of periodicals. At the time when the fieldwork was carried out, the section also subscribed to two Italian daily papers, which students could read. Moreover, Downtown University offers an opportunity for first year students doing a degree in modern foreign languages to attend a summer school in the country where the language they are studying is spoken. These three-week-long courses in the foreign country are largely subsidised by the university. As was specified in the information booklet received by students on entry, the successful completion of this approved three-week course is a requirement for admission to the second year.

At the time of my visit to Downtown University, Italian was offered in a variety of joint honours combinations, but not as a single honours language.

Italian was also an option in different combinations and as a supplementary subject, in which case it was studied for two years only. When Italian was studied in a joint-honours combination with another European language (e.g. French, German or Spanish), students were required to take 60 credits of Italian modules in the first year, three modules in each semester of the second year, and one compulsory module in Italian language in each semester, plus a total of four other modules chosen from the available range, in the fourth year. Students in all years had to take a compulsory language module per semester. The other modules in the programme were compulsory for years one and two. In the final year, instead, students could choose four optional modules from a wider range.

In their first year, students could choose to study the language as 'beginners' or 'advanced students', if they had prior knowledge of Italian. Both of these modules counted for 20 credits per semester. The first year programme was completed by adding two more compulsory 10-credit modules, 'Introduction to Italian Literature (in translation)', in semester one, and 'Twentieth-Century Italian Literature', in semester two.

The second year options were the following: 'Reading Cinema'; 'Introduction to Italian Linguistics'; and 'Medieval and Renaissance Italy', in semester one, and 'Italian Women Writing', 'Dante: *Inferno*', and 'History of Italian Cinema', in semester two.

In their third year of study, students were supposed to attend courses at an Italian university, as well as at a university in a country where the other language they studied was the native language spoken. Alternatively, they could apply for a post as a language assistant in an Italian school or in a school in one of the countries where the other language they studied was spoken.

In year four, apart from a compulsory language module in each semester, students could choose a total of four from the following options: (1)'Dante: *Purgatorio*', (2) 'Dante: *Paradiso*', (3) 'Modern *Mezzogiorno*', (4) 'Contemporary Italian Fiction', (5) 'Italian and Its Varieties', (6) 'Italian and Translation', (7) 'Italian Popular Culture and Literature before 1860' and (8) 'Italian Popular Culture and Literature'. Each of the options marked by an odd number in the list was linked to the following one marked by an even number. This meant that, for example, if a student opted for 'Dante: *Purgatorio*', in one semester s/he would automatically have to go for 'Dante: *Paradiso*', in the other, and so on.

Other combinations (e.g. BA Modern Language Studies, BA European Studies, BA Modern Languages and the Visual Arts) required the students to take a smaller number of credits and modules in Italian. The non-linguistic options, however, remained more or less the same as the ones listed above.

7.2.2 Seaview University: Facilities, location and organisation.

Seaview is located in a Welsh coastal city. It is a vital research-led university, with a majority of its academic staff actively engaged in research. From the beginning, Seaview University was both a scientific and technical institution and an important centre of excellence in the arts. Over the centuries it has produced international research in fields ranging from geology to physics, from modern foreign languages to engineering, and from law and social sciences to medicine. The university is divided into 10 schools and offers almost 530 different undergraduate courses and 130 postgraduate courses in a very wide range of subjects and it caters for around 10,300 students. At the time when the fieldwork was conducted, there were 9 members of the staff in the Italian department: one professor, three lecturers, two *lettrici* and three language tutors. One of these tutors was Jean, who gave the beginners' class that was included in this study. Jean is also a fictitious name.

Like Downtown University, Seaview University has a compact campus, with all teaching buildings at a short walking distance from one another. Its buildings are mainly modern, but the university central administrative offices are located in a Victorian building, which is part of the original estate donated to the institution.

The Department of Italian, within the School of Arts, offers excellent study facilities. It has a large stock of books – on topics such as Italian language, Italian literature, history and general works on Italy, Italian politics and

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constitution, Italian economy, Italian philosophy and Italian cinema – and periodicals in the campus library for students to borrow or consult. These books and periodicals cover a wide spectrum of aspects of Italian life and culture. There are also reference works of all kinds and a daily newspaper to which the Department subscribes for the benefit of the students. A number of Italian films are also available for students to watch on video and satellite TV from Italy. Moreover, the university partly finances holiday courses in Italy to help students increase their familiarity with the language and the people in the actual country and offers students the opportunity to meet Italian students, who come to Britain from the Italian universities with which Seaview has exchange links. Last but not least the Italian Society, which is run by students, organises social and cultural activities as a more informal complement to the activities of the academic sphere.

At the time when I conducted my fieldwork, in Seaview University, Italian was taught both as a single honours subject, and in combination with another modern language (e.g. French, German, Spanish, Welsh and English as a Foreign Language); or with a different subject, ranging from Ancient History to Sociology. Italian could be studied as a component of single honours schemes based in other Departments as well, or, in combination with a second modern foreign language, in a degree in Modern Languages with Business Studies, with Computer Studies or with Legal Studies. Finally, the provision included a single-year module of Italian for non-specialists.

Students were required to take a different number of credits in Italian each year, according to their degree scheme. In their first year, students could take up to a maximum of 80 credits in Italian. In the following years, as a rule, students opting for Italian Single Honours were required to take 120 credits per year in Italian. Joint Honours students were normally asked to take at least 60 credits per year in Italian. Other combinations required a lower number of yearly credits in Italian.

In year one, freshers were divided into 'beginners' and 'advanced'. Beginner students had to choose a 2-semester language module of General Language and Oral which was worth 40 credits. Another 30-credit General Language and Oral module was available for the students who had left school with an A-level in Italian. The first year provision included four more optional modules, each worth 10 credits: 'History and Politics in Modern Italy', 'Intellectual and Cultural Themes in Italian History', 'Introduction to 20th Century Italian Narrative and Cinema' and 'Language in Action: Fiction and History'.

In their second year, students were obliged to take a compulsory language course which lasted for both semesters. According to their degree scheme they had to either go for a General Language and Oral 20-credit module, or for a 10-credit language module, specially tailored for students on a degree scheme in a non-linguistic discipline. Further options included one 20-credit module, 'Governing Italy I', and several 10-credit modules, 'Governing Italy II', 'Government and Politics in Post-War Italy', 'Dante I: Inferno', 'History of the Language I', 'Reading Modern Italian Fiction I', and 'Reading Modern

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Italian Fiction II'. Single Honours students were also expected to write a 2,000-word plan of a dissertation (worth 10 credits), which they would complete in the final year. Final year dissertations were required to be between 7,500 and 10,000 words long.

The third year of study was supposed to be spent abroad. Most of the degree schemes with Italian required students to spend an intercalary year abroad, either studying in universities located in countries where the languages they were studying were the native languages spoken, or working in a foreign school as English language assistants. Students could also spend a year abroad working, but the Department had to approve the students' choice of workplace.

In year four, again, students had to take a compulsory linguistic module which would last for the whole year. Again, there were 20-credit or 10-credit language modules, according to the degree scheme followed by the different students. The provision in Italian was completed by a number of content options, some of them in common with the ones available for the second year: 'Governing Italy I', 'Governing Italy II', 'Government and Politics in Postwar Italy', 'Dante I: Inferno', 'Dante II: Purgatorio', 'The Italian Language Since Unification', '19th and 20th Century Italian Social History', 'Writing Modern Italy I' and 'Writing Modern Italy II'. All these modules lasted for one semester and were worth 10 credits, apart from 'Governing Italy I', which was a 20-credit, 2-semester module. Furthermore students were required to write

their dissertations were supervised throughout the year. The dissertation was worth 20 credits.

7.3 The teachers

As I mentioned above, during my fieldwork I observed the work of two teachers, one of them, who taught Italian for beginners at Downtown University, was Italian, whereas the one who did the same job at Seaview University was British. As I have already indicated, in order to keep their identities confidential I am referring to the two of them using fictitious names: the Italian teacher has been given the name Francesca and the British teacher Jean. Although Francesca and Jean did the same job, their backgrounds were quite different. These differences were reflected in their ways of teaching the language and managing their classes.

Francesca, the Italian teacher was in her late 20s or early 30s when my observations took place. She had arrived in this country soon after completing her degree in modern languages in Italy and had had some previous experience as a teacher of Italian L2 in other British universities. In contrast, Jean was 50 at the time when I observed her class. She had already had a good deal of experience of teaching Italian, both in schools and at university. The age difference played a role shaping the two tutors' teaching styles, their expectations of the students and what the students expected from them and the way they related to them.

7.3.1 The teacher at Downtown University: Francesca

Francesca could easily be mistaken for one of her students. She dressed in a casual fashion and when she was outside of a classroom, waiting for the class which took place before hers to finish, she addressed her students as if they were her friends, in an informal, joking way. She smiled and laughed a lot and really gave the impression that she was having fun when she was working. She still exercised some authority in class. Without ever giving up her half-mocking tone, she was clearly able to enforce her authority as a teacher. She would sometimes shout at her students, if they were not working in the way she wanted them to work and even confiscated a student's pocket dictionary on one occasion, since he was not supposed to use it in class.

Francesca had completed her studies at a time when language teaching in Italy was very much informed by the communicative approach but, at the same time, she was used to the poor levels of proficiency achieved by British students. She did not expect language students to be fully-fledged linguists already and was not surprised when even basic grammatical terms and concepts had not been mastered. In Italy she had studied English and her knowledge of English was quite extensive. However, she was aware that she had a tendency to make occasional mistakes when speaking English. She used them as a resourceful way of building a relationship with the students in her classes and had no problems with asking students for help with vocabulary or with pronunciations she was unsure about. The students, or at least some of

the students, seemed to feel free to correct her when she made mistakes and this never hampered the natural flow and the friendly atmosphere of her lessons. Being Italian was, therefore, an asset for Francesca in her capacity as a teacher.

Francesca was still relatively new to language teaching and had not built up a stock of her own teaching materials. In her grammar classes she tended to rely almost entirely on the textbook adopted by the Italian section and made no use whatsoever of learning material of her own. The textbook was: Branciforte, S. and Grassi, A. *Parliamo Italiano! A Communicative Approach* (1998) Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin[i]. In the oral language class, instead, she did use materials that she had prepared, but these were mostly taken from teaching books and she had not had the chance to use (and test) them beforehand, as it typically happens to teachers at the beginning of their career.

Francesca always started her classes by calling the register and by making general announcements. In the oral class, this was followed by an explanation of the activity she was going to undertake in that lesson, while in the grammar class, as already mentioned, she stuck to the book, often reading aloud from it, suspending her reading at times for comments or further explanations. Occasionally, questions from the students, or her reactions to passages in the book led to digressions or longish comments.

Despite Francesca's reliance on the textbook she did not particularly like it. The book used at the Downtown University was an American publication and

Francesca made no secret of her dislike of some of the values reflected in the book, along with aspects of the American way of life portrayed there. Her stance, in this respect, related to her politics. She told me on one occasion that she had had the opportunity to get a teaching job in the United States, through one of the professors she had worked with in Italy, as he had connections there, but she turned the offer down and preferred to come to the UK. In class she never missed an opportunity to make ironic comments about examples in the book, which she saw as celebrating North America or Americans.

7.3.2 The teacher at Seaview University: Jean

In Jean's class there was also ample room for joking comments and laughter, but in a more controlled way than in Francesca's. Jean's tone of voice was always calm and in dealing with each lesson, she showed the confidence typical of a person who had had the time and the experience to grow into the teaching job. Her knowledge of Italian was remarkable. Her Italian was excellent in all respects and she spoke the language as if she was a native speaker.

Jean had completed her university studies in Britain. She had begun her career as a teacher when a focus on teaching grammar in language classes was very much the norm in modern foreign language teaching, at secondary school and even more so at higher education level. She looked back at this time as the 'golden years' and complained about the deterioration of these standards. As she once put it to me, "learning a language had come to mean just parroting

formulas without any real understanding and putting ticks in a grid". Her attitude was, however, one of resignation, since she still loved her work with students.

Jean made extensive use of her own material. She had prepared this over the years and that she knew it thoroughly. Her explanations were clear and seemed to come just at the right time, in between the parts of the text that she read aloud from her photocopies. It was as if they were part of a script she had rehearsed many a time. She performed her role with the skill of a consummate actress and director of the class. She found it more difficult to use the textbook that had been recently adopted, against her will, and that she disliked, because she felt it was the product of an approach to language teaching which she did not agree with. The book was: Speroni, C., Golino, C. L., Caiti, B., *Basic Italian* (1993) (7th edition) Fort Worth, TX; London: Harcourt Brace Jovanich[ii]. So, she only tended to use it as a complement to her notes and as a source of homework exercises to give to her students.

Because of her opposition to what she regarded as the infelicities in the communicative approach and because of the importance she attached to the teaching of grammar in modern foreign language instruction, Jean seemed to have built a particularly good rapport with some of the students in her class. These included: a mature student who was older than her, and had had experiences of formal language learning as a student and two international students, who had had language learning experiences in their home countries that were more in line with the methods that Jean considered appropriate.

7.4 Teaching materials

In this section, I am going to describe the teaching materials that were used by both teachers in the three different lessons that I observed, recorded and transcribed to carry out this study. A detailed discussion of the ways in which the material chosen was used by the teachers will follow in chapter 8 of this thesis, where I will take an in-depth look at how each of the classes unfolded. As will be discussed later, the choice of the material for each lesson and the use that each teacher made of it was partly determined by the experience of the teachers, as well as by the needs imposed by the curriculum for that level in each university.

7.4.1 Francesca's teaching materials

As I said earlier, one characteristic of Francesca's teaching was the tendency to heavily rely on the textbook, in her grammar lessons. In the oral lessons, she still used copies of published material to find ideas for organising classroom activities to maximise opportunities for students to practise the spoken language.

7.4.1.1 The material used in Francesca's written language and grammar class

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, most of Francesca written language and grammar lesson was based on the textbook adopted by Downtown University, *Parliamo Italiano! A Communicative Approach* (1998), Unit 5 ' Mangiare:

Tutti a tavola!'. Each unit in the textbook was divided into four teaching sections. Each section presented, in turn, some vocabulary, 'civilization notes', exercises, a dialogue or a reading passage, more exercises, more 'civilization notes', grammar explanations, related grammar exercises and a final 'civilization' box. At the end of each unit there were more reading passages and exercises on the topics dealt with in the unit.

7.4.1.2 The material used in Francesca's oral class

The teaching material that Francesca had prepared for her oral lesson was a simple grid, which is included in the appendices. The grid consisted of a weekly planning table, similar to the ones you can find in diaries. On the right side, there were seven boxes with the days of the week, arranged vertically. On the top there were six boxes, arranged horizontally, one for each of the meals or snacks that one could have during each day: 'colazione' (breakfast), 'pranzo' (lunch), 'merenda' (morning/afternoon in-between meals snack), 'cena' (dinner/supper), and 'spuntini' (snacks). On top of the sheet there were the words 'Mangio e bevo' (I eat and drink), and, under this heading, there was a line for each student to write his or her name. Around the grid there were drawings of drinks and fruit.

Students were supposed to work in pairs first. Each member in the pair, had to ask the other: '*Che cosa mangi a colazione / pranzo / merenda,* etc.' ('What do you eat for breakfast / lunch / a snack, etc.') and enter the information given in the appropriate box, corresponding to each meal for each day of the

week. At the end, each student was supposed to have information about the daily eating routines of their partner. After this, each pair was asked to work together with another pair and they would have to draw up a summary of their eating habits, writing a few lines that then one of them would then read out (e.g. 'In our group three people have breakfast and one does not…').

Apart from the worksheet, Francesca had prepared another page that went with the handout, in which she had listed some useful words and expressions, so that students could practise correct usages when they were asking or answering the questions. Apart from being a tool for the use of the student, the additional sheet served also as an *aide memoir* for the teacher, when, at the beginning of the class she introduced the activity. This page included some grammatical structures, to make sure students would be aware of the prepositions they should use with the verb *mangiare* ('to eat') . She also listed sentences with alternative verbs and made clear that, with some meals, the use of the verb *mangiare* is not accurate or appropriate. Students were therefore invited to use the verb *fare* ('to do' in the meaning of 'to have') with the terms *merenda, colazione, uno spuntino* ('a snack', 'breakfast', 'a snack') and the verbs *pranzare* ('to lunch') and *cenare* ('to have dinner or supper'). Finally, the handout contained a reminder on the use of the verb *piacere* ('to like') applied to the topic, e.g. *Cosa ti piace mangiare/cucinare?* ('What do you like eating/cooking?').

7.4.2 The material used in Jean's written language and grammar class

Jean's lesson was roughly divided into two parts. The first one consisted of a grammar explanation, done on the basis of a handout that she had given to the students. The grammatical form being dealt with was the subjunctive. The teacher had already introduced this verb form in the previous lesson and was now going to go over it again, providing a series of examples of use. The handout was headed 'Subjunctives', in English, in bold, capital letters. Under the main heading the words 'principal uses', written in bold, in lower case letters and underlined, introduced the students to eight compulsory areas of use of the subjunctive in Italian (the word 'compulsory' was written in bold capitals on top of the list). Under each of these areas of use there were several examples, where the verbal mood was used according to that particular usage. No translation was given of the examples. These points about compulsory use of the subjunctive were followed by two more areas of use of the subjunctive, headed by the title 'optional', in bold, capital letters.

The fact that the sentences which exemplified the various uses of the Italian subjunctive in context were not translated into English, made the presence of the teacher necessary, to clarify the meaning of each example, since these were not part of a wider text given in the handout, and, as one of the students pointed out during the lesson, could have been generated at random by a computer.

The second part of the class was dedicated to reading. Again, the activity was done on the basis of material that Jean had given out to the students. In fact, students had a handout made up of 24 pages containing a collection of reading passages from various sources. The passages were from texts written in different genres, from jokes to extracts from Italian readers for beginners (both passages and dialogues), from letters to adaptations of newspaper or magazine articles, from short stories to poems. Most excerpts did not have any reference to the source from which they were taken. A few did, but the references were not complete. The students had been given the handout – or 'anthology', as the teacher sometimes referred to it – earlier in the year and had been invited to read from it in their own time. From time to time, Jean asked the students if they had read anything in it they had found interesting and if they wanted to share with the rest of the class.

In the class that I observed and video-recorded, one student offered to read one of the poems, *Pudore* ('Modesty'), by A. Pozzi, which she said she had enjoyed reading. The teacher also got the students to read another poem on the same page, S. Quasimodo's *Ed è subito sera* ('And suddenly the evening comes'). Finally, another student suggested that the class should read a prose text, *La donna in Italia* ('The Woman in Italy'). Although this text had no references to any source or author, it read like a journalistic account of the changing situation of women in Italy, in the transition from a traditional into a more modern society. The text was probably taken from a reader or a textbook, because some words bore little numbers on top, as if there had been footnotes in the original text (however these had not been reproduced on the

photocopied handout). It also seemed rather dated, both because of some of the vocabulary used, and because of some of the ideas expressed. Indeed, the text seemed to refer to a stage of societal transformation in Italy during the late 1960s or the 1970s.

7.5 The students[iii]

In both universities, the students in the classes that I observed were mostly British. There was a small number of international students, on exchange programmes. In some cases, as I will show later, in Chapters 9 and 10, their presence, although quantitatively small was qualitatively significant, because they tended to engage actively in the class activities and to ask questions or make comments, that in many cases were followed up by the teachers.

7.5.1 The students at Downtown University

I observed, recorded and analysed two different classes at Downtown University, an oral class, which was made up of only seven students, and a written language and grammar class, which included fifteen students. Some of these students were the same as in the oral class. In both classes female students outnumbered male students and there were no clearly gendered patterns of interaction since the students got along quite well with each other and the teacher treated the male and female students in very much the same way. On occasions, she did however pick on some of the male students more than on the others. This was due to the fact that these students spoke up more

in class and challenged her. And, according to Francesca, they tended not to do their homework.

In the oral class, two students out of seven were male. Two were international students: a Spanish female student on Erasmus exchange called Dolores and a visiting American male student called John. There was also a mature female student, Esther, who was British. Although the age gap between Esther and the others was considerable and immediately noticeable, Esther was well integrated in the class. She worked normally – in a pair first and a wider group, later on in the lesson – seemingly enjoying the class. Also the exchanges between Francesca and Esther were very relaxed and similar to the ones that Francesca had with the other students.

As for the international students in the class, the presence of John, the American student on exchange, added an extra dynamic to the building of classroom relationships. I have already mentioned that Francesca, the teacher, had rather negative views with respect to the United States. In spite of this, her attitude towards John was a very positive one. One day, during an informal conversation I had with her, when she was talking about her views on America and the Americans as a whole, she added that, quite surprisingly, she admired John, for "he was not like an average American person". He had travelled, coming into contact with different cultures. For example, he had been to Central America and to Mexico. He could speak fluent Spanish and he had done some voluntary work for charities in disadvantaged environments in

those countries. Although this did not change her approach to America as a whole, she clearly regarded this particular student very favourably.

John did engage quite actively in the oral class I observed, participating in the pair-work activity with Nick, a British student and an active contributor to the class. Francesca seemed to have a complex rapport with Nick. She used to address remarks to him a lot and seemed positive in her approach to him, but she often picked on him too. Nick was the student whose dictionary was seized by Francesca for the duration of one class, because he continuously transgressed her ban on consulting dictionaries and her requirement that the students should ask her instead.

The presence of John as a 'cultural outsider' within the student group, with a different cultural frame of reference to his British counterparts generated some interesting exchanges about culture, as will be shown in more detail, later on in this thesis. Francesca was only able to bridge the gap between the aspects of Italian and British culture being discussed in class, but this did not help the American student, who did not have access to either funds of knowledge. As I will show in my data analysis chapters, heterogeneity in a class can add considerable 'cultural' value.

In Francesca's written language and grammar class, the group was larger. Five of the students in the oral class were also part of the grammar class. This included Esther, the mature student. There were only three male students in this group, Rob, Leo and Nick. Nick was also a student in the oral class. In

addition, the group included two female Spanish students on an Erasmus programme. One of them was Dolores from the oral class; the other one was called Ana. There was also a student of Italian origin, called Faye, She did not have any prior knowledge of Italian and for this reason she was studying as a beginner.

7.5.2 The students at Seaview University

Jean's written language and grammar class at Seaview University was small, but rather heterogeneous. It included Tim, a mature student in his fifties, Anna, an Austrian student on an Erasmus exchange programme, Megumi, a Japanese student and two British female students, Sarah and Laura. Also in this class heterogeneity in age and nationality, far from constituting a problem, was at times the source of culturally meaningful exchanges.

Tim, the mature student, was very active and contributed to the lesson a lot. Sometimes his neighbour, Anna, the Austrian student, asked him for explanations, rather than interrupting the teacher. However, also Anna actively contributed to the class, by asking questions, making comments and proposing a poem to read in the second part of the lesson. The British and the Japanese students, on the whole, were much more passive, although, they did participate, if required to do so.

The teacher seemed to be affected by Tim's presence. She had a few exchanges with him and she made gender-related jokes when talking directly

to him. For instance, this happened at a certain point of the lesson, when they were discussing an example of an Italian sentence containing a verb in the subjunctive. In Italian the sentence meant 'I think you are right'. Jean turned to Tim and said: "No, Tim, you must learn that you've got to say to the wife, I'm sure you're right, I'm sure you're right, I'm sure you're right, you're definitely right, don't get me wrong, you're right!" Tim responded playfully to this aside. The fact that Jean and Tim were of a similar age seemed to make it easier for both to relate to each other.

As I have already said Jean was a very experienced teacher. This was evident in her way of dealing with the cultural heterogeneity of the class. She could immediately relate to Anna's questions, some of which puzzled the British students, because she was aware of the nature of Anna's prior knowledge and language learning experiences. Furthermore, Jean tried to involve the Japanese student in the classroom activities, asking her directly to participate and asking questions related to her cultural background. In this way, Jean showed that she valued diversity and, at the same time, she found a convenient and appropriate way of prompting a student, who would otherwise be inclined to remain silent.

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[i] The textbook pages relevant to Francesca's written language and grammar class described in this thesis are included in the appendices.
[ii] The textbook pages relevant to Jean's class described in this thesis are included in the appendices.
[iii] The names of the students used in this thesis, as well as the names of the teachers, are fictitious.

CHAPTER 8

Teaching/ learning events and materials used

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to set the context for the analysis chapters which follow. Here I will focus on each of the three teaching events which I observed in two different British universities and which constitute the source of the data analysed in this thesis. Drawing on my fieldnotes from my classroom observations and my informed conversations with the teachers, I will give a detailed account of the way in which the classes unfolded and of the materials used for each teaching/learning event. In doing this I will also refer to the teachers' particular styles, the ethos and the rituals followed in these classes. My account will be primarily based on: my fieldnotes, the transcripts of each class, the relevant worksheets or textbook pages and the reading passages that were used. This chapter will hopefully round off the information already given in chapter 7 and provide a useful introduction to the analysis chapters.

8.2 The beginners' grammar class at 'Downtown University'

There was a group of 15 students in this class. While the students were still flocking into the classroom and taking place behind their desks the teacher was marking their presence on her register. After the door was closed, the teacher started giving a couple of general announcements. First of all, students were reminded of the deadline for a piece of assessed homework they had to hand in the following week. The second

announcement was about planning. Francesca had agreed with another teacher, who taught grammar to another group of beginners, that they would get to the end of unit 9, section B, in their textbook by the end of the term. This meant that they would have to do a unit section in each of the classes in the semester, if they wanted to have five spare hours for revision at the end of the term. The teacher said that she would ask the students to learn the vocabulary every time.

While she was still speaking about this, a little group of late students knocked at the door and came in. Francesca interrupted her announcement to greet them in a jolly way and mark down their presence in her register. Then, she took the floor again, briefly summarising the announcements she had already given for the benefit of the latecomers. Here, Francesca, in a light-hearted way warned her students that the task of going over so many units in the textbook was demanding, however she used words of encouragement. Yes, they would have to work hard, but they should rest on the certainty that the task was within their possibilities and, above all, they should not be afraid of the examination.

After this, yet another late student came in. Francesca ticked his name in the register and asked him to ask a fellow student to inform him about the announcements she had given, after the class.

8.2.1 Reviewing homework

At this point the class started. Francesca turned to a specific page in the textbook and to the exercise shown in Figure 1 below.

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Fig. 1

> **C. La risposta logica**. Trovare nella colonna a destra le frasi che si abbinano logicamente con le frasi a sinistra.
>
> 1. Dai, Gianna Prendi ancora un po' di torta!
> 2. Che cosa ha detto Lucia quando le hai dato il regalo?
> 3. Riccardo, tu mi vuoi veramente bene?
> 4. E dopo gli spaghetti alle vongole ho mangiato un agnello arrosto squisito.
> 5. Hai sentito? Tommaso ha preso un brutto voto all'esame.
> 6. Scusami, Antonella. Non c'è più acqua.
>
> a. Fa niente, Anzi preferisco il vino.
> b. Poverino! E ha studiato tanto!
> c. No, per carità! Non ce la faccio più?
> d. Che buono! Ho l'acquolina in bocca.
> e. Non sapeva cosa dire. E' rimasta senza parole.
> f. Si capisce, sei il mio amore!

Exercise C page 190. From Branciforte, S., Grassi, A. (1998) *Parliamo Italiano – A communicative approach*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company.

This first activity was the correction of some exercises in the textbook the students were supposed to have done as homework. The first was exercise C shown in Figure 1. This required students to match utterances with the appropriate responses, which were listed in scrambled order. On asking a student, Leo, to read out the first sentence followed by the appropriate response, however, Francesca found out that he had not done the exercise. He excused himself by saying that he had done the exercise on another page. Francesca answered that he should have done both and asked if there were other students who had not done the exercise on page 190. Several students raised their hands, admitting they had not completed their homework. Francesca jokingly scolded them, while she praised those who had been diligent. Then Francesca asked Ella, who had done her homework, to read out the first sentence and the appropriate response in Italian. However, Ella did not immediately understand that she was supposed to do this, because Francesca had called her *Ellina* using the Italian suffix *–ina*, a diminutive form which expresses affection or closeness to the speaker. In other words she was calling her *little Ella*, but Ella did not know what that meant

and failed to respond. When the teacher realised why her prompt had not worked she addressed Ella again calling her "*Ellina, piccola Ella*" ("*Ellina*, little Ella") and reading the starting line of the exercise for her, so that Ella only needed to complete the sentence by choosing the response from the right-hand column. Ella did so, but she did not give the correct answer. So, Francesca addressed Eve, another student, asking her whether she agreed with Ella. Eve said she did not agree and Francesca invited her to give her answer, which was the correct one. After this, Francesca asked Mia, a third student, to translate the first half of the sentence into English. Mia did so, but she omitted the translation of the Italian word *dai!*, an idiom which corresponds more or less to the English 'come on!' or 'go on!'. As no other student appeared to know the meaning of this word, Francesca gave the class a translation of the expression. After this, Francesca turned to Nick, and asked the student to translate the response to item c in the right-hand column in the exercise, but Nick gave a wrong answer, so Francesca turned to one of the Erasmus students in the class, Ana, from Spain. As she hesitated, Francesca asked yet another student, Faye, for the translation of the line. However, Faye also had difficulties in giving the translation, because also the response to the first part of the phrase in the textbook contained an idiomatic expression, "*Per carità!*" which can mean "For Heaven's sake!", or also, "Mercy on me!" Once again Francesca had to give a translation herself. Then she passed to the second item in the exercise.

The same pattern continued with one student reading out one phrase from the exercise in Italian and the other one being asked to give a translation of it. The pace of the exchanges increased a bit, after the first pair or phrases had been completed. Francesca praised students who had done well or reproached those who were not

ready to answer. She also made some comments to highlight particular words or structures she wanted the students to observe or remember. For example, in commenting on the final version of sentence 3, which was correctly matched to sentence f in the right-hand column, Francesca reminded the students that in the oral class they had had on the previous day they had already encountered a grammatical structure that was again used in this item, the *impersonal si*. She added that later on in the class they were going to deal with that structure in detail.

Sentence 6, in the left-hand column of the exercise in Figure 1, provided Francesca with the opportunity to focus on the different possible translations of the word *scusami*. The student (Linda) who had been asked to translate the sentence and the corresponding response (sentence a in the right-hand column) had translated *scusami* with *excuse me*. This word has a wide semantic range and can be translated by different English terms in different contexts. It may mean *excuse me, sorry, pardon me, apologies*. Francesca made sure her students were aware of this mismatch between the semantic range of the words in English and Italian and of the fact that the translation given by Linda was not appropriate. Francesca also had to provide the students with the meanings of some other terms in the exercise, either because they asked her what they meant or because she realised that their translations were not accurate. So, for example, while checking sentence 4 (which was matched to sentence d) she taught her students that *vongole* means *clams*; dealing with sentence 5 (matched to sentence b) she was asked for the meaning of *brutto*, (bad); and in sentence a (which is the response to sentence 6) she explained the meaning of *anzi*, here *actually*.

After the correction of the first homework exercise, Francesca immediately passed on to the next exercise A on page 193. This is shown in Figure 2 below.

Fig. 2

A. **Due Brani.** Creare avverbi dagli aggettivi elencati qui sotto. Poi sostituire le parole in corsivo con gli avverbi di significato simile.

Esempio: gentlile → gentilmente
Mi ha detto *in modo cortese* che…
Mi ha detto gentilmente che…

accurato	divino	misterioso
normale	perfetto	rapido
raro	recente	semplice

1. *Di solito* Cristina e Roberto passano le sere insieme a casa e non escono *quasi mai.* Oggi, però, Roberto ha telefonato a Cristina al lavoro e le ha parlato *in modo strano.* Le ha detto *solo* di essere pronta per uscire alle sette e mezzo. Quella sera l'ha portata a mangiare all'osteria "ZI' Rosella" dove si mangia *in modo squisito.*

2. *Non molto tempo fa* Andrew è andato in Italia per seguire un corso intensivo di lingua italiana. Ha studiato molto e ha imparato *in poco tempo.* Ora parla bene l'italiano: non *senza errori*, si capisce, ma abbastanza *in modo preciso.*

Exercise A page 193. From Branciforte, S., Grassi, A. (1998) *Parliamo Italiano – A communicative approach*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company

Here, the students were required to transform adjectives into the corresponding adverbs. They then had to study two short passages in which some adverbs or expressions were given in italics. They were supposed to replace these italicised words with the adverbs they had just formed, preserving the sense of the text.

Once again, Francesca asked different students to read out one sentence each. They read the sentence just once, putting in the new lexical item directly. Before starting, Francesca realised that, also in this case, some students had not done their homework and making half-serious remarks, reproached the class. Then she asked Leo, the student who had admitted not having done the other exercise, but had claimed that he had done this one, to start. Leo correctly replaced *di solito* (*usually*) with *normalmente*

(*normally*) at the beginning of the first text, but he hesitated when he got to the second item where he was required to replace *quasi mai* (*hardly ever*). The word *mai* (*ever* or *never*), in this sentence, is linked to the negative *non* (*not*) to give the sentence its meaning. In order to replace *non…quasi mai* (*not…almost ever,* i.e. *almost never*) with *raramente* (*rarely*) and keep the same meaning, the students should have turned the sentence from negative into affirmative, *e non escono quasi mai* (*lit. and they do not go out almost ever, i.e. and they hardly ever go out*) *e escono raramente* (*and they rarely go out*). This was not easy to understand, also because, in the text, the negative form 'non' was not in italics. Therefore the students did not think that they had to change that word too. In fact, as Leo was unable to replace *quasi mai* with any of the adverbs he had formed from the adjectives in the list, Francesca turned to Vera, another student, who had identified the correct adverb, but failed to make the necessary change in the sentence, in order to preserve its original meaning. This obliged Francesca to give an explanation. Francesca referred to a moment in the class the day before, where she had dealt with the difference between the use of *mai* in Italian and the use of *ever* and *never* in English. Then she had pointed out that the word *non* in the text should have been printed in italics. However, as Francesca attempted to offer this explanation, she stumbled, as she could not remember the expression *in italics* and wrongly used the term *inclined* which was tactfully corrected by a student, Laura.

The rehearsal of the homework activity then carried on. Ella gave the solution for the next sentence without any hesitations. She was praised and then Francesca called upon Dolores, one of the Spanish Erasmus students to continue. Unfortunately she had not done the exercise, nor had Ana, the other Spanish student. Again Francesca used a

half-joking tone to stress her disappointment with this attitude and told the students off. They responded by giving the teacher an excuse: they had got mixed up with the timetable, so the week before they had not come to the language lesson. Therefore they did not know what homework they were supposed to do. Francesca made fun of this excuse, telling them it was a very original one; one she had never come across before.

The remainder of the teaching/learning activity ran fairly smoothly, although other students turned out not to have done the exercise and some struggled to provide correct answers.

8.2.2 Introducing a new grammar point

At that point the grammar class moved on to the next stage. Francesca began explaining some new language items. The first was the difference in meaning and use between the two Italian verbs *conoscere* and *sapere*, which both mean 'to know'. The Italian use is similar to that in several other European languages, e.g. French (*connaître* and *savoir*), Spanish (*conocer* and *saber*), German (*kennen* and *wissen*), and so on. However the semantic range of the English verb 'know' is much wider. As all of Francesca's students were students of other languages and Italian was not their first foreign language, they were all familiar with this difference. Therefore Francesca was able to get someone to articulate the rule about the different use of these two verbs. Juliane, one of the students, responded. Then she asked Rob to read the first few examples (and their translation) given by the textbook. Then she asked Ruth to do the same. Ruth read out the sentences on the relevant page. Having the students read

the examples gave Francesca the opportunity to correct their pronunciation of some words.

When the examples had been given, Francesca started to go over the grammar schematisation in the textbook. First, she made the students observe the conjugation of the present indicative of the two verbs displayed in the book. She pointed out that *sapere* is an irregular verb and stressed the importance of learning the different forms. She also made the students aware that when new verbs are presented, the textbook usually provides their past participle and invited the students to make a note of the present infinitive and the past participle of any new verbs they met, so to facilitate their memorisation. After this, she went over the sections dealing with each of the verbs in the book, drawing attention to the places where their use was clearly spelt out and providing more examples to compare and contrast the use of the two verbs.

This done, Francesca asked the students if they had any questions and, as nobody appeared to have any, she told them to work in pairs with one of their neighbours and do exercise A which is shown in Figure 3 below. This was a simple fill-in-the-blanks exercise, composed of three mini-passages from which all forms of *conoscere* or *sapere* had been taken out. Students had to fill the blanks with the correct verb in the appropriate mood, tense and person.

Fig. 3

A. Al ristorante. Completare i brani con la forma appropriate dei verbi **conoscere** o **sapere.**

1. Mario è un buongustaio: _____ tutti i ristoranti della città. Lui è un cliente abituale al ristorante La Forchetta: i camerieri lo _____ e _____ quali piatti preferisce.

2. Noi non_____ cucinare molto bene, così vogliamo uscire per mangiare al ristorante. Chiediamo ad un amico: "Tullio, _____ dov'è l'Osteria del Giglio?" Lui risponde: "Non lo _____, però _____ una buona trattoria qui vicino."

3. Io _____ quel signore seduto al tavolo laggiù, ma non _____ dove l'ho visto prima. Ah, adesso mi ricordo. E' il padre di Angela. L'ho _____ a quella festa la settimana scorsa.

Exercise A page 195. From Branciforte, S., Grassi, A. (1998) *Parliamo Italiano – A communicative approach*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company

While the students worked, Francesca monitored them by moving around the class and observing and helping out each pair. During the pair-work Francesca moved around the classroom, monitoring the work of the different pairs of students. She helped students do the exercise and answered one question on the use of the two verbs. This activity went on for 3-4 minutes. When all the couples had gone over the exercise, Francesca led a whole-class discussion of the exercise. In turn students read out a sentence of the exercise giving the missing verb form. The activity unfolded in a similar way to the previous two exercises. In most cases the students had filled in the blanks correctly. Francesca intervened in the following ways:

Leo was called upon to 'fill the blanks' for items 2 and 3. He was not paying attention and had not heard that the first 'blank' had already been dealt with by Lisa. So he dealt with the same item and Francesca, with an ironic reproach, invited him to be more attentive to the class activity. When they reached the end of the first passage, Ana, one of the Spanish students, asked whether the form of the verb *conoscere* required in the second blank should be *conoscono* (simple present 3rd person plural) or

conosce (simple present 3rd person singular). The solution given by Leo (3rd person plural) was correct, since the subject of the sentence is *i camerieri* ('the waiters'). Francesca pointed this out to her before asking another student to carry on with the activity. When they got to the beginning of the third passage the student who was reading out the first sentence, Laura mispronounced the demonstrative *quel,* saying [kel] instead of [kwel], although she had chosen the correct verb form. Again, Mia read *conosciuto* wrongly [kono'skiuto] instead of [kono'çuto] when she was filling in the last blank. This was picked on by Francesca, who repeated the sentence that Mia had read out and the one that Laura had read out modelling for them the correct pronunciation. At the end of the activity Francesca seemed pleased because students seemed to have understood the difference in the use of these two verbs.

8.2.3 Translating a dialogue

Francesca then introduced the next activity: a dialogue further on in the textbook, which is shown in Figure 4 below.

Fig. 4

	D.2 Incontro	
	Cosa brucia in cucina? *Renata e Paola sono in cucina, dove preparano una cena per i loro amici.*	
1	Renata:	Apparecchi tu la tavola, mentre io taglio i pomodori.
	Paola:	Va bene. Quale tovaglia usiamo?
	Renata:	Vediamo, siamo in otto… Perché non usiamo quella blu con i tovaglioli di cotone? Sono più eleganti!
	Paola:	Bene. E le posate – ci servono anche i cucchiai?
	Renata:	No, solo i cucchiaini da caffè. Non dimenticare i bicchieri per il vino e l'acqua! Prendi il vassoio di cristallo per la torta e poi lo puoi mettere nella sala da pranzo.
	Paola:	Stasera si prepara veramente una tavola elegante!
10	Renata:	Certo! E' il compleanno di Vittorio!
	Paola:	Quando prepari il sugo per la pasta voglio vedere quello che fai. Così imparo come si fa (1).

Text D.2 page 198. From Branciforte, S., Grassi, A. (1998) *Parliamo Italiano – A communicative approach*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company

Francesca read the text out to the class, first. At the end of her reading, knowing that there were a number of new words and expressions, she asked the class whether they had understood the meaning and asked the students to provide a line-by-line translation of it. The procedure was again similar to the one employed with the previous exercises, except that each student took one whole turn in the dialogue and attempted to translate it.

Nick was the first student Francesca called. He hesitated with the translation of the first line in the dialogue. He could not give the translation of *Apparecchi tu la tavola* (Will you lay the table, please). So, Francesca gave him the translation of this expression. Then Nick carried on the task without problems. After this it was Esther's turn. She asked for the meaning of the term *tovaglia* (table cloth) which was promptly provided by Francesca. Eve dealt with most of the following line, but she did not

know how to translate *Vediamo*, (Let's see). Francesca helped the student even with this minor point. The next student, Linda, remained silent when her turn came round. She was hesitating because she did not know the meaning of *posate* (cutlery). Francesca supplied the translation and Linda completed her task, but she made another mistake which required an explanation on Francesca's part. The problem for Linda was the interpretation of the meaning of the verb *servire* in "*ci servono anche i cucchiai?*". Francesca had to point out that this verb can mean both 'to serve' but also 'to need'. In this case it is used with its second meaning, while Linda had translated the sentence as: "Do we serve spoons?". In order to clarify this point Francesca gave some more examples of the two different uses of this verb. First she said "*Ti servo un piatto di spaghetti*", where *servire* is used in the meaning of 'to serve' (I'll serve you a dish of spaghetti). Then, lifting the textbook in her hand she stated "*Questo libro serve per imparare l'italiano*" (This book is needed to learn Italian). This example was followed by a codeswitch into English and a joking remark ("That's debatable, actually!"), in which Francesca expressed her reservations on the value of the textbook as a teaching resource.

Next, the teacher called Faye to carry on with the translation. Again, the student could not complete the translation because of one word. She could not remember that *dimenticare* meant 'forget'. Once Francesca had helped her with this, she completed the translation of the first sentence in the dialogue turn without problems. However, in the next sentence she needed Francesca's help for she did not know the term *vassoio* (tray) which she initially mistranslated as 'vases'.

The next student to be asked for her contribution was Ana, one of the two Erasmus students. She hesitated at the beginning, so Francesca asked her whether she wanted to translate the next turn into Spanish first. But Ana chose not do this and was able to complete most of her task (she translated *elegante* with beautiful, instead of 'elegant').

Ruth was the next student to be asked to translate. The turn she was asked to translate was short and easy. The next turn – which Francesca assigned to Mia – was longer and more complicated. Francesca joked, as she asked for Mia's contribution, saying that Mia could complain for having been given such a difficult task. However, Mia did her translation with relatively little help from Francesca.

The next turn was Ella's. Although she sounded very confident at the outset of her translation, while she was still translating the first sentence she made a mistake. Francesca pretended to have fit of coughing in order to attract her attention to it. This was enough to make her realise her mistake, so she could correct it. The next sentence in the text challenged the students with a difficult word, *piccante.* Chloe, who was expected to give the translation of the sentence, translated it as 'spicy'. Francesca explained that *piccante* means 'hot' rather than spicy, since spicy food, although savoury, may well be mild, while *piccante* involves that "it burns a bit!"

Juliane, who was the student expected to translate the following turn translated *peperoncino* with 'pepperoni', while *peperoncino* means chilli. Once again Francesca corrected the mistake. Juliane carried on, but she had to be helped two more times because she did not know the meaning of the words *cipolla* (onion) and *pancetta* (bacon).

At this point Francesca called upon Rob to give a contribution. He was first asked to translate line 17, but as it was short and easy, Francesca asked him to carry on with the next turn (lines 18-19). The first statement was translated without any hesitation, but as soon as he started to deal with the longer sentence he paused. The first problem he faced was how to translate *sul fornello*, literally 'on the cooker'. With a little help from Francesca, Rob managed to translate the first part of the sentence correctly, 'To start with, we'll put the water for the pasta on the hob'. But the most difficult terms still had to come. The first one was the phrase *buttiamo la pasta*, an idiom which refers to the act of putting the pasta into the boiling water. Rob had difficulty with this expression. He probably knew that the verb *buttare* means 'to throw', so he thought that the phrase might refer to when the pasta is 'thrown out' of the pot; therefore he translated it as 'we drain the pasta'. Francesca corrected Rob's translation immediately, but it took her a couple of seconds to register the reason for his mistake. She eventually came to the conclusion that Rob did not know how to prepare pasta and took this as an opportunity to give the class explicit directions on how to cook pasta. She said quite emphatically that one must not put the pasta in cold water, but bring the water to the boil first, add salt and only then throw the pasta in. She also indicated that adding stock cube for extra flavour, or oil to prevent the pasta sticking together or to the sides of the pot then becomes unnecessary. After this brief monologue, she re-assigned a turn to Rob. He then faced one further difficulty in his translation of the idiom *al dente*. Neither Rob nor the other students in the class were able to translate this phrase, which again had to be explained by Francesca. Then Rob translated the last sentence in the dialogue correctly, albeit with a brief moment of hesitation on the term *condirla*, 'to add the sauce'.

Then Francesca called Lisa to continue the translation. Lisa started wrongly, because she carried on using the same subject ('we') as in the previous turn, whereas the character speaking in the turn she was translating used the first person singular. However, after that Lisa, appeared to be understanding the text pretty well, with only minor hesitations on difficult terms such as *allora* (then or so) and the idiom *capirai!* (big deal!). She translated these with Francesca's help.

Leo, the next student to be asked for a contribution needed constant help from Francesca in order to provide a translation in both of the turns he was expected to translate. Francesca even had to help him out with the translation of *Buon appetito!* (Have a good meal!). However, one of his pauses gave Francesca the opportunity to digress and teach her students another idiom (*Salute!* i.e. 'Bless you!'). Her digression was prompted by the phrase *Alla salute della cuoca!* (To the health of the chef!) in line 25 of the dialogue.

Vera, who had to translate the last few turns, did not know how to translate the answer, *Altrettanto!* (And you!), so she asked Francesca for help. Thereafter, Vera was able to conclude the translation of the text quite smoothly. The students laughed when they reached the end of the dialogue, when the event depicted in the dialogue ended with the cake made by the dinner party host burning while she was entertaining her friends. The laughter appeared to show that they were engaging with the task and that Francesca had succeeded in animating the world of the textbook for them.

8.2.4 Assigning a new homework activity

When the activity was over, Francesca assigned the class another homework exercise, which was similar to the text they had gone over at the start of the class. The exercise consisted of nine sentences in scrambled order, each referring to an event described in the dialogue they had just read. They had to re-order them, so as to obtain a simple summary of the text. While assigning the homework Francesca addressed directly two of her students, Vera and Lee, in her usual half-serious and half joking tone, telling them that she knew they were not going to do their homework.

8.2.5 Introducing another new grammar point

At this point in the grammar class, Francesca asked the students to turn to page 200 of the textbook. She took the opportunity to 'celebrate' the fact that they had got that far in the book by saying "We have reached page 200!" and raising her fists to the sky in a victory sign. After this brief outburst Francesca recomposed herself and said she was now going to introduce a new grammatical point to the class: the use of the particle *si* in impersonal phrases, which is a notoriously difficult construction. Francesca's explanation followed the structure of the explanation given by the book. First she read out the examples given. In some cases, she made jokes comparing what the example said to reality, like when she commented on the first sentence with *si* in the textbook. The sentence read *In classe **si parla** italiano*. After reading the translation provided in the book (In class we speak Italian) she added, grinning, that in her class this practice was not possible otherwise the students would not understand anything that was being said. Indeed, most of the talk about the textbook and about the grammar items was in

English, while the text was read aloud in Italian and translated into English to check comprehension.

After reading the first set of examples and their translations, Francesca started giving a general explanation about this particular structure. She indicated that the impersonal *si* can be used with a verb, in Italian, in sentences without a subject to make general statements or questions. In this case it usually corresponds to English sentences with 'one' as a subject. However, the same form is used to construct sentences with a passive meaning. The difference between the two is so fine that few Italians can readily tell one construction from the other. Indeed Francesca kept the explanation brief and followed the points in the textbook very closely.

One of the lines of the explanation in the textbook dealt with an exception to the rule, i.e. the partitive pronoun *ne*, which always follows *si*. However, one of the students noticed a gap in the textbook explanation which had not been picked up by Francesca: that is, before *ne*, *si* mutates to *se*. Francesca thanked the student for pointing out this gap and made a critical, ironic comment both on the book, and on herself as a teacher.

When she had come to the end of her explanation, Francesca asked the class to complete an exercise, which is shown in Figure 5. The purpose was to put the rule they had just gone over into practice.

Fig. 5

Che cosa ci si può comprare? Trovare nella lista a destra prodotti che si possono comprare nei luoghi elencati a sinistra. Poi formulare frasi usando **si.**

Esempio: Dal fruttivendolo si comprano le mele.

1. in farmacia	a. le sigarette e i francobolli
2. in libreria	b. il bagnoschiuma al profumo di mughetto
3. dal macellaio	c. i biscotti
4. dal fioraio	d. l'aspirina
5. in profumeria	e. il caffè Lavazza
6. in pasticceria	f. rose e tulipani
7. in tabaccheria	g. il nuovo romanzo di Umberto Eco
8. alla torrefazione	h. delle costolette di vitello

Exercise A page 201. From Branciforte, S., Grassi, A. (1998) *Parliamo Italiano – A communicative approach*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company

The exercise consisted of two lists of terms: on the left a series of shops or outlets, on the right a list of items that could be bought. Students had to find out where each item could be bought and then compose a sentence with the *impersonal si* following the model provided: 'At the greengrocer's one buys apples'.

The activity was conducted in the same way as the earlier pair-work. Students worked on their own in pairs, while Francesca went round the class, observing their work and helping them out. After letting them deal with the exercise for a few minutes, she asked single students to give the sentence they had composed for each item in the exercise. When she was on the point of passing from the pair-work to the whole-class discussion, Francesca had a problem in orchestrating the class interaction. She lost her patience at this point and was only able to attract everybody's attention by raising her voice and using a 'colourful' Italian expression.

After this little incident, the whole-class activity proceeded smoothly, until the last item in the exercise had been reached:

Alla torrefazione, si compra il caffè Lavazza
(At the coffee house, one buys Lavazza coffee).

This sentence gave Francesca a cue for a digression of a few minutes on the Italian way of buying and drinking coffee. This took the form of a narrative. The translation of the term *torrefazione* (coffee house) given above does not do justice of the exact meaning of this word. Indeed, a *torrefazione* is a factory where they roast coffee. Many of these factories have their own shop or outlet, where private customers can buy coffee directly from the producer.

In response to the item in the textbook, Francesca started off by commenting that nobody would buy industrial coffee from a place like that. People buy Lavazza coffee at supermarkets, but the service they find in a *torrefazione* is completely different and much more personalised. She told her students that in such an outlet they would ask about the kind of machine you have got in order to adjust the cut of the coffee powder they sell you. They would also have a wide variety of different coffee grains (more or less roasted) and they would be ready to mix them together to produce your own favourite coffee blend. This would happen while the customer is waiting. Francesca mentioned that this is what her grandmother used to do. She used to go to one of these places and bought her own coffee mix. As she had a grinder at home, she used to buy coffee beans rather than coffee powder. Francesca shared with the class her memory of the smell that was around her grandmother's house when the coffee was ground. She added that at the moment, being in England, she did buy Lavazza coffee herself, but that it could not be compared to the quality of the one you could buy from a *torrefazione* in Italy. Although this coffee was a bit more expensive than the one from the supermarket, it was well worth the money. Finally Francesca concluded her

narrative by advising students to visit a *torrefazione* and buy their coffee there when they went to Italy.

8.2.6 The close of the class

At this point the class was almost over. There was only time left to assign some more homework. Francesca left her students free to choose whether to do exercise C or exercise D on a subsequent page of the textbook. Both exercises required the students to make sentences with the *impersonal si* structure based on a comparison between life in Italy and life in the U.S. In exercise C students were supposed to help an Italian University student on an exchange programme in the States with problems she encountered on campus. Students had to answer her questions whenever possible using the structure they had just learned. Exercise D dealt with differences between Italy and the United States in relation to eating habits.

In assigning this homework Francesca made some sarcastic comments about the American education system, remarking that, although the Americans say their universities are very good, most Italian students come back from exchanges there to report that it is far easier to study in the U.S. than in Italy.

To bring the class to a close, Francesca summed up, with the help of the students, the exercises that she had assigned them to do as homework for next session. She did this by asking Rob to read out the exercises in Italian. After this the class was over and the students left the room.

8.3 The spoken language class at Downtown University

As I indicated in Chapter 7, the oral class I observed involved a group of 7 students. Some of these – Nick, Esther, Dolores, Mia and Vera – had also participated in the grammar and written language class which I have just described. The classroom was substantially smaller than the one where the grammar language class was held and the students' desks were arranged at the centre of the room, forming a rectangular shape, with students sitting all around it. The teacher stood behind one of the short sides of the rectangle of desks and had an OHP that she used to write down words and phrases that she suggested to the students who, during the activity, asked her for terms they did not know.

As she often did, Francesca started the class by making some general announcements. Francesca informed the students that she had almost completed the marking of a previous assignment in oral Italian. She said she was not going to publish the marks on the notice board, for she knew that some of the students did not want everybody to be able to see what their results had been. Therefore she asked the students to, either come and see her in her office at 4.30 p.m., that afternoon, or to e-mail her, so that she could communicate marks to each student personally. Finally, she told students that the following week they would have to do another assessment session. She reminded them to revise the vocabulary and grammar structures they had dealt with in their classes.

8.3.1 Setting up the activity for the day

Then Francesca started presenting the oral activity of the day, which was one about food. Almost apologetically, Francesca pointed out that she knew that she may appear to be repetitive in proposing once again an activity about food and eating habits (she had covered food in a previous spoken language class). She said she wanted to make sure that students knew everything they needed to survive in Italy. While saying this, she handed a little pack of handouts to the student sitting nearest to her and asked her to pass them around. The handout is described in some detail in Chapter 7, section 7.4.1.1. Some new words were included in the handout, therefore Francesca explained what they meant, before initiating the activity.

Students were going to work in two pairs and there was one group of three. They would have to ask each other in Italian what they usually had for breakfast, lunch, and dinner and also at snack times during the day, every day of the week. They had to register the answers of their 'interviewee' in their grid, then compare the answers recorded by their group and draw up a summary of patterns emerging. Finally one person would report in Italian the results of the group activity.

Before the pair-work began, Francesca introduced some vocabulary items. The first word Francesca explained to students was the word *merenda*, which, as Francesca explained, is a meal in-between official meals. It is usually a break that children have at around 10 in the morning, when they are at school, or at around 4 in the afternoon. The size of the meal, as well as the things that one eats at *merenda*, depend on what mothers give their children: it could be a filled roll, a slice of pizza or some fruit or

yogurt, etc. Francesca, also pointed out that also adults were 'allowed' to have this kind of snack. She, for example, was keen on her *merendas* which were actually rather substantial meals.

Francesca rounded off this explanation with instructions on how to do the pair-work and how to ask partners information about what they had for each meal. She insisted on accuracy in the use of prepositions. Only two prepositions were correct to use this question: "*Cosa mangi a/per colazione, cena,* etc." ("What do you have at/for breakfast, dinner, etc.). She also gave some examples of possible wrong utterances. In addition, she reminded students that if they were eating out, the usual question about what they were having would involve the use of a different verb: not *mangiare* ('to eat'), but *prendere* (literally, 'to take', used in the meaning of 'to have').

In one case, in the exercise Francesca had prepared on a handout, neither the verb *mangiare* nor the verb *prendere* were appropriate. This was when students were supposed to talk about other meals e.g, *spuntini* (which is the plural form of the term *spuntino*). At this point Francesca introduced the meaning of this new word to the class. She said that this term identified a different category of meals, but she had some problems in pronouncing the word 'category' in English. So, after trying a couple of times and being unhappy with her own pronunciation of the term, she asked Nick, one of the students, to remind her of the correct way to say it.

A *spuntino* is also a snack you have in-between meals or late at night. However, unlike a *merenda*, a *spuntino* is generally a meal which is not officially 'allowed', and is absolutely forbidden to people on a diet. So people tend to have their *spuntini*

furtively and they always deny having had one. After explaining the meaning of the term, Francesca came back to the main reason why she had introduced it. In fact with the term *spuntino* one has to use the verb *fare* (literally, 'to do' or 'to make', in the meaning of 'to have'). The same verb can be used also with other words identifying meals, but not with all. For instance, *fare pranzo* or *fare cena* would be wrong in standard Italian. Francesca highlighted this through a series of examples, pointing out that although *fare pranzo/cena* are accepted in some regional variations of Italian, standard Italian has two specific verbs to refer to having lunch (*pranzare*) and dinner (*cenare*). The use of *fare* is, however, possible with other meals (*fare colazione; fare merenda*) ('to have breakfast; to have a snack').

After eliciting feedback from the students about the clarity of her explanation of that point, Francesca moved on to the next questions included on the first page of the handout. The students were also expected to ask these questions to each other. The first question was:

> *Cosa ti piace mangiare a colazione (pranzo, merenda, cena)?*
> 'What do you like having for breakfast (lunch, a snack, dinner)?

The students were then asked to re-use the verb *piacere* ('to like') in a slightly different question: to ask their partners what they liked cooking. Again, Francesca insisted on the use of the accurate prepositions.

Once she had gone over the terms and questions in the handout which students were supposed to use in the activity, she began organising and managing the class activity itself. As mentioned before, the students were sitting around the desks which were

arranged in the shape of a rectangle at the centre of the small room. Francesca asked the four students on her left to work in pairs: Esther, a mature student, with Dolores, a Spanish, Erasmus student and Nick with John, an American student on exchange; and she asked the female students on her right to work together as a threesome. She also set 30-35 minutes for the interview. After this the students would have further time to write a group report on the results of their interviews. They were not allowed to use dictionaries but they could ask her for assistance whenever they did not know a word they wanted to use. When I spoke to her after that class, Francesca explained that she had prohibited the use of dictionaries because she wanted to avoid the use of inappropriate words or expressions as had happened in two previous sessions.

8.3.2 Doing pair-work, with support from Francesca

Once the students had started the pair-work, Francesca drew back and started moving around the desks to help the students while they were conducting their interviews. Despite Francesca's recommendation, Nick took out of his bag his pocket dictionary, which he used for part of the activity with no apparent objections on Francesca's part.

As the students were all part of a beginners' group they required Francesca's help throughout the activity. They asked for the Italian translation of several general words they either did not know or they were not sure about (common food names like 'cereals' or adverbs, such as 'normally' or 'usually'). Most of their questions were related to terms which were culturally specific (e.g. kinds of food that were not widely known or consumed in Italy, such as typically British, Indian or Chinese specialities) and for which it was quite difficult to identify a translation in Italian.

Whether the term required was general or culturally specific, on each occasions she was asked, Francesca gave a word or phrase in Italian that students could use and she also expanded the term, giving alternatives or mentioning related words or expressions. All the time she used the OHP to project the written term or phrase to the whole class.

Having already run the activity twice before, Francesca was aware of the questions related to food that were likely to come up. While the students were conducting their interviews on their partners' eating habits at breakfast she gave them a series of terms, such as *pane tostato* (toast), *burro e marmellata* (butter and jam), *tè* (tea), *caffè* (coffee), *caffellatte* (milky coffee), *uova* (eggs). In doing this she also complained to the students since these were words they were supposed to have studied in their textbooks.

She also pointed out that some foods which are common in Britain, such as baked beans and jacket potatoes, do not exist in Italy. In order to get round this problem she told the students that she had already agreed on makeshift translations for these terms with a previous group taking the activity, they had agreed on a mixed term '*jacket patata*' to translate the English for 'jacket potato' or 'baked potato'. Students in this group could use these translations for the sake of the activity, but should be aware that they would not mean much to an Italian who had never experienced those foods in Britain.

While Francesca was giving this explanation to the class, Nick was checking the term in his pocket dictionary. He interrupted Francesca to tell her that he had found a translation for 'jacket potato'. The Italian entry was more of a paraphrase than of a translation for it was *patata cotta al forno con la buccia*, i.e. 'unskinned baked potato'. Francesca stuck to her original suggestion that a mixed term should be used. She also mentioned another makeshift translation she had agreed on with the other group: baked beans would be *fagioli al pomodoro*.

For a while the pair-work unfolded fairly smoothly, with students conducting their interviews about mealtime habits and preferences, and with Francesca pointing out mistakes in pronunciation, gender or use of words (e.g. the term *marmellata* which translates both as 'jam' and 'marmalade'), or providing students with the words they did not know.

When the students came to ask questions and give answers on what they had for lunch, more difficulties arose. Nick was on a diet which included foods that were difficult to translate in Italian. So, a discussion took place on how to translate 'pasty' and on whether the filling of a 'pasty' was made of meat, vegetables or both. When Nick asked how to say 'curry' in Italian, Francesca told him that he would have to mention the kind of meat that was cooked in the curry and use the expression *pollo al curry* ('chicken curry'). She once again remarked that Indian cuisine was not as popular in Italy as it is in Britain and therefore Italians did not know most Indian dishes and specialities like chicken *korma* or chicken *tikka*.

Another problem which arose with Nick was the translation of the term 'pie' which in Italian is different depending on whether it is sweet, like in 'apple pie' or savoury, like in 'steak and kidney pie'. The first one is translated with *torta* ('tart') while the second is translated with *pasticcio*, although exactly these actual food items are not known in Italy. Once again, Francesca had to point out that the translations that are found in dictionaries are not particularly meaningful to Italians, since the vocabulary items related to typical British foods are unknown in Italy.

After dealing with these questions about vocabulary related to lunch, Francesca went back to moving around the classroom, suggesting words to individual pairs of students or correcting their pronunciation. Noticing that the group including Vera, Mia and Kelly was working slowly, she reminded them that they had just a quarter of an hour to go through the rest of the activity.

In the meantime, Nick had opened his pocket dictionary again and was reading aloud the translation of *jacket potato*. Francesca reminded him of what she had said earlier in the class and again suggested him that he should use the term 'jacket patata'. John, the American student who was doing the activity with Nick, asked him what a *jacket potato* was. Nick explained to him that it was a baked potato, which is "cut open and garnished with cheese, coleslaw or other ingredients". Francesca joined in the exchange stressing that Italians do not bake potatoes without peeling them before putting them in the oven and told an anecdote from her own life. She said that when her mother came to see her in England she was very surprised to see that baked potatoes were served in their skin. Francesca had to explain to her that she was not

eating the skin because she was too poor to buy baked potatoes that had been peeled, and that actually they were very tasty.

The activity continued with Francesca circulating around the pairs and the group of three. Other food items, such as *hamburger* or *ketchup* came up. These are eaten in Italy too and so Francesca pointed out that they are spelt the same way as in English, but the pronunciation varies in Italian. She also noted that some items, like *chilli con carne*, are known of but not normally served in Italy. However, when Nick asked for the translation of *poppadoms* Francesca had to remind him and the other students that Indian food is not commonly eaten in Italy and so Italians do not have a word for *poppadoms*. Jokingly, she invited Nick and John to stop talking about Indian food and talk about Chinese food instead. Nick took her literally and asked her how to translate 'Chinese noodles'. Francesca answered with the term *spaghettini di riso* ('rice noodles'), but Nick was not convinced that that translation was correct, so he picked up his pocket dictionary and started checking. At this point, Francesca, tired of the fact that Nick was challenging her principle of not using the dictionary, walked up to Nick and took the pocket dictionary out of his hands. This was clearly a playful exchange. Nick smiled and commented on the fact that Francesca's act of authority had been video-recorded. However, Nick was still stuck on the term 'noodles'. He had forgotten the translation Francesca had given to him just minutes before, so he asked again. Francesca suggested that he and John should use the phrase *spaghettini cinesi* ('Chinese noodles'), as both of them had rightly said that noodles are not always made of rice.

Francesca's attention was now drawn to the three-student group who had started – as she put it later – "skipping meals" because they realised they were short of time and

they still had a lot to do to complete the activity. She reproached them, and told them they had only five minutes left to carry out the task.

Nick and John were working on, and as she came over to them again, Nick asked Francesca how to say 'mustard'. John then asked for the Italian term for 'hot dog'. Nick picked on John's American pronunciation and, laughing, mimicked his classmate saying 'hot dog'. Francesca answered John's question and diverting attention from Nick's attempt to poke fun at John's accent, she pointed out that Italians say 'hot dog' as well, but they do not pronounce the initial *h*.

8.3.3 Preparing the reports on the work in pairs

As the 35 minutes allocated for the work in pairs had elapsed, Francesca decided to interrupt the work and pass on to the next phase: an oral report about the eating habits of the participants. To do this, Francesca needed to form new groups: John and Nick were merged with Dolores and Esther, while Kelly, Vera and Mia were left in the same group as in the previous phase. At this point Francesca reached for the OHP and gave the class a series of structures and expressions she wanted them to use to report statistically about the meals of the students in the new groups. She explained that they could use the 'impersonal *si*' or a personal construction to say what the average eating habits of the group were. She also pre-taught terms, like *in media* ('on an average')*, verso* ('around') that the students could use to roughly refer to the times when they had their meals. Then she reminded them of other useful words, such as *tutti* ('everybody'), *nessuno* ('nobody') and of frequency adverbs like, (*quasi*) *sempre* ('(almost) always')*, di solito* ('usually'), *mai* ('never'), which they might want to use

in their report. She also provided examples of possible sentences they could produce, using the different words and structures she was illustrating to them. Then she asked the students to write down simple reports taking into account the data in their handouts which they would read out aloud at the end.

The two groups started working and writing up their reports, while Francesca moved from one to the other listening, looking over their work and helping them with the formulation of the sentences, or with grammar difficulties, correcting the pronunciation and suggesting alternatives. This part of the activity was conducted very hastily, for they were running out of time. In fact, Francesca had to interrupt the groups while they were still working and start the final part of the activity. She asked each student in the two groups to read out a sentence of the report in turn. Francesca started with the group on her left (Dolores, Esther, Nick and John). She called out a student's name and that student read one sentence of their report. If there were any language mistakes they were immediately corrected. All four students read at least one sentence. When the first group had finished she passed to the next and did the same.

The class then came to an abrupt end. Francesca gave Nick his dictionary back and reminded the students that if they wanted to know about their marks they should see her in her office in the afternoon.

8.4 The written language class at Seaview University

Jean's written language beginners' class at Seaview University took place in the morning, in a very large classroom. Only five students took part, all of them sitting in the first row, facing the teacher: Tim, a British mature student, was the only male participant. The others were Anna, an Austrian student, Megumi, a Japanese female student, and two British students, Laura and Sarah. The class was divided into two parts of equal length, about 20-25 minutes each. The first part dealt with grammar, an explanation of the subjunctive, which Jean organised as a whole-class activity, with the help of a handout (see Appendix). The second part focused on reading. Students proposed texts they had chosen from photocopied anthologies of Italian writing in various genres. In this part of the class two poems and a journalistic text about the role of women in Italy were read aloud, translated and commented on.

8.4.1 Explaining the use of the subjunctive

The class started with Jean referring to some aspects and uses of the subjunctive in Italian, which she had already mentioned in a previous lesson, the day before. Also, Jean said that in her explanation she would refer to other languages, as this would help those students who were already linguists. Then she explained that the subjunctive is not a tense, it is a mood, and she contrasted it with the indicative, by saying that the idea the subjunctive expresses is that of a hypothesis, a feeling, something which is not a statement, because it is not completely certain. Here, Jean introduced two examples, ones that she made up on the spot, taking inspiration from her own class. Megumi, the Japanese student, was referred to in both:

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Megumi è giapponese (Megumi is Japanese)

Credo che Megumi sia giapponese (I believe Megumi is Japanese)

Jean then carried on by listing some expressions that require the subjunctive. She reminded her students who had studied French that many grammatical structures which require the subjunctive in French also do so in Italian, but Italian uses the subjunctive a lot more. She noted that the only consolation for the students of Italian is that the subjunctive is losing ground in modern Italian and it is now used quite a lot less than it used to be.

At this point Jean suggested that the students should go through the handout they had in front of them. Before reading from it, she told them that it was comprehensive because, in it, they could find everything they wanted to know about the subjunctive and ways to avoid it. She also added that although the points in the handout were not in any particular order of importance, side 1 was "a bit more compulsory than side 2".

The first case of use of the subjunctive presented in the handout was the 'polite imperative'. This gave Jean the opportunity to refer to her class on the imperative a couple of weeks beforehand, then she read out a series of examples where this use of the subjunctive was shown. The last of these examples was taken from Puccini's *Turandot*, and it is the title of the famous aria *Nessun dorma*, where *dorma* is a subjunctive and a polite imperative. Jean here tried to involve the students in a discussion of what *nessun dorma* may mean, but only Tim, the mature student, made a contribution with the words: "Nobody shall sleep" or "Let nobody sleep".

After this, Jean moved on to the next point. She reminded students of something she had already mentioned on the day before, i.e. that the subjunctive is very often introduced by *che*, which means 'that'. She added, for the benefit of those who had studied Latin, that the Italian construction *che+subjunctive* corresponded to the Latin construction *ut+subjunctive.* Such constructions are used to express uncertainty, opinion, a state of affairs that is unlikely, a state of mind etc.

This explanation was followed by another series of examples which were read out and translated by Jean. At a certain point, however, Jean tried to get the students to participate more actively in the class. So, she invited them to translate the examples into English themselves. Tim and Anna were particularly active in participating in this activity, until the end of the first part of the class, which was devoted to grammar explanation. The other students also made contributions, in particular Laura, who seemed to know quite a lot of vocabulary, even some items that her classmates did not know. Jean helped the students out, and whenever they made mistakes or were too literal in their translation, she made them reflect on other possibilities or tried to elicit alternatives from the rest of the class.

The next point in the handout dealt with clauses introduced by *che* followed by the subjunctive. All these sentences were in turn translated into English by the students and this gave the class the opportunity not only to see examples of subjunctive in use, but also to learn and revise vocabulary or to focus on other difficult verbal forms, such as the *indicative historical past* (or *passato remoto*).

When discussing this part of the handout, Jean invited the students to look at the present subjunctive of regular verbs in their books. She drew their attention to the fact that the verb forms for the first, second and third singular persons are the same. Then she gave them advice as follows: "although I have spent the entire year so far telling you not to use personal pronouns, I suggest you use them with the subjunctive, in order to avoid ambiguities". She also pointed out that the form of the first person plural in the present subjunctive is identical to the present indicative. In addition she referred to regular patterns in spelling and pronunciation in the different conjugations.

As a follow-up activity, some more examples were read and translated. During this activity Jean again emphasised that translations should not be literal and that the students should not stick strictly to the grammatical structure of the original, but should aim for turns of phrases that speakers of English would commonly use. Tim raised the question of the ambiguity of verbs if they are used without specifying the subject. His question was prompted by a sentence, *vuole che parliate piano*. This can be translated both with 'she wants you to speak slowly' and 'he wants you to speak slowly'. In response, Anna, the Austrian student, pointed out that the use of the pronoun 'you' in English can be ambiguous. She also noted that in Italian, as well as in German, her own mother tongue, there is a distinction between 'you' singular and 'you' plural, which is absent in standard English. This observation triggered different reactions: Tim observed that the Italian sentence clearly referred to a plural subject for the verb *parlare*; Laura did not quite understand what Anna had wanted to point out. So Jean felt she had to explain that to a second language user of English this aspect of English grammar may seem ambiguous and that there was a distinction between singular and plural forms of the second person in old English and that this distinction

is still retained in some regional varieties of English. The example she gave was the regional variety of English spoken in Cumbria.

After considering these examples, Jean drew the students' attention to the forms of the present subjunctive of the auxiliary verbs ('to have' and 'to be'). They would need these to form compound tenses. The tables with the present subjunctive of the auxiliary verbs were followed in the textbook by a few model sentences, which Jean read out and translated for her students. However, one of these sentences caught her attention, since, as she put it, she always tried to put the sentences in context. The sentence was the following:

Dubito che siano agricoltori (I doubt that they are farmers)

Jean asked herself, in front of her students, what sort of situation could have given rise to such a sentence. Tim suggested that the examples given in textbooks were probably generated by a computer and Jean agreed: "*Penso che abbiate ragione*" ('I think you are right'). Jean rounded off her explanation by reminding the students that when they used the subjunctive in Italian they were not making a confident statement but they were saying something "keeping their fingers crossed". She then concluded this first part of the class by inviting the students to look over the grammar they had been doing during the Easter holidays.

8.4.2 Translating and talking about texts

At this point the second part of the class started. Jean asked her students to take out their anthologies and asked them to read aloud in class a passage they had read at home that they particularly liked.

Both Anna and Tim had a proposal. However, Jean seemed to be particularly keen on Anna's, since she suggested reading a poem, Antonia Pozzi's *Pudore* (Modesty). Anna read the poem aloud for the whole class. As soon as the reading was over, Tim asked for the meaning of the word *pudore*. Jean asked him to look it up in a dictionary, saying that this term – although not specialised – was not one that would come up everyday in a conversation. While Tim was looking up the word in his pocket dictionary, Jean asked Anna whether she had also read the other poem on the same page, Salvatore Quasimodo's *Ed è subito sera*.

Before Anna had time to answer, Tim had found the translation of the word in the dictionary and the focus of the lesson was brought back to Pozzi's text. Jean asked Anna why she liked that poem in particular. Anna answered that she liked it because, although it had been written almost a century before, it had still contemporary relevance. Jean acknowledged Anna's observation and then invited the other students to translate the poem into English.

Tim, Anna and Laura contributed to the translation of the poem. This gave the students an opportunity to learn some new words, revise a couple of terms, observe one use of the subjunctive in context and consider that translation is a difficult activity, since it has to take account of the original meaning while using forms which sound natural in the target language. The final discussion centered on the last lines of Pozzi's poem which evoked the image of a young mother who blushed when a passer-by complimented her about the beauty of her baby. Jean said she considered this sort of attitude to be excessive, and she did not see why a mother should be that modest about her child.

Jean then moved the group on to reading the other poem on the same page of the anthology. In introducing it, she said that she was being a bit self-indulgent, since it was a poem she particularly liked. She added that the poem was also very well known in Italy. She began to read it aloud. However, Anna and Tim were still discussing a term in Pozzi's poem. Anna had never heard the word 'passer-by' and could hardly believe that it was an English word. Tim was trying to explain to her that it was indeed an English word and that it was also very concrete and logical.

Jean endorsed Tim's explanation, but then brought the focus of the class back to poetry, and, in particular, to Quasimodo's poem. She asked the students to re-read the poem silently, as she wanted to "discuss its meaning" with them. The poem is very short and is shown below.

> *Ognuno sta solo sul cuor della terra*
> *trafitto da un raggio di sole:*
> *ed è subito sera.*
> (Everyone's lonely on this earth,
> speared through by a ray of sun:
> and suddenly the night's here.)

"Discussing the meaning" meant working through the poem, line by line, translating into English and commenting on aspects of grammar and lexis. The first line was translated without problems, although Jean suggested an alternative to the literal translation of the second half of the sentence given by Laura. The first word of the second line proved to be more challenging for the students. The word *trafitto* is, in fact, the past participle of an irregular verb *trafiggere* ('to spear through'), a rather refined verb, which could hardly be included in what we consider to be everyday

vocabulary. So, it took quite a few guesses for the students to identify the meaning of the word, which they did with Jean's help. The different suggestions from the students for the translation of *trafitto* (illuminated, touched, warmed, struck, penetrated) led Jean to open a brief discussion on the specific difficulties of poetic translation. Tim observed that respecting the original meaning of a poem and providing an appropriate form in the target language was very difficult, especially because the sound, which is so important in poetry, cannot be easily reproduced in translation. Jean added that very often poetic genres are so specific to the culture that they are impossible to translate. She gave the example of *haiku*, inviting Megumi, the Japanese student to give her opinion. Megumi confirmed that translating *haiku* is practically impossible. After this brief exchange attention turned once again to the poem and its final line was translated.

At this point, Jean invited the class to choose some prose to read and discuss. Tim put forward his original proposal again. This was a text on page 6 of the anthology, *La donna in Italia* ('The woman in Italy'). Anna said she would have preferred a different text, but as she had already suggested one at the beginning of the reading session and had had her suggestion taken up, Tim's suggestion was now accepted. The text was quite long and it appears in the Appendix to this thesis. Jean asked her students to read the whole text aloud, reading one or two sentences each, starting with Tim. At the end of the reading there was only time for brief discussion. As Jean said, the passage was very "meaty" and offered a lot of points for discussion, as well as providing examples of grammatical structures they had recently studied. Jean suggested having a discussion on the issues raised in the passage in the following class. Her class was heterogeneous, including students of different ages and backgrounds, from a middle-

aged man from the UK, to a young woman from Austria, a couple of young British students and a young woman from East Asia. So it was likely that they would have different perspectives on the topic.

Jean suddenly realised then that she did not have the time to go over the homework the students were supposed to have done. So, she said that they would start with that at the beginning of the next class and she asked the students to remind her. Finally, she summed up what the students were supposed to study during the Easter holiday. The class then came to an end. The students got up and said "goodbye" to Jean.

8.5 Conclusion

The three different classes described above formed the main focus of my data analysis. As I indicated in 8.1, my account draws on my fieldnotes, the transcripts of each class, the relevant worksheets, reading passages and textbook pages and on my informal conversations with the teachers. The themes that emerged at this stage of the research anticipated some of those that I will examine in closer detail in Chapters 9 and 10, with closer attention to the talk-in-interaction. What came over quite clearly was the contrast between the two teachers and, especially, in the ways in which they managed their institutional identities, as teachers.

Jean assumed a classic language teacher identity, positioning herself as an expert in the grammar of Italian (and of other languages) and evaluating the students' attempts at translation in and out of Italian. All five of her students went along with this, assuming a student identity, following her lead and, occasionally, asking questions

and making suggestions. In Francesca's class, the identities of teacher and students were continually negotiated and renegotiated. Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) distinction between different types of identities was relevant here. Francesca moved in and out of several different identities in the classes I observed. Most of the time, she took on a 'teacherly' identity, supporting and evaluating the students' attempts at producing utterances in Italian or translating Italian sentences in the textbook or worksheets. But, quite frequently, she also slipped into the identity of a 'friend' or 'peer group member' (she was only a few years older than her students).

In the accounts above, I have tried to show that these shifts in identification by Francesca were signalled by different kinds of contextualisation cues: through the use of paralinguistic features (e.g. shifts in intonation) to mark a 'joking' or 'ironic' style; through the use of non-verbal cues, like false coughs, smiling or laughing; through the use of gestures like the 'victory sign'; through the use of particular naming practices (e.g. the use of the diminutive form of 'Ella'); through codeswitching between English and Italian and through various verbal strategies. I will look at this use of contextualisation cues more closely in analysing the actual transcripts of talk in Chapter 20.

Francesca also asserted her Italian-ness and her cultural knowledge of daily life in Italy, slipping in and out of narratives and monologues about cooking pasta, about buying coffee at the *torrefazione*, about *merenda* and *spuntini* and contrasting Italian cuisine and other cuisines. Allied to this was an identity as a second language user of English. This came over through cues like her hesitations or pauses when encountering particular words in English, like 'in italics'. Jean also talked about culture but in

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different terms, largely evoking aspects of high culture. I will return to this point in Chapter 10.

One other point of contrast between the two teachers lay in the ways in which they used the teaching materials (textbook and handouts) that they brought into class: these materials were used by both teachers to structure the classroom activities (with more or less focus on grammar). Francesca distanced herself from the textbook allocated for her beginners' class on four occasions, openly criticising the book and its contents. Jean used a handout and an anthology of reading that she had compiled from textbooks that she was familiar with. She treated these texts as authoritative and, in the handout on the subjective, had actually marked some uses as 'compulsory'. The only evidence of her distancing herself from the texts came in response to Tom's comment about examples in textbooks being "generated by computer".

One final point of contrast between the two teachers relates to their language teaching methods. Jean adopted a fairly classic grammar/translation method, while Francesca blended a grammar/translation approach (based on the textbook) with a communicative approach that was guided by the materials she had prepared herself on "food preferences at mealtimes". These different pedagogic approaches and the ideas guiding the practices are discussed in more detail in Chapter 9, along with their beliefs about language and language learners. Chapter 10 focuses in more detail on the different processes of identification at work in these classes, and on the ways in which teacher and student identities were interactionally constructed. It also looks more closely at talk about culture and about cultural difference.

CHAPTER 9

The views of language and language teaching guiding classroom practice

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I begin my analysis of the talk exchanged between the two teachers and their students in the three classes described in Chapters 7 and 8. My focus is primarily on the discourse of the two teachers: on their contrasting approaches to language teaching and learning and on their views of language. Through close analysis of the classroom talk, in English and Italian, I show how their views about language are revealed in their classroom conversations with their students. The chapter is divided into seven broad sections: first, in section 9.2, I briefly describe the ways in which Jean and Francesca differ in their approaches to language teaching and learning. In section 9.3, I then go on to take a close look at Jean's grammar-translation approach 'in action' with references to particular episodes in one of her language teaching sessions. In section 9.4, I sum up the insights I gleaned, through the data analysis, into Jean's views about language and into her in-class practices. In section 9.5, my attention turns to Francesca. I look at particular teacher-student exchanges in one of her spoken language classes and in one of her written language classes. Then, in section 9.6, I sum up my insights into her views on language and her in-class practices. Section 9.7 then presents a conclusion that links back to the literature review, and specifically to section 4.6 (chapter 4) and section 5.2 (chapter 5).

9.2 The two teachers: contrasting approaches to language and language teaching

As I worked through the transcripts of the classes, I became increasingly aware that Jean and Francesca were oriented towards two different approaches to language teaching and learning. Broadly speaking, Jean showed an orientation towards a more traditional grammar-translation approach and Francesca leaned more towards communicative language teaching. I have already mentioned in chapter 7 of this thesis that the two teachers were of a different age and had therefore been trained at times when different views on language teaching had predominated. The two teachers also seemed to have different views of language, as linguists and teachers of modern foreign languages.

On a number of occasions, during the classes I observed, both Francesca and Jean made statements on the language they were teaching. These showed clearly what viewpoint they took on Italian, what priorities they envisaged in their work as teachers and what priorities they had for their students as learners of the language. They took different ideological stances vis-à-vis aspects such as the use of standard vs. regional varieties of Italian, or of students' 'errors'. The teachers expressed their own values about what the language was (or meant) to them, and what they considered to be 'good language'. On several occasions, they showed they had preferences towards certain uses of the language, both as it was used in Italian society, and by the students. At times they tended to be prescriptive, insisting on certain uses and forms. At other times they seemed to allow more room for variations, displaying a more sociolinguistic view of language, as social practice.

The two teachers also revealed their own thinking about language teaching methodology. Generally speaking, Jean, who was oriented towards a grammar translation approach, tended to articulate more prescriptive ideas about language than Francesca. On the other hand, Francesca was more concerned with the use of language to communicate in class. Although she did insist on the use of standard Italian, she also drew attention to regional variants. Jean's attitudes to language variation were less clear.

9.3 Jean, at work, teaching written language and grammar

Throughout her written language and grammar lesson for beginners, Jean clearly hinted at some aspects of language that she regarded as fundamental. From the outset she tended, for example, to introduce meta-linguistic terms or to talk about the language 'as an aspect of study' in a way Francesca never, or very rarely, did. Jean was often pointing out that there are rules in the use of language that must be accepted and adopted and that these rules relate to aspects of grammar and language that must be known by language students.

It looked as if Jean could see herself again as she was years before, a student of Italian. Having experienced the process of learning the language herself, Jean knew what kinds of difficulties her students were likely to encounter. However, there were differences. When she learnt Italian, students were formally taught English grammar at school; they had a conceptual and terminological base to capitalise on, when learning a different

grammar. She was aware that things are different today. Indeed, in an informal chat we once had, she complained to me about how current grammatical ignorance affects the way students approach the study of foreign languages. She also pointed out to me her disappointment with some aspects of the communicative approach in teaching languages. She maintained that the emphasis on activities like, for example, filling a grid was excessive in current practice and that, in her experience, it may lead learners to misunderstand 'what a foreign language is' and 'what learning it really means'. So, on several occasions, during the class I observed and recorded she treated her university students as linguists (or linguists to be) and tried to make them acquainted with some technical terminology.

Extract 1 reveals Jean's preoccupation with the idea that language – Italian in this case – is governed by certain rules, the rules of grammar and how following these rules has an important influence on the precision of the expression. It also clearly shows that, at least ideally, she considered her students as linguists or linguists in training. Extract 1 comes from the very beginning of the class described in chapter 8, when Jean was introducing the grammar topic of the day, the subjunctive. It is a monologue in which Jean tries to explain when it is appropriate to use the subjunctive form in Italian. She uses metalanguage and several examples, which she translates into English.

Extract 1

1	**Jean**:	Right. So the next task to carry on from yesterday was to get straight the
		subjunctive. … Forgive me if I've got to refer to French, Spanish, etcetera, but
		it's gonna help people who are already linguists […]. So, yesterday I
		mentioned that the subjunctive isn't a tense as such and what we tend to call it,

| 5 | in grammatical terms, is a mood. OK. So, that, in a sense, tells us what we're trying to do. We're trying to express, with the subjunctive, an idea a hypothesis, a feeling… something which is unclear and uncertain. So, I can say:*Megumi è giapponese* (**Megumi is Japanese**). I made you a statement: *E' giapponese* (**She is Japanese**). I haven't met her and someone has been |
| 10 | talking about, and I say: *Megumi? Credo che sia giapponese*! (**Megumi? I believe she is Japanese**). I'm giving you my opinion, I'm not making a statement, I'm just giving my… She might be – *credo che sia* – I think she is… So, in Italian we'd use the subjunctive. |

This is the explanation with which Jean opened the lesson, resuming a discussion from the previous day. From the outset, Jean made explicit reference to the classroom identities assumed by her students as linguists to-be, at a university, in a department of modern languages [line 3]. And she assumed the role of university teacher, of a linguist and an expert in Italian. This positioning is revealed in her use of the pronoun 'we' in lines 4 and 13. Using 'we', she included herself in the community of scholars of Italian, the people who have devoted their lives to the study of this language, and can therefore speak it very well – a community which her students were not yet part of. She also referred to her institutional task as a teacher, facilitating the transition of her students from would-be to fully-fledged linguists. To achieve this, she indicated that she was going to use different tools – which are familiar to linguists – such as cross referencing to other languages [line 2], mentioning metalinguistic categories, such as the one of mood [line 5] and stating the rules for accurate use of the subjunctive in Italian ("So, in Italian, we'd use the subjunctive") [line 13]. In line 6, her use of 'we' is more ambivalent. It could be referring to expert users of Italian but it could also be an inclusive use of 'we' referring to herself and the students and the joint task facing them.

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All this reflects Jean's view of what a language is, with particular reference to a HE context: a complex system, with its own set of rules and its own metalanguage. These must be mastered by anyone who wants to regard themselves as a linguist, a student of Italian. At the same time, Jean was revealing what teaching and learning a language meant, for her, at university level. This second aspect will be further discussed later on in this section of the chapter.

The paramount role of grammar in language and the importance of students mastering it is reinforced in Extract 2, which, in the lesson, follows immediately after Extract 1. Jean was still doing her introductory presentation of the subjunctive and stressed its importance for Italian. She did it by putting into practice a point she had made in Extract 1, i.e. the need for her to refer to other languages, so as to give a clear and complete explanation.

Extract 2

1	**Jean**:	So, as I said yesterday, if you've done French, you'll know it from
		things like: "*Il faut que je fasse, il faut que j'aille…*". There are all
		those set phrases in French where you use it. Italian uses it a lot
		more… it does it a lot more. The good news is it uses it less than it
5		used to. So try and mitigate the horror of having to do the subjunctive,
		we use it a lot in Italian, but we use it less today. German […] uses it too.

Jean presented the subjunctive as an essential feature of Italian ('Italian uses it a lot more') [lines 3-4 and line 6], one that could not be disregarded when learning the language. It is not a feature unknown in other languages, as students of French [lines 1-2] or German [line 6] know. At the same time she pointed out to students that there is currently a slacker trend in the use of the subjunctive among Italian speakers [lines 4-

6]. Interestingly, she did not develop this argument completely. She did not mention how the use of the subjunctive in everyday language is still more present in the northern varieties of Italian than, for instance, in the central varieties. She did, however, indicate that people tend to use it less, nowadays. These words were just meant as a little comfort for the students who were confronted with the task of having to learn all the verb forms and the usage rules [line 5]. Indeed, Jean made it quite clear what her view of the importance of the subjunctive is, within the context of the Italian language, and how strongly she felt about it.

Extract 3 still comes from Jean's introductory monologue at the beginning of the class. She was starting to make her way into a series of sentences included in the handout, which provided different examples and contexts of use for the subjunctive. This gave Jean the opportunity to link the topic she was then presenting with grammatical points she had explained earlier in the year and also to address one of her favourite discussion points, i.e. the translation of Italian texts into English.

Extract 3

1	**Jean**:	So, we had a look at imperatives too, three weeks ago, we were working on imperatives, when you're giving somebody an order, you're making a very strong statement telling them … ehm… to do something. In Italian we use the subjunctive as a polite imperative well. So, something like: "*Porti la valigia!*"
5		– "Take this suitcase!","*Venda questa macchina!*" – "Sell this car!"; then "*Senta!*" – "Listen!", "*Finisca questo lavoro!*" - "Finish this work!", "*Stia zitto!*" – "Shut up!": It's a polite imperative, so [class laugh] "Stia zitto!" – "Please, be quiet!"

In showing a point of contact between the grammar topic of the day and one previously studied, Jean tried to explain the pragmatic interpersonal functions served by the

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subjunctive. The examples illustrating these rules helped her to reinforce the idea of grammar as an organic set of resources for building interpersonal meanings.

Furthermore, what she defined as 'polite imperative' [line 4] was in fact the use of the third person singular or plural to address people the speaker is not familiar with, or shows some sort of respect or deference to. The phrase 'polite imperative' can also be a contradiction in terms: some commands just cannot be polite. So, when she came to translate the phrase '*Stia zitto!*' and she did it with 'Shut up!' [line 7], then she realised that the English translation sounded all but polite. '*Stia zitto!*, because of the nature of the message, sounds more like 'Shut up!' than 'Please, be quiet!' to an Italian speaker. This gave rise to laughter in the class.

Further on, Jean tried to involve the students more in the class. She was still presenting several examples of areas of usage of the subjunctive listed on the handout. She was talking of the use of this mood when expressing opinion, wish, or preference. She read out the sentences and asked the students to translate them into English. The following exchange with Anna, the Austrian Erasmus student mentioned in Chapters 7 and 8, gave Jean the opportunity to speak about the difference between the way of constructing sentences in Italian and in English, i.e. to speak of syntax.

Extract 4

1   **Jean**:   "*Preferisci che io arrivi più presto?*"
         Anna: "Do you prefer that I arrive earlier?"
         Jean: "Would you prefer me to arrive – the English would say would you
                     prefer me to arrive earlier? Yes, in fact, Anna said it exactly as

5   it's constructed: 'Would you prefer that I arrive earlier?' Absolutely! That is

                         what the Italian construction is, isn't it?

Jean corrected the syntax of the translation given by the foreign student (the incorrect

auxiliary verb form and the use of a 'that clause') However, soon after correcting

Anna, she seemed to have second thoughts. After all, the student was not a native

speaker of English and her translation was perfectly understandable, if not elegant. So

she praised her and pointed out that she had followed the Italian construction of the

sentence. What was implied here was that the syntax works in very different ways in

the two languages.

The next area of use of the subjunctive that the class looked into − immediately after

the one they were considering in Extract 4 − was subordinate clauses, usually

introduced by *che* (**that**), which follow impersonal verb forms and express uncertainty,

opinion, states of mind, and so forth. Talking of this gave Jean the opportunity to touch

on another aspect of language, lexis. Extract 5 shows how Jean reacted to a lexical

mistake by Tim, who translated *pronto* with **early**, rather than **ready**, a typical case of

interference from Spanish.

Extract 5

1	**Jean**:	"*Sembrava che Giovanno*"– this is a misprint –"*fosse pronto*". What does
		that mean, '*Sembrava che Giovanni fosse pronto*'?
	Tim:	"It seemed that Giovanni… *Fosse*… is the… Is that *essere* (**to be**)?
	Jean:	Yes!
5	**Tim**:	'It seemed that Giovanni would be early, would be…'
	Jean:	Well, we've got a word wrong here, Tim. 'It seemed that Giovanni was'…
		What's *pronto*, is it 'early'?
	Tim:	Early, yes.

	Jean:	Ready?
10	**Tim**:	Ready, yes.

In this case, Tim's mistake affected the meaning of the sentence considered. So, Jean's intervention to correct him was aimed at ensuring that the translation made sense [lines 6-10]. Her reaction to the misprint [line 1] – where the name 'Giovanni' had been wrongly printed with a final 'o' – reveals her attention to detail.

Extract 6, from the same lesson, follows immediately after Extract 5. In it, Jean corrected the translation of a lexical item. This she did by prompting a student, who had said the 'correct' word, to repeat it louder for the benefit of the class.

Extract 6

1	**Jean**:	"*Il fatto che mio figlio si comporti male mi dà fastidio*"(**"The fact that my son behaves badly annoys me"**) …
	Tim:	The fact that my son behaves badly… gives me a headache? [he laughs]
	Laura:	[whispers] […]
5	**Jean**:	Laura, louder!
	Laura:	Annoys me.
	Jean:	Annoys me. *Dare fastidio*, yeah, 'to annoy'… spoken by a true father of sons there too! [class laugh]
	Tim:	I had lots of practice too.

Jean did not accept the half-joking translation of the phrase '*mi dà fastidio*' given by Tim in line 3. Instead, she took the opportunity of Laura coming up with the right words and asked her to repeat her contribution. Then, she kept the class atmosphere on a light-hearted note and joined in the joke started off by Tim.

In Extract 7 Jean addressed another aspect of language: namely stylistic variation and degrees of formality. The opportunity to do so was provided by a group of examples, which were included in the handout immediately after the ones that we have just discussed. Here, Jean just remarked on the level of formality of these sentences.

Extract 7

1 **Jean**:   So, while we're on the subject of *che*'s, point 5, we've got clauses usually
                   introduced by *che* (**that**): command and request, suggestion. "*Il generale
                   ordinò che i soldati si ritirassero*" ("**The general ordered the soldiers to
                   withdraw**"). Request: "*La polizia chiede che i passeggeri rimangano nei loro
5   veicoli*" ("**The police are asking the passengers to remain in their
                   vehicles**"). Suggestion: "*Propongo che ognuno paghi per sé*" ("**I suggest that
                   everybody pays for themselves**"). So these are slightly more […] formal
                   sentences; command, request, or suggestion. So you get these in more formal
                   situations.

Just before asking them to try and translate the three examples given, Jean pointed out to the students that in these sentences the language had a more formal style than in the ones seen in previous examples [lines 7-8].

Extract 8 is the continuation of Extract 7. Here, students were not certain about verb tenses and Jean readily turned to grammatical terminology. From my informal conversations with her, I was aware that for her it was important for learners not only to use the language correctly, but also to know 'what they are doing with it all the time'. For Jean this meant recognising the grammatical rules that apply and being able to describe these using the correct metalanguage in the target language. Calling verb tenses and moods by their right names was therefore for her a relevant aspect of language and language teaching/learning.

Extract 8

1	**Jean**:	The first one, command: "*Il generale ordinò che i soldati si ritirassero*" ("**The general ordered the soldiers to withdraw**"). Have you got any ideas there?
	Tim:	"The general orders the soldiers to retreat".
5	**Jean**:	OK. What tense is *ordinò*?
	Anna and Tim:	It's the future.
	Jean:	Is it?
	Anna:	No!
	Tim:	Oh, it's the past… *passato remoto* (**historical past**)
10	**Jean**:	*Passato remoto*, excellent, yes, *passato remoto*." *Il generale ordinò che i soldati si ritirassero*." And look…
	Tim:	Sorry, what tense is that?
	Jean:	Aah, but that's…you've just pre-empted the question. What tense is *si ritirassero*? What tense is it? 'The general ordered that the soldiers
15		retreat'.
	Tim:	Should be *presente* (**present**).
	Jean:	Right ... What tense is it? You know it's a subjunctive. You know that I know it, don't you? It's going to be a bit of a question of guess-work. This is the imperfect subjunctive. So, what we are going to look at is the present
20		subjunctive, the imperfect subjunctive, eventually the perfect too.

Identifying the precise tense and mood and having control over the formal aspects of the language was highly valued by Jean. The students had mistaken the historical past for a future, because both tenses had forms ending in an accented vowel, in Italian. However, they soon understood (from the discourse context) that it could not be a future, as is clear from the first (wrong) translation by Tim. Students had already encountered examples of verbs in most tenses of the indicative and this made it easier for them to realise their mistake. However, things became more difficult when they came to observe the tenses of the subjunctive, which were being introduced in that lesson. Jean even tried to focus on the Italian construction and give a literal translation

of the sentence [lines 14-15], yet it was impossible to use the English translation of the verb in the same tense as it was in Italian. Jean realised that when Tim said that '*si ritirassero*' must be a present. In fact she reacted with 'Right' [line 17] effectively pausing while she worked out how to explain the verb form. Italian uses a structure that is so different from the one that would be used in English that translation is not adequate to bridge it. Jean did not quite know how to explain it. So, she reminded students of what they already knew (it is a form of the subjunctive) [line 17] and, at first, she even said that for now some guess-work would be acceptable. She soon added then that they were going to consider all tenses of the subjunctive [lines 19-20] and in so doing she was implying that everything would then be clear.

In Extract 9 Jean, again, refers to her view of language and of the importance of grammar in language learning/teaching. This extract comes from a later stage in the lesson, when most examples included in the handout had already been read aloud and commented upon and when some students' questions had already been answered. Jean was now looking at the morphology of the tenses of the subjunctive and was stressing the importance of learning the forms of the two auxiliary verbs, *essere* (**to be**) and *avere* (**to have**). Her views of language and language teaching are intermingled here.

Extract 9

| 1 | **Jean**: | *Avere* and *essere* (**to be and to have**). We need to know these because we're gonna use compounds eventually, aren't we? [Reading the conjugations from the textbook] *Abbia, abbia, abbia, abbiamo, abbiate, abbiano* (**I have, you have, (s)he has, we have, you have, they have**) . *Sia, sia, sia ,siamo, siate,* |
| 5 | | *siano* (**I am, you are, (s)he is, we are you are, they are**). They are very simple. You've just got to learn them, obviously. |

Once again Jean made use of metalinguistic terms ('compounds') [line 2] to stress the relevance of the linguistic content of this particular part of her lesson. She stressed that the conjugation of the auxiliary verbs is an essential feature of Italian as a language and, therefore, knowing it is essential for the students, as learners of Italian ('We need to know these') [line 1]. This point was made using an inclusive 'we'.

Jean frequently referred explicitly to instances where grammatical forms differed across languages. As we have seen in previous extracts, and in chapter 8, she was keen on making these cross-linguistic comparisons. Extract 10 comes from a stage in the lesson when all forms of the present subjunctive of regular and auxiliary verbs had been presented. Jean then provided some more examples to demonstrate the use of the present subjunctive in a discourse context. The first sentence, *Vuole che parliate piano*, displayed again a key difference between the Italian and the English constructions, namely the absence of a third person subject pronoun in Italian where one would be obligatory in English.

Extract 10

1   **Jean**:   *Va bene*? (**Is that all right?**) So, we've got some examples: [reading
                  from the book] "*Vuole che parliate piano*", "She wants you to speak slowly". I
                  mean you might want to put in the personal pronoun here to signify *lei* (**she**):
                  "*Lei vuole che parliate piano*". "*E' necessario che io lo ripeta*", "It is
5   necessary that I repeat it" or "It is necessary for me to repeat it". When I think
                  of … when you put this into English, you want to put it into the English you
                  would use. So, we are not sticking strictly to the grammatical structure. We are
                  going to put it into the language that we would commonly use.

In making her recommendations on the way Italian sentences with the subjunctive should be translated into English [lines 5-8], Jean seemed to be stressing that the two

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languages have a differing system of rules and she discussed the absence of a personal pronoun in a way that implied that these students were already familiar with this structure in Italian and it had already been a focus of class attention.

9.4 Summing up: Jean's views of language and her in-class practices

In all the extracts from the fieldwork recordings provided above we can see that Jean had a rather prescriptive view of language. Communication in Italian was important to her, but being able to communicate was not quite enough. Mastering a language meant knowing it intimately and being able to play with the formal side of the system. It also meant being able to communicate with precision and to control the nuances of what was being expressed. This, she believed, could be attained through practice, translation, contrastive study of language forms and the use of metalanguage. Moreover, Jean's choice of the forms of Italian in teaching her students showed a preference for standard language and formal style. These preferences and beliefs regarding language and language learning had been made explicit to me in our informal conversations before and after class. As I showed in this section, they were also revealed from time to time in her contributions to classroom talk.

To sum up, in the ten extracts above, we saw, 'at work', some of Jean's guiding principles for university level language teaching and some of her firm beliefs about language 'in action'. We saw her making ample use of meta-language and talking explicitly about grammatical forms and pragmatic functions. The routine that she followed most often was that of stating a grammatical rule first, then providing

examples in Italian, which the students were asked to translate. She also made ample use of cross-linguistic comparisons, made occasional references to the fact that there were some students who spoke languages other than English in the class and drew on their knowledge in exemplifying linguistic forms.

She also corrected the students' errors and revealed rather prescriptive attitudes about language and register use. She also paid close attention to detail, showing considerable annoyance when she discovered a misprint in the textbook. The in-class materials she used and the way in which she talked about them were in keeping with her grammar-translation approach.

Lastly, my close analysis of the transcript revealed how much Jean oriented to the teaching materials she had prepared. As we have seen, the interaction in her class was largely structured around the materials, to the grammatical rules stated in them and to the grammatical forms. Translation exercises were designed to exemplify the rules and provide practice in using them. The only breaks in this classroom routine came with asides and jokes made by Jean or the students.

I turn now to a close analysis of Francesca's class with a view to identifying the ways in which her classroom talk rovides a window on her beiliefs about language.

9.5 Francesca, at work, teaching written language, grammar and spoken language

As I pointed out earlier on, Francesca's main orientation was towards communicative language teaching. Although Francesca tended to correct her students when they came

out with inaccuracies and stressed the correct forms, which implies that she saw accuracy as an important goal for university students of foreign languages, on many occasions she seemed to be more relaxed than Jean when faced with inaccurate language, as long as it was communicative. Furthermore, Francesca seemed to be aware all the time that a language is not a closed and fixed system. She sometimes referred to deviations from standard Italian, which would be acceptable in some regional variations, but still advised her beginners to stick to the standard form of the language. When teaching structures, she often offered her students more than one acceptable option to say something.

Francesca's views on the language were connected not only to her views of language teaching and learning, but also to her view of 'culture'. She constantly referred to the different contexts of culture for the language forms encountered in class – with reference to both English and Italian. Her perspective on language was broadly speaking a socio-linguistic one, where language is seen as a social practice, one where the boundaries between 'right' and 'wrong' language, accuracy and inaccuracy, are inevitably blurred at times. However, as I have already said, Francesca did insist that her students should try to use the standard forms of the Italian language.

9.5.1 Francesca's grammar and written language class

As I indicated in Chapter 8, Francesca's grammar lesson involved a bigger group than her oral class. However, some of the students were the same as in the oral class. More of Francesca's views on language were clearly expressed during this class. This

occurred unexpectedly, for example, while Francesca was responding to a student's question, or introducing and giving the meaning of new vocabulary, or when she was explaining or trying to elicit a grammatical point.

Francesca began the lesson with a whole-class activity which involved a review of a couple of homework exercises she had assigned to her students at the end of the previous class. Extract 11 is taken from this early stage of the class. Francesca was asking single students to take turns in reading out the sentences and giving the translation in English to check on the meaning. As I showed in Chapter 8, the exercise was designed to practice the use of some idioms and consisted of a series of sentences in one column, each setting out a situation, and of a list of phrases, given in scrambled order in a second column, from which students had to choose the appropriate response or conclusion for each sentence in the first column. In Extract 11 we see that a mistake by a student in giving an appropriate translation of a word, *scusami*, made Francesca expand her explanation to include different nuances of this Italian term and of another one, contained in the response that had been correctly chosen by the student who had done the homework. The lines in Italian being translated were:

> "*Scusami, Antonella, non c'è più acqua.*"
> "*Fa niente. Anzi preferisco il vino.*"

Extract 11

1	**Linda**:	"Excuse me, I haven't got any more water." "It doesn't matter. I'll have wine."
	Francesca:	When we translate 'excuse me' we use *scusami* for both 'I'm sorry' and 'excuse me'. If you are actually trying to pass and there are people in your way,
5		you can actually say: "Excuse me", "*Scusami*" or "*Mi scusi*" or "*Permesso*"! So, in this case, rather than 'excuse me' it would be 'I'm sorry', because it would be the fault of yours. And then this *anzi*: I would translate it with

'actually' […] to stress a bit that, you know, I don't mind, really, because I actually prefer the wine… to keep the expression.

The translation of *scusami* provided by Linda was not appropriate to the situation given in the example. Francesca presented the class with a variety of situations where the word can be used in Italian, to fit situations when in English other phrases would be used [lines 3-4]. She also mentioned alternatives, like *permesso*, or the more formal form of *scusami*, *mi scusi*, to provide the students with a comprehensive picture of the use of such phrases [line 5]. Finally, she gave them her translation and explained why 'I'm sorry' was an appropriate translation in such a situation, while 'excuse me' was not [lines 6-7].

But the sentence was a tricky one, and contained an adverb, *anzi*, which Linda had left out altogether in her translation [line 1]. Having a very idiomatic use, this word presents quite a few problems for translation. In this case, as Francesca said, it would have been appropriate to translate it with 'actually' [line 8], and she tried to show the illocutionary force of the phrases with this adverb by giving a sort of 'dramatised' translation of the whole sentence.

Apart from the obvious relation this has with Francesca's views of language teaching and her choice of a communicative approach in teaching, what she did here also had cultural implications. Lexis and idioms, in particular, are items that are closely related to the cultural sphere of language.

In Extract 12 Francesca seemed to be advising students that they should put themselves in a flexible frame of mind when they deal with language. The class was dealing with the second exercise, one that the students were supposed to have done as a piece of homework. Here she was answering a question from Laura, a student, who asked about the most appropriate position for an adverb of frequency, *recentemente* (recently), in one sentence from the exercise they were doing, (Andrew has recently gone to Italy to take an intensive course of Italian language**)**. The student who was reading out the sentence in Italian, Chloë, put the adverb at the beginning of the sentence: (*Recentemente Andrea è andato in Italia per seguire un corso intensivo di lingua italiana*). However, the rule that is generally taught in Italian classes is that these adverbs are only put in front of simple verb tense structures and between the auxiliary and the past participle if the verb has a compound tense structure. Francesca had accepted Chloë's translation and therefore Laura asked her a question on where best to place an adverb of this kind within a sentence.

Extract 12

1   **Francesca**:   Recentemente, […] but, yeah, *'Andrea è recentemente andato'* o *'è andato recentemente.'* We are not strict, actually. It depends … When you want to deliver a message, it depends on where you want to put the stress. So keep the rule you study as a rule, but then be flexible to accept also discrepancies.

In her brief comment on the question, Francesca was actually expressing uncertainty about the application of the rule, trying to mediate the mismatch between what the grammar book indicated as a rule and the variable uses that speakers make of the language in communication. As Kramsch says, these two sides of language "can be seen within a view of language as social semiotic. … Rather than a dichotomy, then we

have multiple options regarding the way language is used in variable contexts of use" (Kramsch, 1993: 5). Students should therefore draw on both grammar and on the context in order to freely play with the language, without preconceptions or fears.

Later in the class, Francesca was starting to introduce a new grammatical item: the difference in the use and meaning of the verbs *conoscere* and *sapere*, both covering the semantic field of 'to know'. As exemplified in Extract 13 and previously described in Chapter 8, before introducing the new grammatical item, Francesca tried to elicit knowledge on the topic that students might have from other languages, e.g. French or Spanish, which, like Italian, have two similar verbs to express the meaning of 'to know'. She stressed the importance of using the appropriate lexical form, by reading the examples provided in the book with the students and commenting on them.

Extract 13

1	**Francesca**:	Now we're gonna go over the difference between *conoscere* and *sapere*.
		Do you know what *conoscere* and *sapere* mean?
	Juliane:	To know.
	Francesca:	Both of them. Do you know ... what's the difference?
5	**Juliane**:	To know is to know… *conoscere*, I mean, is to know of a person, for
		example… *Sapere* is to know how…how to speak a language…
	Francesca:	Yeah, that's a rough idea. Rob, do you mind start reading this for me, please?
	Rob:	[Reading the examples and their translation provided by the
10		textbook] "*Conosci Roberto Benigni?*" Do you know who Roberto Benigni is?
	Francesca:	[Approving] Mmh, mmh!
	Rob:	[Still reading] "*Sì, lo conosco. E' un attore*". Yes I know him. He's an actor.
15	**Francesca**:	*Poi?* (**And then?**)
	Rob:	*Conoscete Genova?* (**Do you know Genova**) [He pronounces *Genova*
		putting the stress on the '*o*' rather than on the '*e*'].
	Francesca:	*Genova* [corrects the stress].
	Rob:	*Genova* [he repeats it correctly].
20	**Francesca**:	Ruth!
	Ruth:	*Sai nuotare*? Do you know how to swim? *No so sciare* [pronounces it

ɕkjare].

	Francesca:	*Sciare!* [corrects pronunciation: ɕjare]
	Ruth:	*Sciare* [repeats the word correctly]. But I know how to ski.
25	**Francesca**:	Mmh, mmh [approving].

In her capacity as teacher, here Francesca was checking the students' use of the language in this particular area. The lexical choice between one verb and the other has cultural implications, since it is a particular way in Italian of describing human knowledge. After receiving general feedback about the rule from Juliane, she proceeded by asking students to read aloud examples from the book, so as to reinforce the general usage rule expressed by Juliane. In the process, Francesca corrected words that her students did not pronounce correctly. In so doing she was once again putting the stress on some aspects of language that were priorities in her opinion. Choosing appropriately between *conoscere* and *sapere*, as well as pronouncing words in a way that was acceptable to speakers of standard Italian were clearly priorities for her.

Soon after this, Francesca read out the explanation of this grammatical point from the textbook and provided more examples. This is what Extract 14 shows.

Extract 14

| 1 | **Francesca**: | So, [reading from the textbook] "*conoscere* and *sapere*": *numero due* (**number two**) [she was referring to the bullet point in the explanation given by the book]. "*Conoscere* expresses the idea of being acquainted with someone or something such as people, places, books or films. In the past tense, *conoscere* |
| 5 | | signifies 'getting to know someone'. [She reads some more examples] "*Conosci Silvia?*" Do you know Silvia? "*No, ma so chi è.*" ("**No, but I know who she is.**"). [looking up from the text] You see? *Conosci… No, ma so…* [She resumes reading] "*Dove l'hai conosciuta?* (**Where did you meet her?**) *L'ho* |

	conosciuta a Camogli. (**I met her in Camogli**). *… Sapere* expresses knowledge or awareness of factual information. *Sapere più l'infinito*
10	(**Sapere plus the infinitive**) means 'to know how to do something'. 'I don't know', *non lo so*, is idiomatically expressed in Italian as *non lo so*. In the past tense, *sapere* expresses the idea of 'having found something out'. [She reads the examples] *Sai l'indirizzo della trattoria?* (**Do you know the address of the trattoria?**) *No, non lo so* (**No, I don't know**).
15	*Olga sa parlare il russo.* (**Olga can speak Russian**); and *Ho saputo che non è vero* (**I found out it is not true**)". [Breaking off from reading] Now, do you have any questions on this thing? Is everything clear?

In this extract, we see that Francesca was relying on the textbook as a means of explaining the semantic differences between *conoscere* and *sapere,* using it as an authoritative source of information about the formal linguistic aspects of standard Italian. She even acted as a mediator of the knowledge encoded in the textbook. We see this in two moments in this monologue: in line 7, she interrupted her reading of the text to say to her students: "You see? *Conosci ... No, ma so*"; and, again, at the end of her monologue, in line 17, she stopped reading and asked her students if they had any questions and checked for understanding.

In Extract 15, which follows, in the final part of the class, another grammatical point, the impersonal form expressed with *si,* was explained. As shown in Chapter 8, section 8.1.5, this is a rather complicated structure, because *si* can be used in place of a subject in an active sentence, but can also be employed in a similar way in a passive sentence, in which case it is called *si passivante.* Although the two structures are quite different in nature, they do look very much the same, and the boundary between the impersonal active and passive *si* is very much blurred even for the majority of Italian native

speakers. Moreover, the impersonal use of the *si* is regionally marked, since it is quite frequent in the Tuscan variety of Italian, but not at all in the standard one.

In the extract below, Francesca is reading the explanation and the examples of this structure from the book and making comments.

Extract 15

1	**Francesca**:	[Reading from the textbook] "This construction is also used to express general rules, habits and customs. *Si* is used with the third person plural form when followed by a plural noun: *Si studia bene in biblioteca* (**One studies well in the library**); *Si usano le spezie per cucinare bene* (**One uses spices to cook well**').
5		In compound tenses, the *si impersonale* construction is conjugated with *essere* (**to be**)"…[She stops reading to stress this last point] OK? *Essere*, non *avere*, OK? *Essere.* (**To be, not to have, OK? To be.**) [Reading on] "The past participle agrees in gender and number with the object: *Si sono mangiati troppi tortellini ieri* (**One has eaten too many *tortellini* yesterday**); *Si è preparata*
10		*una buona cena per gli amici* (**One prepared a good dinner for friends**); '*Si è mangiato bene in quella trattoria*' (**One ate well in that *trattoria***)." [Commenting on the last few examples] What I'd like to say is all these past things, you have to learn them, but you'll find another way to say things. If you look at it, it sounds quite artificial. I would say: *Ho mangiato troppi tortellini,*
15		*ieri* or *Abbiamo mangiato troppi tortellini, ieri* (**I had too much tortellini, yesterday or We had too much tortellini, yesterday**), because we know who was at the table. There's no need to say 'I'm told' or to use the impersonal. OK? It can be acceptable, but use it just for the present. Sometimes you can find […] to express abstract ideas. So, that's why you learn it. But in these
20		examples I could see I would use another form. I don't need to use this one. OK?

The first point I would like to make about this extract is about the way in which the textbook presents the grammatical topic in question. The last three examples Francesca read and commented on, at the end of the excerpt [lines 8-11] comprise both

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impersonal passive forms (the first two, lines 8-10) and active forms (the last one, lines 10-11). This is potentially confusing for learners, especially when approaching a difficult grammatical point like this. Ideally, the impersonal *si* should have been presented, with examples of just active sentences, at a stage when students have not yet learned the passive voice.

Faced with this presentational problem, Francesca tried to complement the book's explanation with examples of her own. She was certainly not helped by the confused presentation of the point in the book, where impersonal active and passive forms of *si* are mixed up together.

Francesca commented on the examples saying that they sounded "artificial". Here, she was foregrounding what she felt to be the appropriate language to teach her students, i.e. standard Italian. Francesca did not in this case mention that the form presented in the 'artificial' example is mostly typical of a particular area in Italy, Tuscany, and, although acceptable, is definitely not usual in the standard language. Here, her feel for the language may have been affected by her provenance in Italy: She was from *Marche*, a central region on the Adriatic side of the country, where the use of the impersonal form is not common. The way she made those examples sound more natural, was to turn them into a personal form, using personal pronouns like 'I' and 'we'.

In the final lines of the Extract [lines 17-21], Francesca justified her remark and made recommendations to students on what type of language to use. She stated again that

there can be discrepancies between the language presented in grammar books and the one that is actually used in society. A sentence can be accurate and still sound not right, inappropriate, or "artificial", as Francesca put it [line 1]. What she implied in so saying, was that a flexible attitude towards grammar, a reflexive stance when using the language was more valuable than taking the prescriptions of grammar as the unshakable rules in using the language. Francesca seemed to be saying to her students that there are always alternative ways of expressing something in a language and she appeared to be trying to facilitate the skill to choose the most suitable alternatives in her students by giving them examples. In fact some alternatives were acceptable [line 18], or suitable to be used in different contexts ('to express abstract ideas') [line 19].

9.5.2 Francesca's spoken language class

In Extract 16 we get a glimpse of how Francesca approached the teaching of spoken Italian. This extract comes from an early stage in the class described in Chapter 8. Francesca had just made a few general announcements regarding an assessed piece of work the students had recently done and regarding the next assessment that was due shortly. When she started to present the activity of the day, she took some minutes to explain clearly what she wanted the students to do and pointed out the structures she wanted them to use and how they should use them.

Extract 16

1   **Francesca**:   Now let's move to the activity of today. "*Cosa mangi?*" I pointed it out because I saw that many students make a mistake with prepositions. When you eat something, either you *la mangi a colazione o per colazione* (**eat it at breakfast or for breakfast**). OK? So, if you ask what they [the members of your group]

5   eat at a specific meal, *colazione, pranzo, ...* (**breakfast, lunch,…**) it can be
           merenda (**snack**) or *cena* (**supper**) …

A longish digression on the meaning of the word *merenda* followed. I will include this
in another extract which I am going to discuss later on in this chapter.

           So, you say: *Cosa mangi a colazione? Non alla colazione.* ("**What do you
           have for breakfast? Not for the breakfast.**) OK? [It] is a simple
10   preposition. The same goes *per* (**for**): *Cosa mangi per colazione? Cosa mangi
           per cena?* (**What do you have for breakfast? What do you have for
           supper?**) … *Mi raccomando, mi raccomando* (**I beg you, I beg you**) don't
           come [up] with these *alla colazione* (**for the breakfast**) or *al pranzo* (**for the
           lunch**), because I'm gonna be merciless. OK? When you eat out, usually
15   you say: *Cosa prendi? Cosa prendi quando vai al ristorante?* (**What do you
           have? What do you have when you go to a restaurant?** OK?

In Extract 16 Francesca was quite adamant that there are some formal rules governing
the use of prepositions, which she had given to the students to read and she made it
clear, albeit in a joking tone, that she required her students to stick to them.
Prepositions, both simple and prepositional articles[i], had been recently explained and
practised in the course. So, she wanted the students to show they had learned these.
Hence her recommendations and her threat that she would be "merciless", if the
students were not to pay attention to using the structures correctly. This would seem to
be an attitude quite similar to the one adopted by Jean, when she stressed the
importance of sticking to grammatical rules in a prescriptive way. However,
Francesca's more flexible view of the language comes out a few minutes later, when
after introducing more vocabulary items related to the semantic field of meals, she
returned to the topic of standard expressions, while, at the same time, mentioning
regional variations.

Extract 17

1	**Francesca**:	You say: *Fare uno spuntino*. So, you have got two different […]
		things: *Fare un* (**Having** a) meal, *fare un pasto* (**Having a meal**). It can be:
		fare merenda, fare colazione, (**having a snack, having breakfast**) or *fare uno*
		spuntino (**having a snack**). You don't say *fare pranzo* or *fare cena* (**having**
5		**lunch** or **having dinner**) despite the fact that in some regions this form is used.
		In standard Italian you say *pranzare* (**to lunch**) to have lunch , or *cenare* (**to**
		dine), to have dinner. OK? I won't take it as correct "fare pranzo" or "fare
		cena", because it's regional. Are you with me? Is everything fine?

Here Francesca was stating her goals in teaching spoken Italian: the standard language was the one she wanted her students to learn. The students were just beginners. There was no point in them mixing the standard language with regional variations. However, native speakers, who speak a regional variety do deviate from the grammar rules associated with standard Italian and here she showed that she felt that students must be aware of this fact.

Before Francesca ended her introductory statement and her explanation of the activity she had prepared for the lesson, she stressed once again the structures she wanted the students to use during their oral activity and she insisted that they should be used in precisely the way she had indicated.

Extract 18

1	Francesca:	Again, *cosa ti piace mangiare **a** colazione? Non alla colazione. Cosa ti piace*

*mangiare **per** pranzo, o **a** pranzo?* O, *cosa ti piace cucinare…*, if you are cooking. When you cook for someone, you always use the preposition *per*: *Cucino per il mio fidanzato*, for my boyfriend, *cucino per i miei amici*.

What Extracts 16-18 show is that Francesca believed that her students should be oriented to the use of standard Italian. However, she also felt that they should know that standard Italian is not a crystallised item, a fixed code where no changes or deviations are possible. So, while stressing the rules and prescriptions for the language she wanted to be used in class, she also made it clear that these are not unshakeable truths and that, in the language used by the wider community of Italian speakers, deviations from the rule are frequent and somehow accepted.

In Extract 19, which follows, we see Francesca representing language as a set of resources that can be drawn upon in communicating with others. We see this in an answer Francesca gave to a student in difficulty. We are at a later stage of the class. Students had now started to work in pairs using the handout that Francesca had prepared for the class. They were interviewing each other to find out what their eating habits were at different times of the day, throughout their typical week. Francesca made it clear that there is no single correct form, as the same concept can be expressed in a variety of forms and with different words. So, she offered another option to the student.

Extract 19

| 1 | **Nick**: | *Niente… ma sabato e domenica, normalmente …* (**Nothing… but on Saturdays and Sundays, normally…**) [he turns to Francesca] |
| | **Francesca**: | *Normalmente* (**Normally**). You can also say *di solito* (**usually**) [she writes both forms on a transparency and projects them onto the screen]. By now try to be |

precise with times and everything and then… you'll work things out.

Francesca seemed to be stressing here that there are no fixed ways to communicate something: variations are possible, as long as the expression remains as precise as possible. It is up to the students to 'work things out' [line 5].

In Extract 20, one of the female students in the three-people group asked Francesca how the word 'toast' could be translated into Italian. The students were more or less at the same stage of their oral activity as in Extract 19 and were still asking each other what they usually had for breakfast. Francesca provided the translation, but she also instantly and spontaneously expanded her answer, introducing an idiomatic use of a phrase, which entails a deviation from a grammatical rule, relating to the use of the definite article. The video-recording does not actually show which of the three students in the group actually asked the question and the question itself is inaudible. I therefore referred to the student in question as Student X.

Extract 20

1   **Student X**:   […]
     Francesca: Toast is *pane tostato*. It can be *con burro e marmellata* or it can be just *con il burro*. It's because *burro e marmellata* is sort of, er…, an expression and we don't use the article. It would be *con il burro e la marmellata*, you can
5   still use it, but we say *burro e marmellata*. But when you say just 'butter' you say *con il burro* and you need the article. And then you've got *il tè, caffè, caffelatte*, and so on and so far. Some people might have *uova*, eggs for breakfast. I knew, I knew you didn't know the words.

Francesca, when asked for the translation of 'toast', immediately set her mind on the broader topic 'breakfast'. Indeed, to be more precise she set her mind on the topic

colazione (breakfast). In fact, *colazione is mainly sweet* rather than savoury unlike the traditional English cooked breakfast. This led her to expand on the topic of *colazione* and to speak about the food that normally goes with toast: butter and jam. So, she focussed on the different usage of the expression *'con (il) burro e (la) marmellata'* (with butter and jam) which according to the rule should be used with the definite article in front of the two food items mentioned – which is possible – but as Francesca notes it is normally said without the article because it has become a sort of fixed, idiomatic item, as '*burro e marmellata'* so commonly just go together [lines 2-6]. After this she carried on providing the students with several other lexical items relevant to the semantic field of *colazione*.

In this activity, Francesca gave particular attention to the lexis, stopping, every now and then, to write new lexical items on a transparency, as in Extract 19. Extract 21 is also drawn from an early stage of the pair-work activity in her oral class, when students were interviewing each other on their eating habits at breakfast. Nick, the British student who was also studying French and Spanish, wanted to tell his activity partner that he always has mushrooms when he has breakfast. He tried therefore to guess the Italian word for mushrooms, but his guess was not correct. As he was not sure about the word, he started consulting his pocket dictionary – although Francesca had instructed the students to ask her, rather than use their dictionaries, during that particular activity. Francesca intervened and corrected him.

Extract 21

1   **Nick**:   …   champignoni? [Starts looking up in the pocket dictionary]
    Francesca: [Gets close to Nick] What do you need, Nick?

Nick:	Mushrooms, champignoni. Is 'championi' mushrooms?	
Francesca:	Championi… *Chiampione* [ʃam 'pione] is a champion, but very well	
5	misprononced. *Funghi*! [She writes it on a transparency and projects the word	
	on to the screen]	
Nick:	*Funghi*! Yeah, there we are… *Funghi. Tutti i giorni mangiari* (**Mushrooms.**	
	Every day eat).	
10	**John**:	Il sabato e la domenica…
Francesca:	From Latin: 'fungus'… 'fungus, fungi'.	

At this point it became clear that Francesca was slightly annoyed with Nick because, as indicated in Chapter 8, he was constantly contravening her request to students that they should not use their dictionaries. In her correction of the wrong word, she did not mention the case of interference with French, but she pointed out to Nick that, although the pronunciation should have been different anyway, the word he had used could easily be mistaken for something completely different. Once he was given the appropriate term, Nick composed a rather ungrammatical sentence [line 7]. However, the point was now understandable, because the word *funghi* is used correctly. So, Francesca did not correct him again, although both the syntax of the sentence was incorrect and the pronunciation of the verb in the infinitive (*mangiari*) was incorrect (as it should have been *mangiare*). At the end of the extract we see that, while Nick and John were already moving on and resuming the activity [line 10], Francesca was still thinking of the lexical item she had just told Nick and even gave him the Latin derivation of it [line 11].

Francesca also seemed to be concerned that lexical items should also be spelt correctly. Extract 22 is taken from a later stage of the same activity. Students had now moved into talking about their eating habits at lunch. Francesca was moving from one group to

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another and noticed that the grid on the handout of a student in the three-person group had a spelling mistake. Her comment was just made in passing. The mistake did not affect communication greatly and because the class was a spoken language one rather than a written language one she did not put much emphasis on it. After drawing attention to this spelling error, she expanded on the lexical item that she had corrected and reinforced the use of prepositions, which was the main grammatical topic she wanted her students to practise during that class.

Extract 22

1   **Francesca**:   *Pannini* is fine, but has just one 'n'. You have *un panino* (**a filled roll**), which is either a baguette or a slice of bread, but not the sliced one in there. That would be *un tramezzino* (**a sandwich**), with the white [bread]… OK? And you usually say *al* or *a*. So it would be tuna, *al tonno*; ham, *al prosciutto*;*al salame* (**salami/sausage** [**roll**])).

The wording of Francesca's correction is interesting. She said: "*Pannini* is fine, but…" [line 1]. To the students this sounded as if she was telling them that, yes, there was a slight mistake there, but nothing which could ultimately compromise the meaning of what they were saying. As a matter of fact, Francesca pronounced the word as it would sound if there were a double 'n' in the plural, i.e. in the form the student had written it on her handout. She then gave the standard pronunciation of the singular form (also spelled with a single 'n') in her next sentence. She then went on to introduce another lexical item, *tramezzino* [line 3] and then to discuss the use of prepositions again [line 4] and to teach them how to use them to talk about what a sandwich or roll is filled with. This gave her the opportunity to mention three more vocabulary items (*tonno, prosciutto,* and *salame*) connected to the topic [lines 4-5].

Extracts 23 and 24 all come from a stage in the lesson when students were well into the first activity proposed, the pair work. Students were talking about their meals during the day and mentioned food items such as hamburgers and paella, neither of which are associated with Italian cooking. Francesca's comments here because they touched on another aspect of language: sound-symbol correspondences for borrowed words and then pronunciation when speaking Italian.

Extract 23

1	**Kelly**:	How do you say hamburger?
	Francesca:	Hamburger [pron.: '*amburger*].
	Kelly:	Just, how do you spell ...
	Francesca:	[It] is spelt the same, but we say *amburger*.

Extract 24

1	**Nick**:	Hamburger [pronounces it the English way]
	Francesca:	No, not *hamburger*, *amburger* [am'burger]
	Nick:	*Amburger*.
	Francesca:	*Amburger*! In Italian it wouldn't be *<u>h</u>amburger*, but *amburger*,
5		*amburger* [...]

The issue being addressed here, implicitly, between teacher and student is that what arises when difference in pronunciation becomes a cultural marker. Words like 'hamburger' came into Italian quite a long time ago, probably after the Americans freed Italy after WW2. At that time, few Italians could speak English, and a comparatively large number of Italians in Southern Italy spoke regional varieties rather than standard Italian, as was discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis. Italianisation of foreign words was the trend during Fascist times, and Italians could not be expected to

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understand a word pronounced with a foreign, although correct, accent. Hence Francesca's insistence on the pronunciation of 'hamburger' in an Italian way in Extract 24 above.

A similar issue arises in Extract 25 below. Extract 25 comes from the same stage in the class as Extracts 23 and 24. Extract 26, on the other hand, happened earlier in the class, when Nick and John had just started talking about their lunches.

Extract 25

1	**Nick**:	Paella [pa'jella]. Una paella [pa'jella]
	John:	Yeah.
	Francesca:	Una paella [pronounces it the Spanish way]. Paella [pronounces it the Italian way[pa'ella]]

Extract 26

1	**Nick**:	*Un* curry, *sì un* curry ... Do you have curry? *Un* curry
	Francesca:	We don't say un curry ... *Un pollo al* ...
	Nick:	So, it'll be a chicken, *per esempio*, chicken korma, chicken tikka masala...
	Francesca:	I know what you mean, but in Italian we don't have these Indian habits. So,
5		sometimes we can say *un pollo al curry* because we use the spice, rather than the curry. So if you eat Indian food, you say what you eat.
	Nick:	*Un pollo* [he pronounces it the Spanish way] *al curry* ['kwri], *un pollo* [Spanish pron.] *al curry* ['kwri]
	Francesca:	*Un pollo* [she pronounces it correctly] *al curry* ['kwri] o *un pollo al* curry
10		['kari] ( ) My father says *curry* ['kwri], because it's really up to you to read the label of the curry.

These two Extracts also show Francesca modelling the Italian pronunciation of foreign words, from Spanish and from South Asian languages. As in Extracts 23 and 24, the implicit assumption appears to be that foreign words should be pronounced in the Italian way, in order to be understandable to Italians. However, things have changed in

Italy since the times when the word 'hamburger' was introduced into Italian dictionaries. The study of English, along with other languages, such as Spanish, has become more widespread during the compulsory school years. In fact, learning English and Spanish has become progressively more common than learning French, which in the 1960s was still the most studied L2 in Italy. As already mentioned in chapter 2, the expansion of the economy in the 1960s made Italian people wealthier and gave them more opportunities to travel abroad. There was also an expansion in consumerism. Last but not least, Italy has fairly recently become a destination for mass immigration, and this has started to have an impact on the 'culture' and the language. This has brought about a change in the way Italians make words, which are derived from English or other languages, their own. This is a cultural process, which has direct consequences on the way the language is conceived of by native speakers, depending on the generation or the age group they belong to. Italianised versions of foreign words are still common, especially among older people, or people who did not have a sound linguistic education. However a new, cool tendency is taking over, especially among the younger and/or better educated speakers many attempt to reproduce the original pronunciation of foreign words. There has been no research into this shift in usage, but there are indications that this practice could be a way of marking status. So, both types of pronunciation co-exist. Francesca actually seemed to be alluding to this changing aspect of the language and the flexibility of its uses in lines 9-11 when she notes the difference between her own pronunciation of 'curry' and that of her father.

9.6 Summing up: Francesca's views of language and her in-class practices.

A rather different picture emerges from my analysis of the interactions between Francesca and her students, exemplified in Extracts 11-16. Francesca was concerned with encouraging her students to communicate in spoken Italian and had devised an activity for the spoken class which facilitated practice in the use of particular prepositions. The choice of this activity was clearly informed by a commitment to a communicative approach to language teaching and learning.

Nevertheless, she insisted on the use of standard Italian, in speaking and in writing (viz: her concern with correcting spelling revealed in Extract 22). In her conversations with me, before and after class, she indicated that she felt that beginners should be supported in getting a good grasp of standard Italian. She corrected students' grammatical errors and their pronunciation, asserting her expertise as a native speaker. At the same time, she drew her students' attention to regional variation and gave examples of linguistic forms used in different regions of Italy.

She was confident in her capacity to teach Italian vocabulary. In the spoken language class, she made it clear that she wanted her students to ask her for help with lexical gaps and not to use their dictionaries. And, in both classes, she helped individual students by suggesting alternative ways of expressing the points they wanted to make (e.g. in Extracts 11, 19 and 20), by encouraging them to expand their repertoire of communicative resources and by emphasising the need to try different ways of expressing things.

However, in the written language and grammar class, she showed some uncertainty in dealing with grammatical rules and in using metalanguage, especially when she was challenged by a student, as we saw in Extract 12. When introducing grammatical rules in English, Francesca relied more heavily on the textbook, reading aloud from the textbook. At the same time, she acted as a mediator of the textbook for the students, highlighting particular points, checking on understanding and adding examples of her own. And, when she found the textbook presentation particularly challenging (e.g. in Extract 15), she actually took a critical stance on the material presented, indicating to the students that, from her point of view, the examples in the textbook sounded "artificial" and that such forms were rarely used in standard Italian, even in formal registers.

9.7 Conclusion

As I indicated in section 5.2.2 of this thesis, Kubanyiova (in press) has called for more qualitative research and discourse analysis in studies exploring the interface between teacher beliefs and classroom practices. This chapter has shown how close analysis of the talk exchanged between teachers and learners can indeed provide us with telling insights into the knowledge, beliefs, understandings, preferences and language ideologies that teachers bring to their work in classrooms and into the specific ways in which the design and conduct of their classes is shaped by these beliefs and understandings.

Furthermore, when classroom observation and discourse analysis are combined with informal conversations with teachers, before and after class, in the staffroom or elsewhere, we can build a fuller picture of how particular teachers' biographies, including their own language learning and teacher training experiences have had a bearing on their beliefs and language ideologies and we can begin to explain variation in teacher practices.

As I pointed out in Chapter 7, Jean and Francesca, the two teachers in this study, had had very different professional trajectories and different experiences in terms of teacher training: Jean had been trained long before Francesca, at a time when grammar/translation methods were still widely used. She has also been working at Seaview University for a number of years, in an environment where language teaching and learning was still largely text-based and centred around translation, as in many university settings. In contrast, Francesca was a relative newcomer to the British higher education scene and had received her training as a language teacher in Italy. In addition, they had had different trajectories as language learners: Jean had learned Italian as a foreign language herself, along with a significant body of metalinguistic terminology for talking about the language, and that experience must have shaped her views of the language. Francesca was a native speaker of standard Italian and a second language learner of English and, as I will show in the next chapter, when speaking English in class (with fluency) she still came across gaps in her communicative repertoire from time to time. This inevitably shaped her presentation of self as a teacher.

As I have argued above, these differences in the biographies of the two teachers, in their trajectories as teachers and as language learners, enable us to understand the priorities, preferences, beliefs and, indeed, insecurities that guided their in-class practices as teachers of Italian.

One last point that I would like to add it that, in developing research of this kind, on language teacher beliefs 'in action', we need to pay particularly close attention to the ways in which teachers use and talk about texts with the students in their classes and, building on the type of research I considered in section 4.6 of this thesis, we need to begin asking questions such as the following: What texts do the teachers bring to class (where they have the freedom to choose)? What purposes do they have in mind? What views of language and language learning are encoded in these texts? How do the teachers mediate the texts for their students? What views of language and language teaching are reflected in the ways in which they mediate the texts? What identities do the teachers take on in talking about the language forms presented in the texts? By focusing in on the practices that unfold in class around language texts, and by addressing questions such as these, we can probe yet deeper into the complexity underpinning the relationship between language ideologies, teacher beliefs and actual classroom practices.

ⁱ Some Italian prepositions, when used in combination with definite articles merge into a single word. The grammatical term *preposizione articolata*, which is commonly used in Italian to refer to these items, is often translated as 'prepositional article' in English textbooks.

CHAPTER 10

Constructing different cultural worlds and identities through classroom talk

10.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I am presenting a further dimension of my analysis of the three language classes in this study. This time the analysis will focus on research question 2. I will give an account of the cultural elements that the two teachers introduced in their language classes, indicating how they did so. I will look at several different ways in which Italian culture was represented in the teaching materials that were used, as well as in the explanations, the discussions and the small talk that unfolded in these three classes. In my analysis of the classroom data, I identified a continuum of cultural dimensions, building on and extending House's (2002) distinction between different ways of conceptualising culture. In this chapter, I will exemplify these dimensions of culture with reference to a few episodes from each class. I will focus on how the teachers talked about culture and I will show which of these dimensions they most frequently referred to (there was considerable difference between the two teachers). I will also indicate how the two teachers positioned themselves vis-à-vis the different cultural worlds, cultural practices and values they were talking about, assuming different identities in this process. In addition, I will consider those moments in the interactions between teachers and students when there was some negotiation between teachers and students about aspects of culture. Following Bhabha (1994) I will characterise these moments as opportunities for opening up 'third spaces'.

10.2 Interpreting and analysing the data: From patterns emerging to an analytic framework

Jean and Francesca's role as language teachers inevitably led them to deal with aspects of culture, connected with Italy, in classroom practice. When reading and analysing the transcripts of the classes, it became apparent that the two teachers had quite different ways of talking about culture. As I have already suggested in Chapter 8 and again in Chapter 9, in discussing the differing views of language and of the language teaching/learning process that the two teachers displayed, there are some factors relating to their language teaching histories that can account for such differences. First of all, there was a clear age gap between the two teachers. This is significant in the sense that Jean and Francesca were trained at different times, when the emphasis, within British and Italian society and institutions, as well as within the educational agencies offering training to linguists and teachers, was on different cultural dimensions. Secondly, the two teachers had different backgrounds and national origins. Thirdly, Jean studied and was trained in the UK, while Francesca graduated and qualified as a teacher in Italy.

In Chapter 2, I addressed the question of why Italian culture has been traditionally represented in terms of 'high culture' and I pointed out that there has always been a kind of resistance – at least in some *milieux* – to taking on more mundane dimensions of Italian cultural life. It is only quite recently that a more anthropological view of culture has been embraced. This has only emerged since the period in the 1970s when the communicative teaching approach became widely accepted, at least in language

teacher training practice in Italy. It has now become the concern of researchers and textbook authors more widely, and has been recognised as part of a wider concept of culture. As I showed in chapter 3, House's (2002) distinction between humanistic and anthropological concepts of culture is useful and has helped me to capture broad trends in my classroom data. However, as I demonstrate in the sections that follow, I also found that Jean and Francesca referred to specific aspects of popular culture and mass media in Italy and they also raised social issues related to life in Italy (e.g. debates about the status of women). In addition, they took account of cultural diversity in their classes and made allusions to cultural practices and social issues in the countries of origin of some of their students.

I was eventually able to draw up a continuum of different dimensions of life that were talked about in the three university classes in this study and in the materials designed for teaching the language:

1.   Everyday cultural practices in local lifeworlds (e.g. shopping, cooking eating, family life, etc.);

2.   Popular culture (e.g. pop music, TV programmes, computer games, sports, etc.);

3.   Italian social life and social issues (e.g. gender, class/region, ethnicity, etc.);

4.   Italian literature, art, architecture, music, etc. (high culture);

5.   Political and institutional worlds in Italy.

This continuum extends from everyday dimensions of culture (1) to the most public and institutional (4) and societal representations of culture (5).

At the same time, taking House's broad two-way distinction on board, I observed that while Jean was more oriented towards a humanistic view of culture, Francesca tended more towards an anthropological one. As I stated above, this could be attributed to the fact that when Jean was a student - between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s – the anthropological view of culture had not yet become the mainstream one in the context of Italian L2, and her tutors were likely to have been trained on the basis of the humanistic background, which traditionally informed the idea of Italian culture. On the other hand, Francesca carried out her studies and training in the 1990s, when the anthropological view had been consolidated within the Italian context.

After identifying all references to culture in my data, I then classified them against items 1 to 5 in the continuum of cultural dimensions that I have schematised below. The grid, which follows, gives an account of which of these dimensions of culture Jean, and then Francesca, referred to most often in their classes.

Table 3 Dimensions of culture: Linking House's (2002) two-way distinction with the continuum based on the data.

Teacher	A continuum of dimensions of culture				
	1	2	3	4	5
Jean		✓	✓	✓	
Francesca	✓	✓			
	Anthropological			Humanistic	

Jean thus seemed to show a predilection for high culture. This was apparent from some examples in the teaching material she used, which included references to opera

or to poetry (see sections below for details). However, she also used material which addressed issues related to Italian social life, such as articles from magazines. Finally, Jean showed an interest in taking advantage of the cultural heterogeneity of her class, in order to discuss culture from different perspectives.

Although Jean did include elements and texts that referred to Italian social life and social issues in her teaching material and in the class discussions, on several other occasions, it can be seen that it was the humanistic view that was still most clearly embedded in her classroom practice. Thus, some examples she used to explain grammar referred back to the cultural heritage of Italian music (see section 10.3 below). Furthermore, in the reading anthology she had prepared for her first year students, she had included a few poems, thus prompting her students to take on the challenge of reading poetry at an early stage in their learning of the language.

In discussing different dimensions of culture in her class, the identity she often appeared to be assuming was that of expert – as an Italianist – and she appeared to expect her students to familiarise themselves with the cultural heritage of Italy as part and parcel of the task of language learning. This may well be the reason why she frequently referred to aspects of high culture in her teaching and why her contributions to classroom conversations about culture quite frequently took the form of monologues or strongly teacher-directed talk.

Another aspect that should be noted regards the structure that Jean gave to her classes. The same organisational sequence was carried over all the classes I observed as well

as the one that I analysed in depth in this study. There was a clear-cut division between the first part of the class – devoted to language and grammar – and the second one, which was geared towards reading and discussion of social and cultural themes. This practice seems to echo the dichotomy pointed out by Kramsch (1993: 3) to which I referred in chapter 3 of this thesis. No clear-cut distinction of this kind ever appeared in the way Francesca's classes were structured.

In contrast, Francesca seemed to prefer to talk about everyday cultural practices, in other words, culture as defined by Roberts et al. (2001: 36-38), namely "the ordinariness and dailiness of people's lives" and observation and reflection on "otherness" in its local particularity. Francesca also showed awareness – or was sometimes made aware – of other cultures, associated with regions and countries beyond Italy, within her classes. This contributed to the making of new spaces for culture in her classes. I also put a tick for Francesca in table 3 corresponding to dimension 2. This is because I observed a lesson she gave (although this was not recorded and therefore not included in the data that I finally used for this analysis), where she constructed a session around ideas drawn from a popular TV programme, which is broadcast in Italy and in the UK.

The dimensions of culture that Francesca most frequently highlighted in her classes fell into category 1: everyday cultural practices in local lifeworlds. For example, a feature that both classes taught by Francesca had in common was the general topic: food. Food has a clear cultural relevance in an Italian context. The spread of Italian

cuisine has contributed to the perception of Italian-ness that non-Italians have and, to some extent, even to the one that Italians have of themselves.

Resorting to different discourse strategies, from joking to providing language examples, from references to her experience as an Italian living in Britain to longer narratives about herself and her family habits in Italy, Francesca took on board this widely recognised cultural dimension of Italian-ness and exploited it in her classes. In doing so, she sometimes took on an outsider's role, projecting herself to her students as a living example of an Italian with habits opposed to those displayed by the British, the background of the majority of her students. At other times, she acted as a cultural broker, explaining the differences between cultural practices in Italy and in Britain, from the point of view of someone who knows the British socio-cultural context very well. On yet other occasions, she gave up her role as a cultural mediator letting the teaching material, e.g. the textbook, speak in her place and allowing it to become a cultural reference point, for her students to refine their cultural awareness.

Despite the fact that there were more students in Francesca's classes than in Jean's class, Francesca's classes were comparatively more homogeneous than Jean's class, as far as the linguistic and cultural background of the students was concerned. In fact, considering the students in both her classes together, there were only three students from countries other than the UK. There were two female Spanish students on an Erasmus programme and a male student from the USA. This North American student shared a first language (English) with the rest of the class. Most of the class were students in their late teens/early twenties. There was just one mature student.

Although Jean's class was small, being made up of just 5 students, it was rather heterogeneous. It comprised Tim, a mature student, Anna, an Austrian student on an Erasmus exchange, Megumi, a Japanese student and two British students, Sarah and Laura. As I will try to show in the analysis below, the presence of students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and different age-groups, made the cultural dialogue in the class more complex and multifaceted, making it richer, but also more problematic. We will see how the composition of the classes influenced the dialogue on culture, which unfolded during the lessons.

To conclude, it is interesting that neither of the teachers seemed to be concerned with cultural dimension 5. Aspects related to this dimension are still widely featured in textbooks, in the so-called 'cultural' or 'civilisation' sections.

10.3 Jean talking about culture

As I mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, Jean showed an orientation towards incorporating in her classes dimensions of culture that referred back to both the tradition of Italian high culture, as well as to certain social issues. In the following sections, I will try to show how she spoke about these cultural dimensions. Jean built references to such cultural aspects into her own teaching material, in the form of examples to illustrate particular language usages or passages from reading texts. Essentially, we can observe that Jean showed three main ways of talking about culture. First of all, she talked about examples of Italian 'high culture', such as Italian

opera and poetry, feeding these examples directly into her teaching material. Secondly, she used translation as a way of comparing and contrasting English and Italian. This enabled her to discuss with the students the way in which meanings are constructed in different linguistic and cultural contexts. Finally, she used a media text to compare debates in Italy and the UK about a particular social issue. She also expanded the discussions and the comparisons, by taking advantage of the heterogeneity of her class.

10.3.1. Talking about high culture and literary language

The tendency by Jean to incorporate cultural elements linked to Italian high culture and the Italian cultural heritage was clearly manifested even in her written language and grammar lesson. In Extract 1 we see a reference to Italian opera. This extract comes from her introduction to the grammar topic of the day, at the beginning of the lesson and is the continuation of Extract 3 in the previous chapter. The class is still considering the use of the subjunctive as a means of accomplishing a polite directive and the example is included in the handout that the teacher had just passed round to the students.

Extract 1

1	**Jean**:	…"*Viva la regina*!" "Long live the Queen!" And everybody knows the tune, but did they know it was a subjunctive? *Nessun dorma*! Well, why is that a subjunctive? Why is *nessun dorma* a subjunctive? What does the title of the song actually mean? I mean we all remember the World Cup…
5	**Tim**:	None shall sleep.
	Jean:	Let nobody sleep! Yes, nobody shall sleep! So, what in fact he's saying…

the person who is singing…it is: "You lot, you all stay awake, let nobody sleep until we resolve this mystery!" (…) [No reaction from the students] But yesterday I mentioned that quite often you are going to have the subjunctive

10   introduced by the word *che*, which signifies 'that'.

Extract 1 shows a number of features which illustrate aspects of Jean's view of culture and her expectations of her students. First of all, the cultural reference here reflects a humanistic view of culture. There were a thousand other possibilities to illustrate this use of the subjunctive, and yet her choice fell on the starting line of an aria from a famous Italian opera, Puccini's *Turandot*. This choice was motivated by a desire to illustrate a common use of language and it also revealed the cultural worlds to which Jean oriented herself, worlds which were echoed in the kind of teaching texts that were mainstream materials at the time when Jean was herself a student. She clearly expected that her students should be familiar with them. Take, for example her statements '*everybody knows the tune*' [line 1] and '*You lot, you all stay awake, let nobody sleep until we resolve this mystery!*' [lines 7-8] which clearly indicate that the teacher presupposed that the whole of the class would be familiar with the whole opera and its script. However, the formal wording of the opera libretto was rendered in a colloquial English style, as if she was endeavouring to make her translation easier for her students to grasp; the Italian phrase with the subjunctive was culturally and linguistically mediated for the British university context.

In line 4, realising that she had probably set her expectations too high, Jean also made reference to a television broadcast of a popular sports event: the football world cup and a performance by the Three Tenors – L. Pavarotti, P. Domingo and J. Carreras –

at one of the ceremonies held as part of this sports tournament. Again, we see Jean bridging different cultural worlds: high culture and popular culture.

In the second part of the class, as we saw in the previous chapter, the class was engaged in a reading activity. They read three different texts from a collection of photocopied material in Italian, which the teacher had handed out to students earlier that year, to enable them to read in the foreign language during their free time, at their own pace. The following two extracts show once again, in different ways, Jean's orientation to high culture. Extract 2, that follows, took place at the beginning of the reading session. It shows Jean complying with Anna's suggestion to read a poem. Tim had also made a suggestion. He had chosen a magazine article about the status of women in Italy. Jean opted for Anna's suggestion.

Extract 2

1	**Jean**:	Has anybody read a passage that they particularly enjoyed and they want to share that enjoyment with us?
	Anna:	There's…
	Tim:	What about '*La Donna in Italia*' ('**The Woman in Italy**')
5	**Anna**:	There's a very nice poem…
	Jean:	Ah, Anna… has found a poem. *Pagina*…? (**Page…?**)
	Anna:	*Ventidue*? (**Twenty-two**?)
	Jean:	*Ventidue. Guardiamo un po' pagina ventdue, allora… Ah,… Ventuno, ventidue!* Which one? *Quale? Anna, quale poesia ti piace?* (**Twenty-two.**
10		**Let's look a bit at page twenty-two, then… Ah,… Twenty-one, twenty-two! Which one? Which one? Anna, which poem do you like?)**

The inclusion of examples of poetry in a reading pack designed for relative beginners is remarkable, since poetry is generally studied at a more advanced level. Jean pays special attention to Anna's chosen text and even starts to talk to her in Italian [lines 6-

9]. This was not the only poem in Jean's anthology, nor her favourite. In the following extract, and in others later on in this chapter, we will see that Jean used this suggestion by Anna as a means of moving on to another poem – one of her favourites.

The poem picked by Anna was by a rather obscure Italian poet, A. Pozzi, and was called *Pudore* (**Modesty**). The talk around the poem unfolded as shown in Extract 3 below. First, Jean had Anna read it. Then, as the title, *Pudore*, was a word unknown to the students, Tim was invited to look it up in his dictionary for the benefit of the class. While this was happening, Jean asked Anna whether she had read another poem in the anthology, a much better known poem. Quasimodo, the author, is one of the few Italian poets who have been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. After this passing reference to the other poem, Anna was asked to explain why she liked the poem she had proposed and finally the text that had just been read was analysed from a linguistic point of view. Jean pointed out grammatical structures and explained the meaning of unknown lexical items with occasional contributions from the students.

Extract 3

1	**Tim**:	What's *pudore* (**modesty**)?
	Jean:	What's *pudore*? *Pudore*… Who's got a dictionary? We won't find it in a little
		one, that's it! It's quite a special, or specialised word, *pudore.* [Turning to
		Anna, referring to the poem following the one she had just proposed on the
5		same page of the anthology]. Did you read *Ed è subito sera* (**And soon the**
		evening comes)*,* Anna, by Quasimodo?

Jean's question to Anna [lines 5-6] suggests that she was particularly keen on the Quasimodo poem and was looking for an opening to bring it into the discussion.

10.3.2 *From translation and linguistic difference to the context of culture*

Extract 4 below, shows another moment in Jean's class when different cultural worlds are brought together through the study of examples to illustrate uses of the subjunctive in Italian. This extract refers to a phase in the first half of a class when all forms of the present subjunctive of regular and auxiliary verbs had already been presented, and Jean was giving some more examples of the present subjunctive in context. Extract 4 follows Jean's explanation already presented in chapter 9 of this thesis (Extract 10). In my comment on that extract, I explained how Jean seemed to underscore the importance of mastering the grammar of a language in order to be able to fully exploit its communicative potential in use. Jean had geared her explanation to reinforcing the need for the students to study thoroughly the forms and uses of the Italian subjunctive. However, a question posed by Anna, the Austrian Erasmus student, opened a window on other non-Italian contexts of culture. This drew attention to the fact that there were students in the class who spoke languages other than English.

Extract 4

1	**Anna**:	Er… It would be '*che parli piano*': 'she wants you to speak'…
	Jean:	So, … if she's speaking to who? To a singular, to you-singular?
	Anna:	Yes!
	Jean:	Sure!
5	**Anna**:	But the translation would be the same…
	Jean:	It would be the same in English, absolutely, yeah! Yeah, that's right!
	Sarah:	That's like normal.
	Jean:	Yeah, Anna's point is that 'you' in English is the same word in the singular and in the plural… Ehm… From a foreigner's point of view
10		it's not very clear. You know she's got two and we've got four, in Italian.'You' and 'you', I mean… unless you go up north that divine village in Cumbria where they still use 'thee' and 'thou', that's much more clear, you

know, old-fashioned English, fusing dialects, but yes, it's not clear in English, is it?

Anna, an Austrian student and a native speaker of German, took the floor and asked a question in line 5, and in so doing highlighted a linguistic difference between German and English, namely the fact that, in German there is a distinction between the second person singular pronoun (du) and the second person plural (ihr), the so-called T/V distinction (Brown and Gilman, 1960). Sarah, a British student, spontaneously remarked "that's like normal" [line 7]. This obliged Jean to wear a cultural and linguistic broker's hat, and to mediate between the two students. She did then try explaining the linguistic difference between German and English and by referring to the distinctions in Italian, she also made explicit reference to different categories of people whose 'difference' is indexed by their use of language.

Jean's intervention in this case was prompt and she was able to exploit the cultural variety within her own class as a resource to stimulate a cross-cultural dialogue between students and the teacher. This, according to Kramsch (1993), can happen when the composition of the class is culturally homogeneous, because through the dialogue between students and the teacher 'participants not only replicate a given context of culture, but because it takes place in a foreign language, it also has the potential of shaping a new culture' (Kramsch, 1993: 47). As we have seen, this can happen in classes where students have a heterogeneous language and cultural background, provided their contributions are taken on board and valued by the teacher. Here, Jean did acknowledge Anna's contribution and Sarah's initial reaction to it. By expanding on it, she offered the class food for thought and started a brief but

significant reflection on the different ways of depicting the social relations between speakers in and through the choice of pronouns.

Extract 5 below comes soon after the exchange shown above in Extract 3. After the discussion of the linguistic features of the poem by Pozzi chosen by Anna, Jean cajoled the class into a discussion of the Quasimodo poem that she happened to like.

Extract 5

1	**Jean**:	Because, given that we have thrown ourselves into the deep end not even going to have a look at prose, doing poetry, I mean, let's really go for it. Let's have a look at Quasimodo. Take a couple of seconds and just read the poem and we'll discuss its meaning… Right. "*Ognuno sta solo sul cuor della terra/*
5		*trafitto da un raggio di sole:/ed è subito sera."* ("**Everybody's lonely on this earth/speared through by a ray of sun:/and suddenly the night's here**"). It's a sort of great existentialist idea here…
	Tim:	*Raggio di sole* is a ray of sun.
	Jean:	It is, yeah, yeah… And *ognuno…*
10	**Sarah**:	Everyone?
	Jean:	Everyone, each one of us, yeah. So, each one of us is… What?
	Sarah:	Alone
	Jean:	Yeah
	Sarah:	Literally, it says 'on the heart of the earth…'
15	**Jean**:	Literally it says on the heart of the earth, yeah. So, literally, Everyone is alone…, could we say on this earth? [Sarah nods]. Everyone of us is alone on this earth. *Trafitto*, right. What part of the verb is *trafitto?*(**speared**) […] [Students carried on guessing, but the translation of *trafitto* proved to be a difficult obstacle to overcome. Not only is this verb irregular, but also it is a
20		lexical item that one could not expect a beginner to have. The guessing game became more frenzied, so much so that Jean had to stop it and give the translation herself, in order to keep the focus of the class on the poem, rather than on the translation game. However, the difficulty of finding a suitable term for the translation gave Jean the opportunity to draw the class's attention on
25		poetic translation].

Jean:	You can see the difficulty now, translating, can't you? I mean, it's not that prose is not difficult to translate. Think of problems that… I don't think that it's such a good idea to translate poetry. Am I being really old-fashioned?
Tim:	I mean, you can, but you have to understand what the poet is trying to say and
30		then you've got to use the appropriate…
Sarah:	Yeah, I think…
Jean:	Just think, it's easier…
Tim:	But it's the sound, isn't it? That is important with poetry.
Sarah:	[…]
35 **Anna**:		I just know that if you know something behind… about the life of the poet, sometimes, the first interpretation and then you read about it and you find out what he has done and then you sometimes have got a totally different interpretation.
Jean:	Yes, that too, yes!

As in the previous extract, the students interpreted Jean's invitation to 'have a look at' the poem *Ed è subito sera* as an invitation to translate it into English. They got stuck on the past participle form '*trafitto*' and the exchange between students and teacher turned into a guessing game. Eventually Jean provided the 'correct' translation. This was followed by brief bantering about the connotations of other alternatives and then, by a brief exchange about the possibility of translation and about the need to know more about a poet, to be able to interpret individual poems. By now the language class had taken quite a literary turn and had become a reflection on the translatability of poetry.

Extract 6 below comes right at the end of the discussion about the difficulty of translating poetry. In this extract Jean switches, unexpectedly, to a reference to a specific genre of Japanese poetry, namely *haiku*[i]. The introduction of this cultural reference was significant in two ways: firstly, it served as a means of including Megumi, a Japanese student, in the group discussion. Secondly, it revealed Jean's

quite extensive knowledge of poetry. Again, we see Jean drawing on her knowledge of high culture, though this time it is Japanese high culture.

Extract 6

1	**Jean**:	… Megumi, how do you translate *haiku*?
		And you could do it, could you? I mean it's so difficult, because it's so
		specific to the culture.
	Megumi:	Yeah, […]. [The student speaks very softly and her utterance was not clearly
5		recorded, but she appeared to confirm what Jean was saying]

10.3.3 Social issues viewed from different cultural perspectives

Jean also introduced into her lessons teaching material referring to aspects of Italian social life and social issues. Extract 7 below occurred at the end of the session discussed above. After the long discussion on poetic texts chosen by Anna and by Jean herself, the class discussed Tim's choice of text. This was a longish, journalistic prose text, dealing with gender issues in Italy: *La Donna in Italia* (**Women in Italy**). This came from a rather conservative Italian newspaper/magazine. The article put over rather mixed messages about women and so provided a starting point for in-class discussion. Again, following the routine established in this class, the whole text was read aloud. This took some time as it was a much longer text than the poems previously discussed. Each student read aloud in turn, without prompting. Jean appeared to be conscious that the end of class time was approaching, so she initiated the discussion of the text as follows:

Extract 7

| 1 | **Jean**: | Shall we have a look at this 'La donna in Italia'? It's a long one, so we'll |
| | | need to sort of belt through it. *Vogliamo cominciare a leggere? Cominciamo a* |

		leggere una o due frasi (**Shall we start reading? Let's start reading one or two sentences**) ... I mean... [to Tim] *Vuoi cominciare?*(**Will you begin?**)
5	**Tim**:	[Starts off the reading routine by reading aloud the first two sentences of the text. The other students each take turns at reading aloud until the end of the article.]
	Jean:	Good, very good. Right… So, what a meaty passage, isn't it? A lot in there... That's interesting. And Laura says it's the truth. So, your mission… is… your
10		mission, now, for Thursday is to tell me what you think. I'd really like to know what you think about this passage. So, it means re-reading it, obviously, and you can look out for things that we've already looked at… subjunctives… There was a *migliore* (**better**) there… We looked at comparatives and superlatives yesterday. So, look out for those things and tell me what you
15		think. Right, Tim, Laura's given us a point of… *un punto di partenza* (**a starting point**). She said it's true, she reckons it's all true. So, what do you say? We've got different cultures here.We're gonna get, dare I say?, a middle-aged man [...] dare I say that? A middle-aged one? [The girls laugh]
	Tim:	[...] might be very glad**.**
20	**Jean**:	From a middle-aged man's point of view, we'll get to a young person's from Mittel-Europe, a couple of, say, 'Brits' and our student from Japan. An Oriental student, see what she thinks. Because Japanese women are thought to be in a certain mould, everybody thinks. It's not true, it's not true, I know, but we've got one in the family, I know. … Right, we did not look… We've not
25		left a gap for the exercise, so remind me on Thursday, we'll do the five minutes, do the exercise from straight to finish, and we are having such fun.

At the end of this reading routine, Jean made a brief evaluative comment on the passage and then asked the students to be prepared to talk about their reactions to it in the Thursday class. She referred to Laura's spontaneous reactions to the text indicating, as we see in Extract 7, that this reaction could provide *un punto di partenza* (a starting point) for the discussion that they would have. What is revealing about this extract is that, in anticipating the discussion to be had the following Thursday, Jean also anticipated that the students would engage with the topic from different cultural perspectives. She made explicit reference to the 'identities' of all the students in the

group, using rather essentialised labels (e.g. Oriental, middle-aged man) while, at the same time, showing some critical distance from these labels ("Because Japanese women are thought to be in a certain mould, everybody thinks. It's not true, it's not true, I know") [line23].

In spite of them being a small 'family', Jean saw her students as representing 'different cultures' [lines 17-22]. The class was a small community of practice, where different nationalities, genders and age groups came together. As I indicated in chapter 4 and in the opening section of this chapter, this constitutes an example of what Bhabha (1994) described as a 'third space', where people with a variety of cultural experiences and points of view have the potential to create new cultural perspectives and a unique cultural context.

As before, Jean also kept a 'language thread' running through the task. She asked the students to look out for familiar grammatical structures [lines 12-14]. However, she was carried away by the discussion about women in Italy ['*we are having such fun*', line 26] that she almost forgot about a grammar exercise she had planned to do in class. She resolved this by putting it off to the beginning of next class and just devoting five minutes to the exercise [lines 24-26].

10.4 Francesca talking about culture

In contrast to Jean, Francesca often referred to the daily cultural activities and routines of Italians in Italy. Her explorations of cultural elements generally took the cue from

what she was teaching. As noted in the previous chapter, Francesca devoted a good deal of her time encouraging her students to learn vocabulary, and it was particular lexical items that led her to speak of culture-related aspects of language. The teaching/learning of vocabulary involved filling lexical gaps; and it opened up opportunities for brief episodes of cultural mapping. She evoked different cultural worlds through brief vignettes and/or scenarios, sometimes as digressions and sometimes as part of the main lesson. In the section that follows, I describe the different ways in which Francesca did this 'cultural mapping' for her students: in section 10.4.1, I will show how she embedded vocabulary items in particular Italian cultural contexts familiar to her and in daily routines in those contexts. In section 10.4.2 and 10.4.3, I will look at the ways in which she handled 'untranslatable' lexis and how she explained colloquial and idiomatic expressions. In 10.4.4, I will illustrate the ways in which she evoked cultural norms by talking through scripts for doing things 'the Italian way'. Finally, in 10.4.5, I will consider the ways in which she revealed her political views to her students along with her ideological stance towards the cultural content of the course textbook published in the United States.

10.4.1 The categorisation of daily activities and routines

On numerous occasions in both her lessons, Francesca drew attention to cultural practices and values related to the purchase of food, to cooking and to meal and snack times in Italy and in Britain. In Extract 8, for example, Francesca was introducing a vocabulary item, *merenda*, during her spoken language class. As I have already noted in Chapters 8 and 9, this was one of the meals that students were supposed to discuss

in the oral activity that day, based on a handout that she had just given them. Following her usual routine, Francesca started her oral lesson by giving a few brief announcements. Immediately after this, she introduced the material and the activities prepared for the lesson of the day. Extract 8 comes from this initial phase. Francesca situated the term *merenda* within Italian cultural contexts that were most familiar to her and to daily routines in those contexts. She also linked the concept specifically to children and to 'mothering'. In addition, she located herself vis-à-vis these cultural practices. In this way, she appeared to be affirming an Italian identity.

Extract 8

1	**Francesca:**	Do you all know what *merenda* is? *Merenda* is usually a break you have. With children it's…, it's usually a children thing, and it's like half morning, when they are at school, and it can be like *panino*, a sandwich, or a slice of pizza or some yogurt and fruit.**.** It depends on what their mums want them to eat. And
5		in the afternoon, again, because in Italy we have lunch around 1.00-1.30 and then dinner from 7.00-7.30 until 8.00-8.30 (…). So, when it's 4.00 the children are jumping around saying: "I'm starving, I'm starving! Give me something!" and that's *merenda*. But adults are allowed**.** I'm keen on *merenda* and … So, we can consider it like a meal … So, it depends on how much you eat. Mine
10		are meals.

To explain the meaning of the word *merenda*, Francesca evoked an imaginary scenario involving Italian schoolchildren [lines 2-4]. Addressing all the students in the class, she posed a question and then answered it herself [lines 1-2] and recounted a number of 'facts' about *merenda*, referring, for example, to the times of the day when having *merenda* is usual and to a series of food items that would be considered appropriate for this meal [lines 3-4].

In talking about this snack time, Francesca appeared to be projecting a rather stereotypically gendered view of Italian society in her account of typical scenarios when children take a *merenda*. There is, for example, no mention here of Italian fathers. Only Italian 'mums' are represented as exercising parental control over what their children eat [line 4], trying to make sure that it is healthy, as the items in the list of foods mentioned in the extract [line 3-4] show.

Francesca's attempt to categorise *merenda* as a typically Italian meal also involved relating to her personal experience as an Italian. By stressing that also she herself was 'keen on merenda' [line 8] Francesca implicitly identified herself as an Italian and rounded off her categorisation of this meal as part of a more general cultural mapping of practices relating to food.

10.4.2 The cultural weight of language: Untranslatable items

Extract 9 comes from a later stage in the oral lesson, when the students were more or less half way through the first (pair-work) activity. Although Francesca had already said a few times that it was almost impossible to translate the names of some foods, she was still asked for translations of terms referring to food items, which do not exist in quite the same form in Italy and in Britain. So, in Extract 9, she reiterated the point about how difficult it is to give translations of culturally specific items.

Extract 9

1   **Nick**:   *Pasticcio*, pie: *pasticcio significa con carne, più che ...* er *... pasticcio* is
                 steak and pie, as far as I […]
    Francesca: Can I ask you a question?

Nick:	Yes.	
5 **Francesca**:	Don't you think this traditional kind of English food it might have a false translation in Italian, because actually we don't know what you are talking about? ... What do you want to say?	
Nick:	It's pie. I mean it's sweet pie. As savoury pie is *pasticcio*, is sweet pie *pasticcio* as well?	
10 **Francesca**:	Erm...	
Nick:	Er... apple ... apple pie.	
Francesca:	We would say *torta di mele.*	
Nick:	*Torta di mele*.	
Francesca:	In Italian will be fine, very open. Specifically it's quite hard to find a	
15	translation. Because we've got mainly the same things, but don't say pie.	

One of the students, Nick, was trying to work out the precise meaning of 'pasticcio', focusing on whether it covered sweet pies as well as savoury ones. In her response, Francesca noted both the differences and the commonalities in culinary traditions, suggesting that the latter predominate ("we've got mainly the same things", line 15). She also drew attention to the fact that, even where there are commonalities, food items in particular categories sometimes get labelled differently. She ended with the advice: "Don't say pie". What is particularly interesting in this extract is the way she uses the first person plural pronoun 'we', adopting a particular stance on the problem: in line 6, she used 'we' in the sense 'we, the Italians', excluding Nick and the other students. She uses the pronoun in the same sense in line 12, saying "we would say *torta di mele*". In the last line, however, she uses 'we' in an inclusive way, in "we've got mainly the same things", referring to herself (as an Italian) and to Nick (as a British person).

10.4.3 The teaching of colloquialisms and idioms

Extract 10, which follows, is taken from Francesca's written language and grammar class. It shows how Francesca taught her students a colloquial expression, and an idiomatic one. The fact that she spent time on these particular items showed that she was aware of the role she could play in explaining the possible connotations of colloquialisms and idioms. Extract 10 is taken from the beginning of the lesson, when the class was reading aloud and checking the first of their homework exercises. As I explained in chapter 4, Francesca typically asked individual students to take turns at reading out the sentences and giving the translation in English in order to check their understanding of the meaning. The exercise consisted of a series of sentences, each describing a situation, and then, on the other hand, a list of phrases, given in scrambled order, from which students had to choose the appropriate response or conclusion to each sentence in the first series. The presence of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms gave Francesca the opportunity to bring culture into the discussion.

Extract 10

1	**Francesca**:	[reads out the beginning of the line for the student] "Dai, Gianna…" ("**Come on, Gianna…**")
	Ella:	"…prendi ancora un po' di torta!" "[…] l'acquolina in bocca." ("**…have some more cake!**" "**[…] mouthwatering.**")
5	**Francesca**:	Eve, do you agree?
	Eve:	No.
	Francesca:	What did you do?
	Eve:	*"No, per carità! Non ce la faccio più!"* ("**No, for heaven's sake! I can't take any more!**")
10	**Francesca**:	OK. What does this mean? Mia!
	Mia:	Ehm… The first bit? Ehm…
	Francesca:	Yeah, the first bit.

Mia:		Take one more piece of cake… [Mia fails to translate *dai* – the word that occurs at the beginning of the sentence]
15	**Francesca**:	Yes, but what is *dai*? I always say '*Dai, dai, dai!*', I don't intend... I don't want you to drop dead… What's *dai*? (…) [Mia does not reply.] "Come on Gianna, have some more cake!" And the translation of the answer, Nick, what is "C"?
	Nick:	How nice!
20	**Francesca**:	What is "C"...(Nick does not know) Ana! Translation of line c? (Silence. Ana does not answer) Actually, for you it must be quite difficult, because you've got to translate into Spanish, and then into English … Faye!
	Faye:	Ehm… does it mean […]?
	Francesca:	"*No, per carità!*" *Per carità* is […] It means something to do with *charity*.
25		"No, please, mercy on me…" Something like that. OK?

The Italian expression in question, *dai*, is used whenever an English speaker would say 'come on' or 'go on'. Although students had heard the Italian expression a number of times from their teacher, such as when she had been trying to spur them on or elicit some item from them, they were evidently not aware (or completely sure) of its meaning. Francesca put a particular stress on it and joked about its similarity to the English word 'die!'[lines 15-16]. She then gave a translation.

The text to be translated also contained an idiomatic expression, '*per carità*' (for heaven's sake). Having tried to elicit the meaning of this idiom from three students without success [lines 18-23] Francesca could see that the meaning of the idiom was obscure for all and tried to give a translation herself. She started by explaining it literally ['something to do with charity', line 24]. This 'thinking aloud' drew the students' attention. Working with idioms and translating them back meaningfully into the L1 is one way of exploring the points of contact and divergence between the L1 and the L2 and the cultural worlds they evoke. One revealing utterance in this extract

was Francesca's explicit reference to the language knowledge of one of the Spanish/English bilingual students in her class. This suggests that Francesca knew the students in her class quite well.

10.4.4   Scripts for doing things 'the Italian way'.

One of the ways in which Francesca gave her students an insight into what she saw as the 'Italian way of life' was by creating vignettes or scenarios based on her experiences of living most of her life in Italy. In Extract 11, we see Francesca engaged in a rather long digression towards the end of the written language class. The digression appeared to be triggered by the last sentence of an exercise involving the use of the impersonal form *'si'*.

Extract 11

1	**Francesca**:	[Reads out the beginning of the new sentence, before calling out the name of the student who is supposed to do the exercise]. "*Alla torrefazione…*" (**"At the coffee house**[ii]**…"**), Juliane!
	Juliane:	"*...si compra rose e tulipani*?" (**"…one buys roses and tulips?"**)
5	**Francesca**:	[Shakes her head] Chloë!
	Chloë:	*il caffè Lavazza*. (**Lavazza coffee**.)
	Francesca:	OK, now. If you want caffè Lavazza, you go to the supermarket. If you go to *la torrefazione*, they are gonna have their own brand of coffee. Like, in my region, we have *Moka Arabica*, *Moka* […]. And actually they've got
10		these big bags, ehm…erhm… How do you call them? This… very thick material.
	Students:	Sacks?
	Francesca:	Sacks of coffee in grains. And they ask you what kind of *caffettiera* (**coffee machine**) you use at home, or if you've got a small espresso maker, because
15		then they can adjust the cut […] the powder, according to what you need. And […] people… It's quite expensive, you go there and you can mix

different kinds of coffees, like there's a more roasted one, so it's gonna be slightly more bitter, then there's a lighter one, more creamy, and you can actually ask for your own mixture, and after a while, when they know you,

20   they'll prepare it for you regularly, for they know you want half a kilo of this, 20 grams of that and 30 grams of the other one. They prepare it for my grandmother regularly, because she's quite keen on coffee, and it's really nice… I mean…You've got usually a small quantity, because when you crush the grains, the beans, the coffee beans, there's a smell, so it's nice. And she's

25   got a thing at home, to crush them at home with a… It's electrical and it's really… I assure you it's a completely different kind of coffee. Now I am drinking Lavazza because I've no choice […] but you can perceive the difference. It's really… If you go and you have your own machine, it's worth trying. You spend a bit more, Lavazza […] a couple of pounds a packet, this

30   one no, but it's really worth buying. If you go to Italy, that's my advice. Go, find these *moka* places and… yeah!

As we see in Extract 11, Francesca's digression took the form of a longish monologue about visiting a *torrefazione.* The cultural aspect of coffee drinking is often highlighted in textbooks for Italian beginners, and the one used in the English University in this study was no exception, although there is not a specific section on *la cultura del caffè*, as in other books I have come across.

The passion Francesca put into her monologue, the reference to real life, to her region [lines 8-9] and family [lines 21-22 and 24-26], to her lived experience with the grinding of coffee beans [lines 23-24] and drinking blends of coffee made to order [lines 18-21] and her invitation to students to participate in similar experiences [lines 30-31], all enabled her to hold the students' attention. They listened to her without speaking, apart from when they helped her find the right word [line 12]. In this way, she created a culturally significant moment, by talking to her students from a different point of view; from that of an Italian, who grew up within the *cultura del caffè.* As

she constructed this brief vignette, she took on the role of cultural broker, advising the learners on how to participate in this cultural experience. The fact that Francesca was Italian made a difference and conferred a certain authority to her account of this ordinary, daily activity.

10.4.5 Articulating a political stance

I mentioned earlier in this thesis that Francesca had a particular political stance towards the United States. The fact that the Department where she taught had adopted a textbook that was an American publication gave Francesca the opportunity to make her views about the cultural content of this book apparent to her students, as Extract 12 below shows. This Extract is taken from the final stages of the written language class, when Francesca was concluding the explanation of the last grammar point for that day.

Extract 12

1	**Francesca**:	"Object pronouns precede *si*: *Marco è contento. Lo si vede dalla faccia.* (**Marco is happy. One can tell from his face**). *Ma è Linda Evangelista!…* (**Wow, that's Linda Evangelista!…**)" [She stops reading the example to comment] Let me guess, she's American! [She resumes reading] "…*La si*
5		*riconosce subito!'* ('**One can recognise her straight away!**')The only exception – and the only exception, so it's worth remembering – is *ne*, which follows *si*: '*Se ne parla sempre.'* ('**One always speaks about it.**'). And: '*Secondo me, di gelati buoni, non se ne mangiano mai troppi.'* ('**In my opinion, one just cannot have too many good ice-creams.**'). OK? So, this
10		done, can we please do *esercizio A*, now, in class, to see if you've got it, or not?
	Laura:	[noticing a variation in the spelling of *si* in the last two examples] Why is it *se*, here, and not *si*, in front of *ne*?

300

Francesca:	This form changes, *se ne parla. Grazie, Laura, grazie, grazie!* (**Thank you,**
15	**Laura! Thank you, thank you!**). So, when you've got *ne*, *si* becomes *se*. I
	forgot to say it and the book forgot to say it. … Great book! … Also, great
	teacher, I must say.

Here, Francesca's attitude towards the United States is again revealed in her ironic comments. First she comments on the example used in the book to show the use of the impersonal form with *si*. The example referred to international model Linda Evangelista, an American of Italian origin. It could be argued that the choice of this particular personality by the book's authors was quite appropriate. The book was, in fact, designed primarily to be marketed in the United States, where this model is well-known.

Secondly, when Francesca was confronted with an actual gap in the explanations given by the book, that is the absence of any mention of the mutation of the vowel in the particle *si* (which becomes *se*) when it is combined with *ne,* she had again the opportunity to show her dislike for the United States [line 16].

Francesca made no mystery of her dislike of the US as a political power. She once told me that she did not agree with what she called "American imperialistic attitudes towards the rest of the world". So, by showing antagonism towards the American textbook she was forced to use, she was making a personal political point too.

10.5 The identities assumed by the teachers in talking about culture

In my discussion of Extracts from my data, both in this chapter and in the previous chapter, I have already hinted at the fact that Jean, as well as Francesca, assumed various identities as they carried out their job as language teachers. In their interaction with the students they positioned themselves in different ways vis-à-vis the students and the subject they were teaching. They took up positions of authority, asserting the power vested in them by the institutions in which they worked, they acted as cultural mediators, bridging what they saw as the 'cultural gaps' between Italian cultural worlds and the students' experiences of other cultural worlds and they assumed the role of experts on various topics, from specific language forms to Italian ways of doing things. They moved in and out of these different subject positions or identities as they performed their wider institutional identity as language teachers.

10.5.1 The identities that Jean took on in teaching language and culture

In this section, I consider the different identities that Jean took on at different moments in her class. Some of these have already been hinted at in the discussion of extracts from the video-recorded transcripts, presented earlier in this thesis. Therefore, in the present discussion, some references to previous chapters of this thesis and previous sections of this chapter will be necessary.

Firstly, Jean often projected herself as a British linguist, or Italianist, who had devoted her life to the study of the Italian language and culture. Extract 13 is taken from the

very beginning of the session recorded in Jean's class and it is the combination of most of Extracts 1 and 2 in chapter 9 of this thesis. It shows what being a linguist and an Italianist meant for Jean. Here we see her speaking from this subject position to students, who she also expected to become linguists and Italianists.

Extract 13

1   **Jean**:   Forgive me if I've got to refer to French, Spanish, etcetera, but it's gonna help
                        people who are already linguists […]. So, yesterday I mentioned that the
                        subjunctive isn't a tense as such and what we tend to call it, in grammatical
                        terms, is a mood. OK. So, that, in a sense, tells us what we're trying to do.
5   We're trying to express, with the subjunctive, an idea a hypothesis, a feeling…
                        something which is unclear and uncertain. So, I can say: *Megumi è giapponese*
                        (**"Megumi is Japanese"**). I made you a statement: *E' giapponese* (**"she is
                        Japanese"**). I haven't met her and someone has been talking about her, and I
                        say: *Megumi? Credo che sia giapponese!* (**"Megumi? I believe she is
10   Japanese"**). I'm giving you my opinion, I'm not making a statement, I'm just
                        giving my… She might be – credo che sia – I think she is… So, in Italian we'd
                        use the subjunctive. So, as I said yesterday, if you've done French, you'll
                        know it from things like: "*Il faut que je fasse, il faut que j'aille…*". There are
                        all those set phrases in French where you use it. Italian uses it a lot more… it
15   does it a lot more. The good news is it uses it less than it used to use it. So try
                        and mitigate the horror of having to do the subjunctive, we use it a lot in
                        Italian, but we use it less today.

Here we see Jean performing the identity of a linguist in three main ways: first she was making cross-linguistic comparisons, showing her knowledge of the ways in which the subjunctive mood operates both in Italian and French. Prior to this extract, she had also referred to Spanish. Secondly, she showed her familiarity with metalinguistic terminology. She used terms such as 'tense' and 'mood' [lines 3 and 4] as well as 'the subjunctive' [lines 3, 5, 13 and 16]. Thirdly, she presented herself as an Italianist or fluent user of Italian in the words "in Italian, we'd use the subjunctive"

[lines 11-12]. She also did this by pronouncing the examples she gave in Italian with a fluent standard Italian pronunciation.

Again, in Extract 14 below, we see Jean assuming the subject position of linguist, of expert on the grammar of Italian. Extract 14 is also taken from the beginning of the session and follows immediately on from Jean's initial monologue featured in Extract 13 above.

Extract 14

1	**Jean**:	So, the handout that you've got, it might look like a daunting two-sided sheet of paper, but, to be perfectly frank, it is everything you have ever wanted to know about the subjunctive and more. So, it's everything you wanted to know and ways to avoid it, etcetera. So, maybe, what we can do is start to look at it
5		together. You ask me questions if there's anything you want to know..., if anybody wants a bit of clarifying...and I'll try and do that; but these are the main points. I mean, they're not in any particular order of importance, but side one is a little bit more compulsory than side two, put it that way.

Here, we see Jean introducing a handout on different aspects of the subjunctive in Italian. I checked with her after class and it seems that she had prepared it herself, referring as she did this, to several authoritative sources on Italian grammar. In this extract we see her offering to read through the handout with the students [line 4] and help them with their doubts and difficulties [lines 5-6]. She is clearly positioning the students as people responsible for their own learning, as university students and she is assuming the role of facilitator in the learning process sharing her expertise with them, as it were.

As I noted earlier in this chapter, Jean also displayed some knowledge of the social semiotic dimensions of language, including the way in which social relations and the social hierarchy are reflected in second person pronoun use in different languages and in different regional varieties of English. This knowledge comes over clearly in lines 1-5 in Extract 15 below. Again she was confirming her identity as a linguist, perhaps as a sociolinguist here.

Extract 15

1   **Jean**:   Yeah, Anna's point is that 'you' in English is the same word in the singular
                         and in the plural… Ehm… From a foreigner's point of view it's not very clear.
                         You know she's got two and we've got four, in Italian. 'You' and 'you', I
                         mean… unless you go up north that divine village in Cumbria where they still
5   use 'thee' and 'thou', that's much more clear, you know, old-fashioned
                         English, fusing dialects, but yes, it's not clear in English, is it?

The other identity that Jean assumed from time to time was that of an expert on Italian literature and high culture, hence the references to Italian opera and poetry that she put into her teaching material and that she brought into her classroom conversations with the students. As I have shown above, she also projected considerable enthusiasm when it came to one particular Italian poem – the one by Quasimodo discussed above. Extract 16, which follows, comes from the second part of the class, after the first poem (Pozzi's) in the anthology was discussed.

Extract 16

1   **Jean**:   And the one underneath. That's one of my very favourite ones, so I'm being
                         A bit self-indulgent, here. This is one of them, it's almost a cliché ... so well
                         known in Italian:
                         Ognuno sta solo sul cuor della terra

5	*trafitto da un raggio di sole:*
	ed è subito sera.
	(Everyone's lonely on this earth
	speared through by a ray of sun:
	and soon the evening comes)
10	It's almost become a cliché in Italian. It's a very beautiful three-line gem of a
	poem. […] It's a sort of great existentialist idea here.

10.5.2 The identities Francesca took on in teaching language and culture

In the discussion of extracts from Francesca's classes seen above, some reference has been made to the fact that Francesca took on several different identities with respect to the students, or the texts she was commenting on. In this section, I am going to present an analysis of Francesca's perspectives vis-à-vis the different cultural scenarios, practices and values she was talking about. I will show how Francesca's views were all reflected in the discourse she was exchanging with her students. These include her views about language and language teaching, about Italian culture; about being an Italian living in Britain; about having been raised in Italy, a country where she still had a family; about being a linguist and a learner of English, and about being a teacher.

Extract 17 comes from the beginning of the spoken language class, soon after the 'definition' of *merenda* featured in Extract 8 discussed above. Francesca introduced another culturally specific term connected with everyday Italian eating practices, one that was used in the handout. The term *spuntino* refers to a snack, which, in many respects, is very similar to the concept of *merenda* (cf. Extract 8), since they are both

snacks that people may take in between their main meals. However, here Francesca stressed the difference in the connotations associated with these two terms.

Extract 17

1 **Francesca**: Now, there's another category [ka'ðigori], category [ka'ðegori], category [ka'tegori], category [ka'tigori] … er … Nick?

Nick: Category ['kategori].

Francesca: …OK, of meals…that are the ones that people on a diet aren't allowed at all,

5 which are *uno spuntino*. *Uno spuntino* will be something you eat possibly in a secret way, er ... when it's not the right time to eat, like between breakfast and *merenda*, or between *merenda* and *pranzo* (**lunch**), or in the middle of the night. *Spuntino* might vary ... can have like … can be like a *Kit-Kat*, or a bag of crisps, or like in my case can be half a chicken [students laugh].

10 Make sure you always deny you have *uno spuntino*: "Me? No! *Uno spuntino*? *Quando*? When?" ... OK? But, some people do, like you go clubbing, you come back, you are hungry, you have *uno spuntino*. Fine. You study all night, hah, hah, hah, hah! [pretending to laugh], when you end studying […] and you can have *uno spuntino*.

This extract gives us three main insights: first we see Francesca defining for her students another example of an everyday cultural practice in Italy. She characterised *spuntino* as an extra and slightly illicit snack. Secondly, we see her assuming a personal stance vis-à-vis this practice, taking on the identity of a young, middle-class student and 'admitting' to habits and practices that are viewed as slightly illicit and self-indulgent in the Italian context. This communicative strategy had the effect of making her own students laugh. She further complicated the vignette by introducing an imaginary conversation with an Italian in which she denies having eaten a *spuntino* (whilst confiding in her students that she actually does indulge). In doing this, Francesca took on the persona of a young Italian who is 'unpacking' Italian mores for other young people, in this case, her own students. A third insight comes from lines 1-

4 of this extract. It relates to the way in which she handled her competence in English. At the beginning of this extract she was having problems finding the correct way of pronouncing the English word 'category'. She asked Nick, one of the students, to help her. Here she was revealing the identity of a second language learner whose English may occasionally show some imperfections. By publicly demonstrating that she was aware of these imperfections, Francesca further consolidated the peer-like rapport that she had established with these students. This was facilitated by their closeness in age. Francesca was in her late twenties.

Although she sometimes showed a tendency to treat students almost as peers, Francesca was ready, when needed, to use the authority that her institutional role as a teacher gave her. We see this in Extract 18. This exchange occurred in the second half of the spoken language class, when the students were still involved in two oral activities.

Extract 18

1	**John**:	I love Indian.
	Francesca:	So do I. *Dai!* ('**Come on!**')
	Nick:	Chinese ... Noodles.
	Francesca:	*Spaghettini di riso*
5	**Nick**:	All right [Picks up his pocket dictionary and checks. At that point, Francesca goes to Nick and takes the dictionary out of his hands. Then she walks back to her previous position holding the dictionary].
	Nick:	We have a lot of foreign foods […]. [Referring to Francesca seizing the dictionary] Caught on camera!
10	**Francesca**:	[laughs] Yeah. [...]

As I explained in Chapters 8 and 9, before the activity had started, Francesca had asked the class not to use their pocket dictionaries, but to ask her instead. However, Nick had been contravening this ever since the beginning of the pair-work activity. At the beginning of this extract we see Francesca responding to John's remark in line 1, in an informal, chatty way ("So do I", line 2). Soon after, she was asked by Nick for the translation of another food item, this time a Chinese one. When he checked his dictionary, implying that he did not trust Francesca's answer completely, she responded by confiscating his pocket dictionary. Here, we see Francesca asserting her identity as teacher and providing a fleeting display of institutional power. However, Nick's reaction to this move indicated that he was not impressed by this show of power. He continued to talk casually ("We have a lot of foreign foods", line 8), and then slipped into a joke by describing Francesca's action as being 'caught on camera' [line 9]. Francesca's reaction to this comment [line 10] suggests that this episode was framed in primarily playful terms. Again we see the peer group rapport predominating over the traditionally asymmetric teacher-student relation of language classes in higher education.

In section 10.3.2, when discussing Extract 5, I looked at the way in which Jean spoke about translation as a culturally related activity, and showed her students how difficult it was to translate genres like poetry, which are so very often culture-bound. Francesca made the same point when talking of everyday activities related to the topic of food. The exchange in Extract 19 below occurred in the first half of the spoken language class, in the initial phases of the pair-work activity, as explained in chapter 8.

Francesca knew very well that the names of typical food items were likely to be difficult to translate from Italian to English and vice versa.

Extract 19

1   **Francesca**:   Now, before you ask, I'll tell you straight away we don't have baked
                      beans, we don't have jacket potatoes … in Italy … we don't have them. So
                      … so we found a sort of compromise with the other group and we called the
                      jacket potato, we called it *jacket patata* …[Students laugh] … And we
5   called the ba…
    Nick: [consulting his pocket dictionary] Er… Here … they say here jacket … er…
                      baked potato … […]
    Francesca: Yes, we say *patata al forno*, but we skin them.
    Nick: [Reading from his pocket dictionary] "*Patata cotta al forno con la buccia* "**.**
10 **Francesca**:   Eh! We'll call it *jacket patata*. And baked beans, we decided they gonna be
                      fagioli, beans, *al pomodoro*, tomato sauce. But luckily we don't have this kind
                      of thing in Italy [she grins].

This extract provides two further insights into what is going on culturally in this language class. First, in dealing with the untranslatability of 'baked beans' and 'jacket potatoes', Francesca insisted on the fact that there is no equivalent in Italy to either of these British food items. In doing this, she placed herself clearly on the 'Italian side of the fence'. She marked the boundary linguistically through the exclusive use of the pronoun 'we', as in "we [Italians] don't have them" [lines 1 and 2]. She not only assumed an Italian identity but also adopted an Italian perspective on 'good taste' in culinary traditions, as in her final comment: "But luckily we don't have this kind of thing in Italy" [lines 12-13] The illocutionary force of this utterance was mitigated by her grin.

Secondly, Francesca was negotiating with her students about how to deal with lexis relating to food items where there are no equivalents in different culinary traditions, even though the differences may only be slight (e.g. in the case of skinned versus unskinned baked potatoes). She proposed a solution, already adopted with another group, namely that of using terms that represent a "compromise" [line 3]. One of these compromise terms, "*jacket patata*" was a mixed code item, part English, part Italian. As she made this proposal, she took on a different stance: she was not longer the Italian outsider, but acted as the teacher working with the students in the class. Her use of 'we' in lines 3 and 4 refers to her and the students in the other group, whereas, in line 10, it is fully inclusive and refers to her and the students in this group. Moreover, her compromise term 'jacket patata' could be said to be a new linguistic and cultural form, of a hybrid nature of the sort that can be created within 'third spaces', following Bhabha (1994).

Later on, in the same teaching/learning episode, Francesca returned to the topic of baked potatoes. This time she produced a personal narrative about her first encounter, as an Italian, with potatoes baked in their skins.

Extract 20

1	**Francesca**:	In Italy we don't eat... we are not used to eating them. I know that the first time I went to [...], they were eating this thing and I thought: "Oh my God, where am I going to end up? I mean, they are so poor they eat the skin as well!" My mum came to see me. Now I'm quite used to it, I sometimes eat it
5		because I like it. She said: "Poor daughter, you don't have any money, you are eating the skin as well." "No", I said, "it's crunchy." But we don't actually have it. That's why you are finding with *buccia...* 'with the skin on it', because we are really not used to it.

The narrative in Extract 20 reveals the association made in Italian middle class circles between eating potatoes with their skins and a peasant way of life. It also includes another participant, Francesca's mother, who apparently had the same reactions as Francesca did to jacket potatoes during a visit to Britain. However, as the narrative unfolds, we see Francesca reporting a shift in her 'taste' as a result of the experience of living in Britain. Thus, her response to her mother's concern was to say that she did occasionally eat baked potatoes with their skins. In lines 5 and 6 she said "because I like it" and "it's crunchy". Throughout this narrative, she kept to the exclusive use of 'we', telling the story, as it were, from an Italian perspective.

The next extract shows perhaps even more clearly than the previous one that identities were being continually negotiated and constructed in these classroom interactions. Extract 21 comes from a stage of the lesson well into the second half, when the class was translating a dialogue from the textbook that had just been read aloud. Rob, who was asked to deal with the meaning of the two sentences below, was having difficulty with the translation of two idiomatic expressions. His difficulties suggested to Francesca that he had no clue about how spaghetti is actually cooked. She reacted by giving the class a 'script' on how spaghetti is properly made, from an Italian point of view. These are the lines Rob had been ask to translate. They are followed by Extract 21.

RENATA:*Mettiamo l'acqua per la pasta sul fornello ora. Poi quando arrivano gli amici buttiamo la pasta e la mangiamo al dente.* (Branciforte, Grassi 1998: 198)

(RENATA:Let's put the water for the pasta on the hob now. Then when our friends arrive, we'll throw the pasta in and we'll have it *al dente*.)

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Extract 21

1	**Rob**:	We put the… put the water [he hesitates]
	Francesca:	on the fire…
	Rob:	on the fire…
	Francesca:	[She is thinking about whether the translation is correct] No…
5	**Rob**:	No…
	Francesca:	[She realises the translation was all right] Yeah!
	Rob:	We put the water with the pasta on the oven...hob...
	Francesca:	The water for the pasta, it would be. We need the water to cook pasta. They know how you English cook pasta by […].
10	**Rob**:	Then, when our friends arrive ... [he hesitates on the translation of *buttare la pasta*] we drain it?
	Francesca:	We?
	Rob:	Drain it?
	Francesca:	*Buttiamo* is literally 'we throw'. We say *buttare giù la pasta*, 'throw down the pasta'; it means… Ooh! [She now realises fully what Rob meant by 'draining the pasta' and what this entails regarding his knowledge on cooking pasta]. You… you say put the pasta inside the boiling water? Don't put it ... like ... in the cold water and then they boil together. You wait until the water boils, you add salt, **and then** you put the pasta, when it's boiling… No oil, no stock cube…**no**! [This last *no* sounds definitely Italian]. OK? Eh, eh, Rob!
15		
	Rob:	and we eat it [he is uncertain about *al dente*]… Is that 'fresh'?
	Francesca:	*Al dente* is when it is hard inside!? *Al dente* means… you need… When you bite it's a little bit crunchy inside. We don't like it when
25		it's soft and… bleah! OK.

Initially, in this episode, Francesca took for granted a piece of cultural knowledge on the part of the student. His uncertainties in the English rendition of Italian lexical items like *al dente* [line 22] or *buttare la pasta* [lines 11-15] or in the translation of the preposition in *l'acqua per la pasta* [line 7] clearly showed that he did not have this cultural knowledge. First, Francesca corrected Rob's translation of the preposition and explained, using an inclusive 'we', in the utterance "we need the water to cook the pasta". After this explanation, she shifted to a discourse about the differences between

English people and Italians with regard to the cooking of *pasta*, alluding first to the stance adopted by the authors of the textbook: "They know how you English cook *pasta*" [line 9]. After this, the shift to a discourse about 'differences' was indexed in two ways: first, through her use of the exclusive 'we' and, secondly, through her use of codeswitching. She not only used the culturally specific lexical items, *al dente* and *buttare la pasta*, she also pronounced the word *no* with an Italian accent [line20]. This set of 'instructions' as to how to cook *pasta* 'properly' was phrased in authoritative terms, with the use of the simple present tense, a negative imperative form ,"Don't put it...like...in the cold water" [line 18] and the negative forms "no oil, no stock cube" [line 20]. Francesca's account here provides an example of the phenomenon described by Kramsch (1993) and discussed in Chapter 3 above, namely that where native speakers of a language speak not only for themselves, as individuals, but also articulate the categories and scripts through which they and other members of their social group represent their experience. In other words, we not only see in this extract Francesca's knowledge about cooking *pasta* but also a wider Italian discourse about 'proper' cooking of *pasta.*

Finally, from time to time, Francesca came over as somebody with strong political views and a broad anti-American stance. Extract 22, below, shows a moment when this stance was made explicit to students. The exchange took place at the end of the written language class, when Francesca was assigning the homework. Here, she openly revealed her views, resorting to criticism and irony.

Extract 22

1   **Francesca**:   Now, I read these exercises *a pagina duecento e due* (**on page two hundred and two**) and of course they play around these wonderful American people. What I actually want you to do is forget America, and do it with England. OK, so, you've got this girl going to the States and she discovers that universities

5   they are amazing. And when Italian people usually go to American universities, they come back and they say they don't do anything at all.

As I indicated earlier, the textbook adopted in the Italian department in the English university in this study was an American publication. Francesca had already voiced some sharp criticism of the book (cf. Extract 13). Having been primarily designed for the North American market, the book's contextualisation of the exercises was done with a possible American user in mind. Here is the rubric designed to introduce the exercise that Francesca was going to assign to her students.

> Una studentessa italiana che partecipa a un programma di scambio (*exchange program*)
> è arrivata poco fa al vostro campus. Il vostro/la vostra insegnante vi ha chiesto di aiutarla
> ad inserirsi (*fit in*) nella vita accademica e sociale della vostra università. Aiutarla rispondendo
> alle sue domande. Usate il **si impersonale** dove possibile. (Branciforte, Grassi 1998: 202)
>
> (**An Italian student who is taking part in an exchange programme has arrived on your
> campus a short while ago. Your teacher has asked you to help her fit into the academic
> and social life at your university. Help her by answering her questions.Use the 'impersonal
> si' where possible.**)

As we see in the extract above, as she was recommending to the students that they should do the exercise with reference to the British context, Francesca made some evaluative remarks about Americans, who she ironically defined as 'wonderful' in line 2. There was further irony in her use of 'amazing' in line 5 to describe the American

academic system. This was juxtaposed with a reference to reports by Italians that "they don't do anything" [line 7] when they go to American universities. So the invitation to 'forget America' that she extended to the students [line 3], was imbued with meanings beyond the immediate advice of a teacher who was aware of the discrepancy between the context for which the book had been written and the one where it was being used. Francesca's ideological stance towards America and its political and cultural influence on the world was made clear to her students.

10.6 Conclusion

As I indicated in chapter 3 (section 3.2), Kramsch (1993:3) wrote of a "dubious dichotomy" in modern foreign language teaching between the development of 'language skills' and 'cultural content'. This chapter clearly confirms the veracity of this observation by Kramsch. The talk exchanged between the two language teachers and their students was suffused with cultural allusions, despite the fact that the classes focused primarily on aspects of grammar and pragmatics in spoken and written Italian. In analysing the ways in which aspects of Italian culture were evoked, I found several of the concepts and theoretical perspectives reviewed in chapters 3-5 particularly useful. I will briefly return to them here and foreground, in this final section of the chapter, those that I found most useful.

As indicated in chapter 3 (section 2.3), my starting point for the data analysis was with House's (2002) distinction between humanistic and anthropological conceptualisations of culture. This enabled me to identify the main differences

between Jean's and Franscesca's orientations to culture and to understand the links between the concept of Italian-ness promoted by national cultural agencies and aspects of Jean's discourse about Italian culture. However, as my data analysis proceeded, I needed to make finer, non-dualistic distinctions between different aspects of culture being talked about in the classes in this study so, as I showed in section 10.2 above, I needed to extend House's model. Moreover, I needed to move away from seeing culture as a fixed, monolithic entity, associated with the 'nation' of Italy. I needed to see it as being evoked and constantly imbued with new, situated meanings in and through the classroom talk, especially the talk that focused on cultural and linguistic difference. To do this, I needed to draw on the poststructuralist and post-modern perspectives on culture adopted by scholars such as Kramsch (1993) and Roberts et al. (2000) and, following the latter set of scholars, I needed to re-envision culture "as a verb". Francesca, in particular, was constantly representing aspects of Italian culture to her students: categorising daily life routines and providing scripts for doing things the Italian way (as we saw in sections 10.4.1 and 10.4.4 above)

And, in addition, because of the recurring discursive focus on cultural difference, particularly in Francesca's class, I found Kramsch's (1993) characterisation of the foreign language class as a heterogeneous space for engaging with linguistic and cultural difference highly relevant. Over and over again, as we have seen in Chapter 10, otherness was constructed in its local particularity, often with the use of the exclusive form of the pronoun 'we'. Jean seemed to focus more on linguistic difference and Francesca on cultural difference (in a largely anthropological, everyday sense).

As I noted in my conclusion to Chapter 4 (section 4.8), an interactionist sociolinguistic approach proved to be the most suitable for this study given its focus on the situated nature of the meaning-making in these classes and on the ways in which contextualisation cues were used to change stance or footing (e.g. as in Francesca's ironic and playful pronouncements or Jean's asides). Adopting an interactionist approach also enabled me to capture the ways in which the two teachers shifted in and out of different identities (as teachers with institutional authority vested in them, as language experts, as native speakers or second language learners or as peer group members). It also enabled me to capture the ways in which they imposed identities on the students (as budding linguists, as university students, as peer group members or as British or 'foreign').

Moreover, in investigating the ways in which identities and relationships were being constructed in these classes, I found that the poststructuralist and post-modern approaches to the study of identity blended well with the interactional approach I had adopted. In particular, it helped me to see identities as plural and multi-faceted and as embedded in institutional relations of power (hence the dominance of teacher talk and the continual positioning of students). In considering the ways in which identities were imposed or assumed, I found the work of Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) particularly useful, notably their distinction between imposed, assumed and negotiated identities and their notion of "interactive positioning". For example, in Francesca's class, we saw much more negotiation of identities, through elaborate use of contextualisation cues and style shifting, as I have already noted in some detail in Chapter 8 (section 8.5).

Lastly, as indicated in Chapter 5 (section 5.5), I found the notion of 'third space' quite appealing when I first encountered it, since modern foreign language classes do have the potential to be spaces where new identities and new cultural and linguistic practices can be forged. However, in these three classes, we only have brief glimpses as to how this might happen. The clearest glimpses come from moments in Francesca's class, where she was dealing with untranslatable items (section 10.4.2). Take, for example, her proposal that a new word 'jacket patata' might be created to fill a lexical gap in Italian. This proposal caused considerable hilarity among her students, perhaps because of its 'third space-ness'

As the heterogeneity of the composition of modern foreign language classes at higher education level increases, due to the recent global growth in student mobility, the particular concepts that I have found useful in investigating the ways in which aspects of culture were evoked in classroom talk in the university classes in this study will, I anticipate, be highly applicable in future studies of this kind.

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[i] *Haiku* is known for its concise nature: it is, in fact, an "epigrammatic Japanese verse form in 17 syllables (from Japanese, from *hai*, amusement, and *ku*, verse", as the Collins English Dictionary explains.

[ii] A *torrefazione* is actually the place where coffee is roasted. Sometimes there is also an outlet where customers can buy coffee.

CHAPTER 11

Summary and conclusions

11.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am going to look back at the research work I have carried out and make an attempt at drawing conclusions. The word 'conclusions' is perhaps not totally appropriate here, because it entails reaching a 'final' point of arrival and implies a totality. The classroom exchanges that I have analysed are set in local contexts, at a particular time, and are based on the contributions that particular participants made during those teaching/learning events. I, therefore, do not consider my conclusions to be 'total' or 'final': they have to be relative, in the sense that a series of factors, e. g. the fieldwork locations, the time of the observations, the personality of the participants and my personal reactions to and interpretations of what I was observing certainly inform the whole bulk of this work. Had the study been based in different universities or classes, had I observed different teachers at other times, I might well have encountered similar views among teachers and identified similar, practices, but I might also have uncovered other situated practices.

I will start with a summary of the research process and the insights it threw up. I will re-state the research questions that I started from when I embarked on this work I will then go back to my research questions and I will consider how and to what extent I have managed to answer them and mention the constraints

on this thesis. Finally, I will think of the future and suggest possibilities, from my perspective, for future research.

11.2 Summary

This study looked at three different Italian language classes based in two British universities where this language has been taught for a considerable number of years. The focus was on language teaching and learning as a social and cultural practice and I looked at how linguistic and cultural views and identities were continually negotiated and constructed within the language class through the small talk and interaction of the participants. I also looked at the views of language and language teaching that informed the teachers' work and at the connection between these views and the views of culture that the teachers revealed in the ongoing flow of classroom talk.

Chapter 1 of this thesis opened with a personal narrative which explained how I became interested in these research topics and how my own personal history led me to embark on this study. It then stated the questions around which this thesis was designed and which I am re-stating here for the sake of clarity. The research questions were:

1. *What views of language and language teaching and learning inform the classroom practice of the teachers?*
a) *What views of language and linguistic variation are expressed by the teachers?*
b) *What ideas about language teaching and learning guide their practice?*
c) *Are there differences in teaching/learning practice and, if so, how can*

these be explained?

2.   *How is culture talked about in the three classes?*

a)   *What dimensions of culture are evoked by the teachers?*

b)   *What images of Italy and Italian-ness are being constructed for the students?*

c)   *How are these images evoked in and through the teachers' discourse?*

d)   *What identities do the teachers take on in talking about culture?*

e)   *To what extent is there explicit talk about cultural diversity within the classes?*

Part I of the thesis provided the global, historical background of the study in chapter 2. Here I outlined the history of the building of the modern Italian state, the constitution of a national identity and the reflection of these in the institutions that were created to teach Italian and spread the Italian culture outside Italy. In particular, I considered the impact that the transformation of Italy from a country of emigration to a destination for immigration has had on the ways Italy and Italian-ness have been represented. The institutional network of Italian schools abroad originally responded to the needs of increasingly numerous communities of Italian expatriates, who had often left their country with the wish of getting back one day, and, therefore, wanted to keep in touch with their own culture and needed their children to be instructed in Italian. This network still exists today, its main aim being that of defending Italy's position in the wider cultural arena, where Italian as an L2 vies for space alongside languages which are much more widely spoken and learnt by foreign students and as an institutional window to promote a glamorous image of Italy, connected to fashion and design, art and a lifestyle which combines modernity and tradition.

I came to the conclusion that it is in this 'promotional' sense that both Sassi's article in *Corriere della Sera* (Sassi, 2002) and De Mauro et al.'s survey on the motivations of foreign students for studying Italian (De Mauro et al., 2001) should be read. Such insistence on the popularity of Italian as a foreign language, which allegedly is the fourth most studied foreign language worldwise does not match with the gloomy picture that emerges from the Nuffield enquiry on the future of foreign language teaching and learning in the UK (Kelly and Jones, 2003) and with evidence from my own personal experience of a university teacher of Italian in the UK. And, as I showed in Chapter 2 (section 2.4), Italian has always occupied a relatively marginal position in Modern Languages departments in British universities.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 made up part II of this work and presented the theoretical context of this thesis. Three broad interconnected areas of literature grounded and informed my work. My review embraced a range of studies on the connections between language and culture, classroom discourse and the construction of identities within the foreign language classroom. I showed that the teaching/learning of a foreign language has come to be considered as a social and cultural practice; at the same time many scholars have contributed to the idea of the foreign language class as a small community of practice, where cultural awareness has been attributed an increasingly crucial meaning for students who want to achieve linguistic competence. Far from being neatly defined and unchangeable, 'culture' is a slippery concept, one that is

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continually constructed, de-constructed and re-constructed through classroom interactions. Moreover, the participants in such interactions are likely to assume different identities at different times, thus showing that identities are not univocal and immutable. Close analysis of classroom discourse reveals shifts in the cultural worlds being represented, as well as the different identities being taken on by the participants.

Part III of this thesis then presented different aspects of my case study. In Chapter 6, I described the research methodology and the fieldwork strategies that I adopted. In Chapter 7 I gave details about the two British universities which were the main research sites for this study. In chapter 8 I gave an account of ways in which the three teaching/learning events which provide the main focus of the study actually unfolded.

In the first analysis chapter (chapter 9) I focused on the two teachers who taught the classes and looked at the views of language and of language learning/teaching that emerged from the talk in their classroom about Italian. Furthermore, I analysed the different identities that the teachers took on while talking about language. As I have shown, Jean, seemed to be primarily concerned about teaching her students grammar. She considered them to be young linguists and regarded herself as an expert in Italian and in her own language (English). She was aware of language variation, although she only mentioned variation indirectly when talking about Italian (e.g. when she stated that the subjunctive is less used today than it used to be in the past, she did not

make the point that it was the Roman use of Italian that influenced the shift away from the use of the subjunctive. Jean's ideas on what makes a language and how it should be taught were also reflected in the material she prepared for the class (a handout which displayed neatly typed lists the different areas of use of the subjunctive and provided examples). In addition, her views of language were evident in the way she stressed the formally correct use of the language during her grammar explanations.

The other teacher, Francesca, seemed to be more interested in having her students use the language for communication. She did provide grammatical corrections of incorrect utterances or written items, but appeared to be more concerned about her students learning vocabulary than in insisting on the production of totally accurate standard Italian. She organised her spoken language class in ways that encouraged the students to talk about topics that were familiar to them and to their lives in the UK. She found the examples provided in class or in the textbook constraining and decontextualised. Francesca often did not mind if students made occasional grammatical mistakes, but was irritated if they did not remember what she considered to be basic items of vocabulary. As for her views about linguistic variation, Francesca mentioned some regional uses of the language, but for the most part, invited her students to use standard Italian. In her teaching, Francesca revealed two distinct identities: that of an Italian native speaker, which gave her the authority to teach and correct her students, and that of a student of English, who sometimes asked her students for help when she got stuck. This meant

that she let her students treat her as a peer, allowing them the authority to correct her.

Another strand of the analysis in this thesis relates to the cultural worlds that were created through the classroom interactions and to the ways in which participants negotiated different identities in the talk about 'culture'. This was the focus of chapter 10 which, also looked at the foreign language class as a possible context for the emergence of third spaces, i.e. new cultural contexts which are created by the intersection of items from different cultural settings and where different cultural identities are evoked and shared in the foreign language teaching and learning process.

In this chapter I also showed that the two teachers showed striking differences in the way they conceived of 'culture' and in the priorities they set themselves in the teaching of 'cultural context' in a beginners' classroom. Jean appeared to prioritise a view of culture that House would define as "humanistic" (House, 2002), drawing on an image of Italy as a nation with a tradition of high culture (e.g. the opera or poetry), or including an article in her reading anthology projecting a slightly old-fashioned picture of the Italian woman, one in which women in Italy are represented as still very much attached to traditional values, such as the family and motherhood. Frequently Jean's cultural references were blended into her teaching material or they cropped up in the examples she offered in order to exemplify a grammar point. This is one way in which Jean

reinforced the two main identities that she took on while teaching her class: that of a linguist and that of an expert in Italian high culture.

Francesca, on the other hand, leaned towards an "anthropological" view of culture (House, 2002), giving her students insights into the way Italians eat, into the daily routines and tasks that the members of a family carry out (e.g. mothers making sure their children eat the appropriate kind of food during school breaks), or even instructing students on how they should behave when they go to Italy (e.g. buying coffee from specific outlets rather than from a supermarket). Her representations of Italy and Italian-ness drew on her personal and recent experience of a young woman who had grown up in Italy and she often contrasted them with the different cultural practices she had found when she had come to live in England. On a few occasions, these cultural references took the form of narrative digressions. Francesca engaged in a number of such digressions during her classes, apparently leaving aside the language topic she was dealing with in the class. At other times she just made comments on what the English do or eat and contrasted this with different Italian practices. This allowed her to take on different identities: that of an Italian person with a thorough knowledge of English lifestyle and habits; that of a linguist and student of English; that of a young woman of an age very similar to the one of the students she was teaching; that of a young teacher, whose authority was sometimes challenged because of her age, an authority she was nevertheless determined to keep firmly in her hands.

11.3 The significance of this study

The research presented in this thesis makes a contribution to research on the teaching of modern foreign languages in two broad ways: first, it focuses on a relatively under-researched area of classroom interaction, namely, interaction in language classes at university level. Second, it contributes to the more general body of post-structuralist research on language, culture and identity in language education. Building on this recent research tradition, language teaching and learning is viewed as a social and cultural practice. Four broad themes relating to theory and method emerged from the study. I describe each of these in section 11.3.1 to section 11.3.4 below.

11.3.1 Teachers' views of language, their biographies and their forms of expertise

Language teachers in higher education, such as those in this study, bring different views of language and of language teaching/learning to their work with the language learners in their classes. These views are revealed in the materials they prepare for use in the classroom, in the topics they choose to focus on (e.g. Jean's focus on the subjunctive mood) and in their reactions to utterances by students which they see as ungrammatical. Their views on language are closely aligned with their views on the nature and purpose of foreign language teaching. Thus, while Jean saw her role as nurturing modern linguists who had a good mastery of the grammar of Italian, Francesca was more concerned with teaching the language with a view to facilitating communication.

As I indicated in Chapter 8, I did not set out to select university teachers of Italian who contrasted in their approaches to language and to language teaching/ learning. However, as I have shown, quite sharp contrasts emerged in the ways in which these two teachers 'did Italian' in their classes for beginners. Drawing on the data analysis presented in this thesis and on my own experience of the teaching of Italian in higher education in two national contexts (the UK and Latvia), I am inclined to argue that the pedagogic and communicative practices of these two teachers reflect two distinct trends in modern language teaching at higher education institutions in Europe: on the one hand, there are those university teachers who, like Jean, focus on the formal features of language, particularly grammatical features, rehearsing these with their students and using various textual resources to illustrate language forms (including different literary genres and media texts, as shown in Chapter 9). On the other hand, there are teachers, like Francesca, who privilege communication and who seek to provide opportunities for their students to engage creatively with the new language that they are learning.

Teachers' views and their understandings of their role as language educators are shaped by their own educational experience (including, where relevant, any formal training in the teaching/learning of languages). They are also shaped by their own professional experience and by their engagement with wider professional networks and associations. Age and point of entry into the profession are also significant factors. So, the key differences that emerged in this study, between Jean and Francesca, related to age differences, to differences in status and to differences in length of employment in the teaching profession. The upshot of this observation is

that any classroom-based study of teacher-student interaction in a modern foreign language class, at university level or in other educational settings, needs to take account of the biographies of those involved in the interaction and how the teacher's views have been shaped over time.

A further dimension of teachers' biographies that needs to be taken into account is that of their own language learning experience. As I have shown in this study, Jean's successful language learning experience enabled her to assume the identity of expert with regard to both Italian and English; whereas, in the case of Francesca, while she asserted her authority with regard to the teaching of Italian, she was less confident about her expertise in English. Her open-ness about this and her willingness to reveal her identity as an advanced language learner did, nevertheless, contribute to the building of a relaxed relationship with her students and enabled her to slip in and out of different identities: authoritative teacher, cultural broker and advanced language learner.

11.3.2 Culture in the university language class

As I pointed out in Chapter 3, there has been a traditional divide in Modern Language departments between teaching language and teaching 'culture' and 'civilisation' and this divide is often linked to staff status and experience. As I noted in the same chapter, Kramsch (1993) has criticised the distinction between "skill" and "content" that is often made in language education and characterised it as a "dubious dichotomy". In this study, my focus was on language classes for beginners

where, conventionally, one would expect the focus to be on 'language skills'. Yet, talk about 'culture' permeated the discourse practices of the teachers and the students. The prevalence of talk about culture in the classes I observed and analysed resonates with my own experience of language teaching/learning in different higher education contexts and it may also resonate with the experience of those reading this thesis.

There were, however, marked differences in the ways in which culture was constructed in Jean's class and in Francesca's class, as I showed in Chapter 10. Again, the differences between the two teachers reflect broad trends in modern foreign language teaching at higher education level. There is a long-established tradition in this field of language education of evoking high culture and emblems of national identity (e.g. in the study of European languages). This stands in sharp contrast to the emphasis on everyday life and local cultural practices that characterises contemporary textbooks and electronic learning resources for beginners. It also contrasts with the students' own interests in popular culture and the interests of some younger teachers such as Francesca.

What we saw in Jean's class was discussion of rather essentialised cultural models of the kind that I considered in Chapter 3, section 3.4. What we saw in Francesca's class was a wider range of ways of constructing Italian culture. Sometimes she drew on cultural models or scripts for 'doing things the Italian way' (e.g. making spaghetti or taking a snack). Sometimes, she slipped into a "small narrative" (Georgakopoulou, 2003) about her own life or that of family members in Italy. Sometimes, she shared

anecdotes about her own lived experience with cultural difference here in the UK. It was during those episodes where Francesca was commenting on her experience of cultural practices in Britain or where she was struggling to find an adequate translation to or from Italian (e.g. *merenda* or jacket potato) that there was open engagement with cultural difference by both teacher and students. This is perhaps what Austin (1998) had in mind when defining intercultural communication as conscious action "to achieve understanding", as discussed in Chapter 4.

11.3.3 The multicultural and multilingual composition of university-level language classes

I did not set out to select university classes with students of diverse backgrounds. But, it so happened that, in all of the classes in this case study, the intake was quite diverse, in terms of age and cultural origins. As I noted in Chapter 6 (section 6.5) the spoken language class in Downtown University included one Spanish student and one visiting student from the USA and the class in Seaview University included an Austrian and a Japanese student. In Chapters 9 & 10, I examined in some detail episodes where the linguistic or cultural knowledge of the students was drawn upon in the classroom conversations (e.g. Extracts 6 and 13 in Chapter 9 and Extracts 4, 5, 6 and 17 in Chapter 10). These episodes provided further spaces in which cultural and linguistic difference could be explored by the participants in both classes. They even provided opportunities to create third spaces where new wordings of the social and cultural world could be tried out. Take, for example, the coining of a new term 'jacket patata' in Francesca's class. These were rare moments but they were made

possible because of the teachers' awareness of the linguistic and cultural background of the students in their classes and their willingness to draw on their students' prior knowledge in classroom exchanges.

11.3.4 Viewing languge teaching/learning as a social and cultural practice: methodological implications

As with other researchers in the field, my commitment to a view of language teaching and learning as social and cultural practice led me to particular choices regarding research methodology. I needed to adopt an approach that would enable me to observe and record language teaching/learning as it naturally occurs in the daily routines of classroom life. An ethnographically-informed approach was best suited to this goal. At the same time, because I wanted to get as close as possible to the specific situated ways in which culture and views of language were evoked in everyday classroom talk I needed to record the talk in the classrooms in the study and to conduct close analysis of transcripts of that talk. In Chapter 4, I traced the ways in which close analysis of texts (including transcripts of audio-recorded talk) has been brought together with ethnography within the recent tradition of linguistic ethnography. However, in this study, the balance was tilted more towards micro-interactional analysis of classroom discourse, due to the constraints outlined in the section that follows. Nevertheless, as I noted in Chapter 8, I followed some of the main principles of ethnography in my classroom observations, in my fieldnotes and in my researcher diary. I would therefore describe this research as an ethnographically-informed study of classroom interaction.

11.4 Constraints on this study

When I originally planned my work, I had thought of observing one oral <u>and</u> one written language class at *ab-initio* level and at the final level in each university. I also wanted to obtain feedback from the students in relation to their expectations and motivations for studying Italian and to the cultural image of Italy that they had built in themselves through their exposure to the language classes. Furthermore, I had envisaged a return to the 'field' after completing my data analysis to meet the two teachers again and to triangulate my findings. At this stage I would have made more detailed fieldnotes and recorded formal interviews to get relevant feedback on the outcomes of my analysis.

As a part-time PhD student with a demanding full-time job in Aberystwyth from 2000 to 2004, in Bath till August 2006 and in Italy from September 2006, I had to face practical constraints of time and logistics which curtailed my original plans for this research project, as well as travel constraints and lack of funding, especially after I had to move back to Italy. These constraints had an impact on the directions taken in this thesis and on the decisions I had to make while designing and conducting my research.

First of all, the fieldwork at Downtown University was organised during two different visits which took place in subsequent weeks in February 2002. Each week I was there for two days, on the Monday and the Tuesday. Fieldwork at

Seaview University was even shorter. This university was closer to where I worked at the time and this allowed me to drive there for two subsequent Tuesdays, between the end of March and the beginning of April 2002, just before the Easter break.

The limited time available for my visits did not allow me to get to know the students who participated in the classes I observed or to identify informants to work with in more depth.

Another shortcoming in my data gathering was the absence of formal interviews with the two teachers. When I conducted my fieldwork in both universities, I had a few occasions to spend time alone with Jean and Francesca. Often we had informal chats either before the start of the classes, or soon after the class was over. On a few occasions we chatted while having lunch at the canteen or over a cup of coffee at the cafeteria. I then wrote notes about these conversations in my diary, at the end of the day.

I had originally planned to make an appointment with both Jean and Francesca after completing the data analysis and to record our conversations this time. However, when I had done a preliminary analysis of the classroom data and I was ready to discuss it with them, to my great disappointment I found out that Jean had moved to the Lake District, in a remote area where and she had neither a telephone nor e-mail facilities and Francesca had got married, left the UK and gone back to Italy. Both teachers were impossible to get hold of and

this meant that my plans for detailed interviews and triangulation sessions came to an end.

The constraints referred to above account for the fact that the analysis presented in this thesis relies primarily on the transcripts of the video-recordings of the classes, on the fieldnotes based on my observations, on the textual data I had gathered and on my fieldwork diary.

As I mentioned above, this thesis was originally designed to include one spoken language and one written language class for beginners and one spoken language and one written language class for finalists in both universities. However, as soon as I ended transcribing the recordings it became clear to me that just focusing on the classes at *ab-initio* level would give me enough material for this study.

Furthermore, I ended up concentrating on three classes rather than four because of the circumstances that prevented me from video-recording the oral language class at Seaview University. The first problem was that the examination session was nearing, and at that time of the academic year classes were mostly geared to preparing students for the oral presentations they were expected to give in their oral examination. This limited the scope and the variety of the material used and the activities that were taking place in these classes. The second, and more important reason was that one of my colleagues at the UWA fell seriously ill and I had to take over part of her weekly teaching.

This meant that I could no longer count on the free days in my work timetable which had allowed me to travel to the two universities where I had conducted my fieldwork. So the scope of the fieldwork at Seaview University was more limited.

11.5 Recommendations for future research

While working on this study, several possible avenues for investigation were opened up for me. There were times when I was tempted to follow these lines of investigation but, as I have already said, I had major time constraints. I outline these different lines of enquiry below as recommendations for future research; my own or that of others.

The first area that needs investigation is the changing ways in which Italian as an L2 and Italian-ness that have been constructed in textbooks since the language has been taught outside Italy. How have the images of Italian and Italian-ness changed over the last century and a half? What aspects of Italian social and political life have been represented in different textbooks at different times? What views of Italy and Italian-ness were projected through the reading texts, the dialogues, the exercises that made up these textbooks? And, how are teachers mediating the images and representations of Italian-ness for their students in the textbooks that are still in use today? These are some of the research questions that merit further examination. I remember spending a few days in the library, at the University of Bath, looking through the

numerous textbooks of Italian that were part of the collection, noting revealing developments in the editorial choices, in the illustrations and in the way the material was designed for use in volumes published over the span of more than a century. I believe this would make a very interesting area of investigation for researchers who could access institutions such as the two universities for foreigners in Italy, at Perugia and Siena, where many of these books were produced.

Another line of enquiry that I thought of pursuing while working on this study was the analysis of narratives. Of the two teachers whose classes I observed, Francesca in particular, often referred to her personal experience, either as a native Italian in Italy or as a foreigner in this country. In doing so she took on different identities and she showed aspects of her own personality that went well beyond the ones that a teacher is normally expected to show. This made her teaching style extremely personal and tinted with a feeling of affection, which ultimately helped her bridge the difficulties she faced in teaching Italian to her students. Looking at teachers' in-class narratives drawing on the work of researchers such as Pavlenko (2001), Georgakopolou (2003), Block (2006) would be a revealing way of investigating teachers' views of the target language and 'culture' and how they engage in interaction with their students, creating scenarios and vignettes which bring the target 'culture' into the lived reality of the classroom.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Recommendations for good practice in Applied Linguistics student projects

BAAL

The British Association for Applied Linguistics

Recommendations for good practice in Applied Linguistics student projects

BAAL (The British Association for Applied Linguistics) has developed guidelines for applied linguists in their relation to the profession, colleagues, students, informants, and sponsors. The recommendations are relevant to professional applied linguists, and the core recommendations identified here apply as much to a student doing an essay for an undergraduate course as they do to a professor managing a large funded project. The numbers at the end of each section of this document refer to the corresponding section in the full "Recommendations", available at http://www.baal.org.uk/goodprac.pdf.

1. **General responsibility to informants**. You should respect the rights, interests, sensitivities, and privacy of people who provide you with your data ("informants"). You should think about and respect all aspects of identity including their culture, gender, and age. On the basis of this, try to anticipate any harmful effects or disruptions to informants' lives and environment, and to avoid any stress, intrusion, and real or perceived exploitation. [6.1]

2. **Obtaining informed consent.** You must get permission from anyone who provides you with data, whether spoken or written. To do this, you should let informants know anything about your project that might affect their willingness to participate: what your objectives are, what you will need from them, how much time it will take, and how you will keep their identities confidential, if that is necessary. When informants are under 16, you also need their parents' permission too. [6.2]

3. **Respecting a person's decision not to participate**. Informants have a right to refuse to participate in research, even if they said at the outset that they would. It is best to plan your project so that it does not depend entirely on the consent of one or two people. (6.3)

4. **Confidentiality and anonymity.** If you have not been given the right to identify participants, they must not be identifiable in any way (confidentiality) and in particular you must not use real names (anonymity). You should try to anticipate ways identities might accidentally be revealed: by including identifying details, pictures, or moving images, playing voices, or allowing unauthorized access to data on your computer or in your files. (6.4)

5. **Deception and covert research.** Deception is unacceptable because it violates the principles of informed consent and the right to privacy. When linguists do not want informants to alter their usual style of speech, and anticipate they might do so if they know the purpose of the study, it may be defensible

> • to tell them the general purpose of the research without revealing specific objectives

> • to ask them to agree to be deceived at some unspecified time in the future (for instance, if there is going to be a role play)

> • (if there is no alternative) to explain the research immediately <u>after</u> gathering the data, and ask for permission then. But if they do not give permission then, you will have to destroy the data without using it (and they may be very angry).

While <u>deception</u> is unacceptable, <u>distraction</u> is generally ethical. Distraction might involve introducing multiple activities into a study to prevent informants monitoring themselves, or asking them to tell about an event in their lives, when what you are interested in is not the story but its form. (6.5)

6. **Sponsors and users**. If your academic project is done in co-operation with an agency, group, or company in the community, you must usually provide an account of your work that is useful to the user. In turn, they must understand that you have to be evaluated on your work as an academic product, and must meet academic deadlines and standards. (7)

APPENDIX 2

Project description

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Provisional title: DOING ITALIAN AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN BRITAIN: A CASE
                       STUDY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND IDENTITY

                       Research to be carried out for an MPhil/PhD degree

1. The nature and scope of the project

This is a qualitative research project which combines linguistic and ethnographic approaches to language teaching/learning. The focus is on (1) contemporary practices in the teaching and learning of Italian at HE level in Britain, (2)the background and experiences of learners and their motivation for language study, (3) the views of language, language teaching/learning and of 'culture' of teachers. The project is to be based in two Modern Language Departments in Britain where Italian has been offered to degree level for a considerable amount of time.

2. Research approach

The research project will be organised into two broad phases:

1) Classroom observations will be carried out in two classes in each department. I hope to base these observations in one beginners' class and one advanced class. The observations will be accompanied by audio- and/or video-recording, subject with negotiation with the staff involved.
2) Interviews will be carried out with the teachers of all four classes at a time which is convenient for them.

Throughout both these broad phases, I will also be gathering samples of teaching materials (printed, audio, visual, electronic materials) and other relevant documents (e.g. timetables, brochures, web pages, etc.).

3. Ethical considerations

In conducting this project I will conform to the recommendations for good practice in applied linguistics student projects of the British Association of Applied Linguistics.

4. Timetable

Preliminary visits will be made to each department in the first semester of 2001-2002 academic year and the main data collection is planned for the second semester of the same year.

G. Fanton
(MPhil student, Department of Education, UWA)

APPENDIX 3

Transcripts

Transcription conventions

Francesca's grammar and written language class at Downtown University

Francesca' spoken language class at Downtown University

Jean's grammar and written language class at Seaview University

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

…	hesitation, or brief pause (shorter than three seconds)
(…)	pause longer than three seconds
[…]	inaudible
(not bold)	my addition
Italics	words or phrases in Italian or in languages different to English
(**bold**)	translation into English of Italian texts or utterances
<u>**bold**</u>	emphasis
[ ]	explanation of non-verbal actions taking place during the events
" "	read from a textbook or a handout

Francesca's written language and grammar class at Downtown University

Francesca: *Allora…* (**Now, then…**) I've got a couple of announcements. Next Thursday I'll give you the passage to translate for CA (continuous assessment) which is going to be due in next… the Thursday after that. OK? Also, we agreed about having a lesson next Thursday, the one we have to… because I missed one. When was it? Nine thirty or eleven thirty? OK

Students: Eleven

Francesca: Ok. So, I'll tell you the precise place and everything […] lesson after this… So, eleven thirty.
              I'm really sorry and I ask to apologise: I didn't have a second to correct your assessments. And not because they are not good or anything… Just because I read them, and read them […]
              Now, back to business. Yesterday we prepared the paper for your exam with Claudia. (Claudia was another teacher, teaching grammar to another group of beginners) and the plan is to reach, by the end of the semester, unit *nove, unità nove* (**nine, unit nine**), section B included, which is quite a lot. We've got nineteen hours and we've planned to do one section each lesson. Sometimes I'll ask to learn the vocabulary, that's the only thing you can do. Then, five extra hours to revise …
[A student comes in late]
              [To the student] Ciao, *Giuliana*! [singing] Ta-tan! You are a shocker? Shock, eh?

Juliane: […]

Francesca: […]
[More latecomers arrive]
              [Ticks the name of the latecomers in the list of present students] OK. *Allora, Giuliana*, Eve, Esther … So, again. We have to reach unit nine, section B. We've got nineteen hours. We've got five extra hours to play with, to revise double check things… Plus we've got an extra week after the second week of term for revision. OK? So, don't panic, everything is under control, but you have to study very hard at the moment, OK? OK? I see the panic […]
[Nick comes in]
              [Francesca ticks his name on the presence sheet] Nick, OK. Nick, you'll ask someone […] people, because I can't repeat everything again. Now, we've got pagina… (**page…**) [looking for the right page in the book] pam barambam bam bam bam! (this is an idiosyncratic, rhythmical sound Francesca makes to underscore her search for the right point in the textbook: she is impatient to start). *A pagina, a pagina… centonavanta* (**On page, on page…hundred and ninety**)? Who did the exercise? Leo?

Leo: Ehm…

Francesca: Ehm…

Leo: On page one-nine-o?

Francesca: [confirming] Eh!

Leo: I did the one on page one-nine-three

Francesca: Yeah, one […] and one here, *esercizio C* (**exercise C**), [to the whole class] Who did *esercizio C a pagina centonovanta* (**exercise C on page a hundred and ninety**)? [several students raise their hands]
                Vedi? Ella lo ha fatto e tu no. (**You see? Ella did it and you didn't**). Vicky?
[Vicky did not do it]
                [Ironically] *Bravi* (**Well done**)! I knew you were to stay there. *Bravi*!
                OK, *allora* (**then**), *Ellina* (**little Ella**), start, number one… *"Gianna… Dai, Gianna,* … Eh… *Ellina*! [Ella does not understand the teacher is asking her to read the sentence because she calls her *Ellina*]

Ella: Oh, me!

Francesca: *Ellina, piccola Ella* (***Ellina, little Ella***)! [Francesca starts reading the exercise line for her] *"Dai, Gianna* (**"Come on , Gianna**)…"

Emma: *"…prendi ancora un po' di torta c'è* […] *l'acquolina in bocca"* ("**…have some more cake, there is […] water in my mouth"**)

Francesca: Eve, do you agree?

Eve: No

Francesca: What did you do?

Eve: *"No, per carità, non ce la faccio più."* ("**No, for Heaven's sake, I can have no more."**)

Francesca: OK. What does this mean? Mia!

Mia: Ehm… the first bit? Ehm…

Francesca: Yeah, the first bit.

Mia: "Take one more piece of cake…"

Francesca: Yes, but what's *dai*? I always say: *"Dai, dai, dai!"*, I don't intend I want you to drop dead… What's *dai*? (…)

Mia: (…) [She does not reply]

Francesca:	[As the answer does not come, Francesca gives the translation herself] "Come on Gianna, have some more cake!"… And the translation of the answer, Nick, which is c?
Nick:	How nice…
Francesca:	[Interrupting Nick] …Which is c […]

[Tom does not know]

	Ana! Translation of line c? […]

[Ana does not answer]

	Actually, for you it must be quite difficult, because you've got to translate into Spanish, and then into English … Faye!
Faye:	Ehm… does it mean […]?
Francesca:	"*No, per carità*!" *Per carità* is […] means something with *charity*. "No, Peter, mercy of me…" Something like that. OK? Now, *numero due* (**number two**), Rob!
Rob:	Eh … e.
Francesca:	[Ironically] *Bravo* Ross (**Very good, Rob**) … read! [Class laugh]
Rob:	"*Cos'ha detto Lucia quando le hai dato il regalo*?" ("**What did Lucia say when you gave her the gift?**")
Francesca:	[Approving] Mh, mh!
Rob:	"*Non sapeva cosa dire, è rimasta senza parole.*" ("**She did not know what to say, she was speechless**")
Francesca:	Do you all agree? *Molto bene*! (**Very good**!) Esther, what does it mean? … The whole exchange.
Esther:	What did Lucia say when you gave her the present?
Francesca:	Mh, mh!
Esther:	And the answer… She didn't know what to say, she was speechless.
Francesca:	*Molto bene! Brava, brava*! (**Very good! Well done, well done!**) … Chloë, tre (**three**)!
Chloë:	"*Riccardo, tu mi vuoi veramente bene?*" "*Si capisce, sei il mio amore.*" (**"Riccardo, do you really love me?" "Of course I do, you're my love"**)
Francesca:	[Laughs] What does it mean Ruth?

Ruth: "Riccardo, do you really love me? Yes, of course, you are my love."

Francesca: *Si capisce* (**It goes without saying**)… Do you remember yesterday, at the oral class, we spoke about this *si* (this is a pronoun particle to introduce impersonal forms of verbs)? Today we are looking into it in detail. Now, bear in mind that *si capisce* is… literally means *one understands* and the expression, the translation of the expression is *of course*. So she was right … you understand? … Numero quattro, Giuliana (**Number four, Juliane**)!

Juliane: I got it wrong…

Francesca: It doesn't matter

Juliane: "*E dopo gli spagetti alle vonoli…*"

Francesca: [Interrupting the student to correct her] *Vongole*!

Juliane: "*…vongole, ho mangiato un agnello arrosto squisito.*"

Francesca: [As if she was fancying the food] Mmmh!

Juliane: "*No, per carità, non ce la faccio più!*"

Francesca: No, we've already used that one. … Ella!

Ella: "Che buono! […] l'acquolina in bocca." (**How good! […] water in my mouth.**)

Francesca: Yes, and Lisa, do you want to translate? Oh, Lisa is […] she […] all the way through.

Lisa: And after the spaghetti with the clams […] [she stops as if she was looking for the teacher to confirm her translation]

Francesca: [thinking over the term aloud] Yes, mussels is *le cozze*

Lisa: Erm… I did eat a lamb, roast lamb … a delicious roast lamb. … Erm… How nice … Mouthwatering, or […] make your mouth water

Francesca: [Approving] Mh, mh,mh!
[Shouting] Leo!

Leo: What?

Francesca: Eh, what… Wake up! Number five! No you […] making mistakes […] exercise. So, Vera, you prepare for another sleep. Dai (**Go on**), five!

Leo:	Hai sentito? Tommaso ha preso un voto brutto all'esame… (**Did you hear? Tommaso got a bad mark in the exam…**) Erm… [he looks at the teacher without speaking, for a moment. Then he whispers] B.
Francesca:	[Nodding] B!
Leo:	Poverino! E ha studiato tanto… (**Poor thing! He had studied so much…**)
Francesca:	Nick, do you want to try a translation?
Nick:	Have you heard? Thomas has … I'm not sure what is *brutto* … something mark
Francesca:	Erm… bad!
Nick:	…A bad mark in the exam. Poor him, he studied a lot for the exam
Francesca:	He studied? You can also leave it here. He studied?
Nick:	A lot.
Francesca:	Yes, or so much. And … Vera?
Vera:	[…]
Francesca:	Ah, ah! And who wants to do the translation? Once… Let's have a change, let's not call a name. Can I have a volunteer? It's gonna be videorecorded as well. [No one offers himself/herself as a volunteer]… Linda, be my volunteer. Translate it.
Linda:	Excuse me, I haven't got any more water. It doesn't matter I'll have wine.
Francesca:	When we translate *excuse me* we use *scusami* for both *I'm sorry* and *excuse me*. Wo, if you are actually trying to pass and there are people in your way, you can actually say *excuse me, scusami* or *mi scusi* or *permesso*! So in this case, rather than *excuse me* it would be *I'm sorry*, because it would be the fault of yours. And then this *anzi*: I would translate it with *actually* […] to stress a bit that "You know? I don't mind, really, because I actually I prefer the wine"… to keep the expression. Now, Leo, you said you had the one *a pagina centonovantatré* (**on page 193**). Have you done it?
Leo:	Yeah.
Francesca:	[Pretending surprise] Oh! [To the class] Have you done it all? … No!? I'm gonna give you trouble! Let's start… Leo.

Leo:	"Normalmente Cristina e Roberto passano le sere insieme a casa e non escono (…)" (**On the whole, Cristina and Roberto spend their evenings at home, together and don't go out (…)**)
Francesca:	Vera!
Vera:	Erm…
Francesca:	You haven't done this one either…
Vera:	Yes, I have!
Francesca:	[Surprised] Oh! *Dai*! (**Go on, then!**)
Vera:	"Raramente" (**Rarely**)
Francesca:	… *E non escono raramente* (**…And they don't rarely go out**). Now, if I say *e non escono raramente*, what does it mean? Because we keep the negation *non escono quasi mai*: we've got the *non* because it goes with *mai*. You remember, we talked about it yesterday. You say: *Non vengo mai a trovarti – I never come to see you*. And in English you've got just *never*, in Italian, you've got *non* and *mai*. OK? In this case *non* is gonna fall, because *raramente* (**rarely**) is not *mai* (**never**). So, if you say *non escono raramente,* it means they go out very often; but if you say *escono raramente* (**they rarely go out**) it means *non escono quasi mai* (**they almost never go out**). So, actually, we should have also put this one in an inclined, also *non* in an inclined.
Lisa:	In italics.
Francesca:	Ah, in italics. OK, Ella!
Ella:	"Oggi però Roberto ha telefonato a Cristina al lavoro e le ha parlato misteriosamente" (**But today, Roberto has phoned Cristina while she was at work and spoke to her mysteriously**).
Francesca:	Molto bene (**Very good**)! … Dolores! Have you done the exercise?
Dolores:	No.
Francesca:	[Ironically] Brava, brava (**Good, very good**)! Ana, have you done the exercise?
Ana:	[Ana shakes her head]
Francesca:	No!? [The teacher points her finger towards the two students] Vergogna! (**Shame on you**)!
Ana:	But we weren't here last week

Francesca:	Why?
Ana:	Because we made a mistake with the timetable, we thought it was at ten past eleven.
Francesca:	That's a good excuse, actually. No one has ever used this one. … Juliane!
Juliane:	I haven't done this part. "Gli ha detto solamente …" (**She only told him…**)
Francesca:	No
Juliane:	"Le ha detto semplicemente di essere pronta per uscire alle sette e mezza." (**He simply told her to be ready to go out at half past seven**).
Francesca:	[Shouting] Rob!
Rob:	Ehm…
Francesca:	Dai! (**Come on!**)
Rob:	Quella sera l'ha portata a mangiare all'Osteria Zi' Rosella , dove si mangia (**That night he took her to dine at the Osteria Zi' Rosella , where food is**) …erm … I don't know.
Francesca:	Now, I have to praise Lee, because he did the exercise. Why do you put me through this shame? OK, Ruth, what did you put?
Ruth:	Divinamente? (**Divine?**)
Francesca:	Molto bene. (**Very good.**)… [To Ana and Dolores] Spanish girls, do you wanna try? Or you prefer like I'll ask you to do the last two and you think about it in the meantime? Chloë, again!
Chloë:	"[…] recentemente Andrew è andato in Italia per seguire un corso intensivo di lingua italiana." (**Recently Andrew went to Italy to do an intensive course of Italian language.**)
Francesca:	Dolores.
Laura:	[…]
Francesca:	*Recentemente*, […] but yeah, *Andrea è recentemente andato o è andato recentemente*. We are not that strict actually. It depends on … When you want to deliver a message, it depends on where you want to put the stress on. So keep to the rule you study as a rule, but then be flexible to accept also discrepancies. So … who did I call?… Dolores!

Dolores:	"Ha studiato molto e ha imparato rapidamente." (**He studied a lot and learned quickly**)
Francesca:	Mh, mh! Ana!
Ana:	"Ora parlo bene l'italiano. Non perfettamente..." (**Now I speak Italian well. Not perfectly…**)
Francesca:	And… Eve!
Eve:	[…] [She does not know]
Francesca:	Erh… Mia!
Mia:	[…] [She does not know]
Francesca:	No idea! Ella!
Ella:	"Accuratamente." (**Accurately.**)
Francesca:	Brava, Ella, sì! (**Well done, Ella, yes!**) Now we gonna go over the difference between *conoscere* and *sapere*. Do you know what *conoscere* and *sapere* mean?
Juliane:	To know.
Francesca:	Both of them. Do you know what's the difference?
Juliane:	To know is to know… *conoscere*, I mean, is to know of a person, for example… *Sapere* is to know how … how to speak a language…
Francesca:	Yeah, that's a rough idea. … Rob do you mind starting reading this for me, please?
Rob:	"Conosci Roberto Benigni?" Do you know who Roberto Benigni is?
Francesca:	[Approving] Mh, mh!
Rob:	"Sì, lo conosco. E' un attore." Yes, I know him. He's an actor.
Francesca:	Poi… (**Then…**)
Rob:	Conoscete Genova? (**Do you know Genoa?**) [He pronounces: dze'nova]
Francesca:	Genova ['dzenova]
Rob:	Genova [He puts the stress on the right vowel, now]. "No ma

conosciamo bene la Riviera." (**No, but we know the Riviera well.**)

Francesca: OK. Rachel!

Ruth: "Sai nuotare?" Do you know how to swim? "No, so sciare."[She pronounces 'skjare]

Francesca: Sciare! [Corrects pronounciation, 'ɕjare]

Ruth: [Repeats the word correctly] Sciare. No but I know how to ski.

Francesca: [Approving] Mh, mh!

Ruth: "Quando […]" (**When […]**)Non lo so. I don't know.

Francesca: Now: the verbs *conoscere* and *sapere* both mean *to know*, but they are used differently. First – and the game is coming – one of the two, *sapere*, is not regular. So, guess what you have to do? You have to learn it by heart! It's also worth… The book… actually, it's a good point… it's started to give you the *participio passato* (**past participle**) on top of the thing [she is referring to the page layout where the past participle is given on top of the scheme with the verb forms], and with many verbs it's quite useful. So, when you do your exercises and meet hundred verbs, my suggestion is that you write down the infinitive and then the *participio passato*. Like *prendere* (**to take**) is not *prenduto* but *preso* [She is referring to the fact that this verb has an irregular past participle form]. So it's worth making a note because in the long run, every time you write it, it helps to remember it, OK? That's a trick, believe me: it's useful, OK? So, [she reads from the textbook now] *conoscere* and *sapere*: numero due (**number two**) [she means: point number two in the book]. "*Conoscere* expresses the idea of being acquainted with someone or something such as people, places, books or films. In the past tense *conoscere* signifies *getting to know someone*: Conosci Silvia? Do you know Silvia? No, ma so chi è. No but I know who she is." You see? *Conosci…* No, ma so… "Dove l'hai conosciuta? (**Where did you meet her?**) L'ho conosciuta a Camogli. (**I met her in Camogli**). *Sapere* expresses knowledge or awareness of factual information. *Sapere più l'infinito* (**Sapere plus the infinitive**) means to know how to do something. *I don't know, Non lo so,* is idiomatically expressed in Italian as *non lo so*. In the past tense *sapere* expresses the idea of *having found something out:* Sai l'indirizzo della trattoria? (**Do you know the restaurant address?**) No, non lo so. (**No, I don't know**). Olga sa parlare il russo (**Olga can speak Russian**); and Ho saputo che non è vero (**I found out it is not true**)."
Now, do you have any question on this thing? Is everything clear? [She waits for a few seconds but nobody speaks] Speak now or shut up forever! OK, can you please do exercise A, in pairs? So, we'll find out.

[The students start working in pairs while the teacher goes round the class stopping near each different pair to observe work or give help]

Juliane: [asks about the use of *non lo so*] Do you use it all the times? For example, if you ask: *Dov'è…?* (Where is…?) and you answer: *Non lo so*!?

Francesca: [Nods]

[The activity in pairs goes on for a few minutes. When everybody has finished, the teacher has the students read out the sentences of the exercise in turns, so that possible mistakes are corrected]

OK, allora (**now, then**), Laura… [Francesca starts off the sentence in the book for her] "Mario è un buongustaio:…" (**Mario is a gourmet:…**)

Laura: "…conosce tutti i ristoranti della città." (**…he knows all restaurants in town**).

Francesca: Leo!

Leo: [who evidently is not following] Eh?!

Francesca: Dai! (**Go on!**)

Leo: [Instead of reading the next sentence he starts the one Laura has just read out] "Mario è un buon…gustai…"

Francesca: I'm very glad that you pay so much attention! We are going on. We are doing "*Lui…*" , 'cause we have already done the first line.

Lee: All right. … "Lui è un cliente abituale al ristorante 'La Forchetta'. I camerieri lo conoscono" (**He is a regular at the restaurant 'La Forchetta'. The waiters know him**)

Francesca: …And, Vera!

Vera: …"e sanno quali piatti preferisce".

Francesca: Well done! "Noi non…" (**We don't…**) Chloë!

Ana: Ehm, er… I camerieri lo conoscono or lo conosce ? (**Ehm, er… The waiters know him or knows him?**)

Francesca: Lo conoscono! I camerieri lo conoscono e sanno quali piatti preferisce (**They know him! The waiters know him and know what his favourite dishes are**) […] because they know him as a person, OK? They … This customer is going there every day… so, …

Ana: [Nods]

Francesca: OK, so, Chloë!

Chloë: "Noi non sappiamo cucinare molto bene, così vogliamo uscire per mangiare al ristorante" (**We can't cook very well, so we want to go out to have a meal in a restaurant**)

Francesca: OK. Nick! "Chiediamo ad un amico: Tullio…" (**We ask a friend: Tullio…**)

Nick: "…sai dov'è l'Osteria del Giglio?" (**…do you know where the Osteria del Giglio is?**)

Francesca: "Lui risponde…" (**He answers…**) … Esther!

Esther: "…Non lo so." (**…I don't know**)

Francesca: "Però…" (**But…**) Eve!

Eve: "…conosco una buona trattoria qui vicino." (**…I know a good restaurant near here**).

Francesca: OK. Lisa! "Io…"(**I…**)

Lisa: "…conosco quel [she mispronounces *quel* saying 'kel instead of 'kwel] signore seduto al tavolo laggiù." (**…know that gentleman sitting at that table down there**)

Francesca: *Quel* ['kwel], not *chel* ['kel], OK? [Starts off the next sentence] "Ma non…" (**But not…**) Ruth!
[Rachel can't find the right point on the page]
We are under [point] three, second line.

Ruth: […]

Francesca: OK! Mia! [she starts the sentence off] "Ah, adesso mi ricordo. E' il padre di Angela…" (**Ah, I remember now. It's Angela's father…**)

Mia: "…l'ho conosciuto…" (**I met him…**) [she mispronounces: kono'skjuto]…

Francesca: *Conosciuto* [kono'ɕuto], soft sound!

Mia: "…a quella festa la settimana scorsa." (**…at that party last week.**)

Francesca: So, I think you got it. Do you have any questions? [She waits a few seconds. No answer] OK. Can I please ask you… No, now into this together… and then I'll ask you a very big thing…
Allora, (Right) [She reads a passage from the book]
"Incontro: 'Cosa brucia in cucina?'
Renata e Paola sono in cucina dove preparano una cena per i loro amici.
(**"Meeting** [Meeting (*Incontro*) is the heading of the textbook section]**: 'What is burning in the kitchen?'**

Renata and Paola are in the kitchen where they are making a dinner for their friends.)
[Addressing some student who is evidently still looking for the passage in the book] Siamo qui! (**We are here!**).
[Resumes reading]
"Apparecchi tu la tavola mentre io taglio i pomodori?"
"Va bene. Quale tovaglia usiamo?"
("Will you lay the table while I slice the tomatoes?"
"OK. What table cloth are we going to use?")
[Harsh noise of pneumatic drill is coming from outside]
Madonna mia […]! (**For heaven's sake!)**
[She resumes reading]
"Vediamo… Siamo in otto. Perché non usiamo quella blu con i tovaglioli di cotone? Sono più eleganti."
"Bene. E le posate? Ci servono anche i cucchiai?"
"No, solo i cucchiaini da caffè. Non dimenticare i bicchieri per il vino e l'acqua. Prendi il vassoio di cristallo per la torta e poi lo puoi mettere nella sala da pranzo."
"Stasera si prepara veramente una tavola elegante."
"Certo, è il compleanno di Vittorio!"
"Quando prepari il sugo per la pasta voglio vedere quello che fai, così imparo come si fa."
"Ma non sai fare gli spaghetti all'amatriciana? E' così facile!"
"Ehm, gli spaghetti all'amatriciana sono un po' piccanti, no?"
"Un po', si usa il peperoncino. Vedi? Prima si taglia la cipolla, fine, fine. Poi si tagliano anche la pancetta e l'aglio."
Passano dieci minuti.
"Che buon profumo!"
"Mettiamo l'acqua per la pasta sul fornello, ora. Poi, quando arrivano gli amici, buttiamo la pasta e la mangiamo al dente."
"Senti, Paola, mi prendi l'insalata dal frigo? Perché dobbiamo condirla."
"Uso sempre l'olio d'oliva e l'aceto balsamico."
"Allora, sai preparare qualcosa!"
"L'insalata... capirai!
Gli amici arrivano. Renata e Paola li salutano. Poco dopo...
"E' pronto! Tutti a tavola, si mangia!"
"Alla salute della cuoca!"
"Buon appetito!"
"Altrettanto!"
"Renata, sento odore di bruciato"
"Oh no! La mia torta! Aiuto!"
("Let's see... There are eight of us. Why don't we use the blue one, the one with the cotton napkins? They're more elegant."
"Right. And the cutlery? Do we need spoons as well?"
"No, just coffee spoons. Don't forget the glasses, both for wine and water. Get the crystal tray for the cake and then you could put it in the dining room."
"Wow! The dining table will look so smart, tonight!"

"Of course, it's Vittorio's birthday!"
"When you make the sauce for the pasta, I want to see what you do, so I'll learn how to make it."
"What? Can't you make the *amatriciana* sauce? It's so easy!"
"Ehm, spaghetti amatriciana is a bit hot, isn't it?"
"A bit, it's made with chilli. See? First you chop the onion very finely. Then you also cut the bacon and the garlic.
Ten minutes later
"What a lovely smell!"
"Let's put the water for the pasta on the cooker, now. Then, when the friends arrive, we'll put the pasta in and we'll eat it *al dente.*"
"Listen, Paola, would you take the salad out of the fridge? We've got to dress it."
"I always use olive oil and balsamic vinegar"
"Aha, then you can make something!"
"A salad... big deal!"
The friends arrive. Renata and Paola greet them. Shortly after...
"Dinner's ready! All go to the table, we can eat now!"
"To the health of the cook!"
"Have a nice meal!"
"And you!"
"Renata, I can smell something burning."
"Oh no! My cake! Help!")

[Talking to the class]
        Now, did you get everything out of it, apart from specific vocabulary? Do you wanna try to translate it ... line by line?
[Silent pause, no answer].
        The answer is 'yes'. Nick, first line...

Nick: (…) [Nick doesn't start. The teacher understands he doesn't know how to translate *apparecchiare la tavola*]

Francesca: It's 'set', 'set the table'.

Nick: Can you set the table, while I'm cutting the tomatoes?

Francesca: Good! Erm...Esther!

Esther: All right. What… *tovaglia*?

Francesca: Table cloth.

Esther: ... are we using?

Francesca: Eve

Eve: [...]

Francesca:	[Approving] Mh, mh....
Emily:	[...]
Francesca:	OK. I would say, 'let's see', OK, 'vediamo', 'let's see.' Paola ... ehm ... Linda!
Linda:	(…) [Linda doesn't start she doesn't know a key word]
Francesca:	*Posate* means 'cutlery'.
Linda:	Do we serve spoons?
Francesca:	No, in this case it's 'do we need'. *Servire* is either... you serve something: *ti servo un piatto di spaghetti*, 'I serve you a plate of ...' Oh no! It's the camera! 'I serve you some spaghetti'; but *servire* means also 'to need something' or 'to be useful'. You can say, 'this book' [she lifts the book a little bit in her hands] *Questo libro serve per imparare l'italiano*, 'This book is useful to learn Italian.' That's debatable, actually! [Francesca makes no mystery of the fact she does not like the textbook in use] Ehm... Faye!
Faye:	No, only coffee spoons. Don't ... [she can't remember the translation of *dimenticare*]
Francesca:	... forget
Faye:	...Yeah, the glasses for the wine and the water
Francesca:	[In approval] Mh, mh!
Faye:	Take... Is that like crystal vases?
Francesca:	*Il vassoio di cristallo* is the tray
Faye:	Oh! Crystal tray for the cake, and then you can put it in the dining room.
Francesca:	OK, Ana!
Ana:	[Hesitates] ... This evening ...
Francesca:	[Smiling] Do you want to translate it into Spanish?
Ana:	Yeah! This evening we are going to set a beautiful table
Francesca:	Elegant table! OK. Ruth!
Ruth:	Of course, it's Vittorio's birthday.

Francesca:	Mia! Now she's wandering: 'Why did she give me this long one, while Ruth went away with a...
Mia:	When you prepare the sauce for pasta, I want to...[she hesitates]
T:	... I want to see
Mia:	..what you ... [she hesitates again]
Francesca:	what you do, *cosa fai* [...]
Mia:	[...]
Francesca:	Ella!
Ella:	But you don't...
Francesca:	[approving] Mh, mh!
Ella:	But you don't know how make ...
Francesca:	[pretending to cough] Cough, cough! ... ***Sai!***
Ella:	But you don't know how to make spaghetti... [she hesitates in reading]
Francesca:	...all'amatriciana?
Ella:	It's so easy!
Francesca:	Mh, mh... Cloë!
Cloë:	Ehm, spaghetti all'amatriciana are a bit spicy, aren't they?
Francesca:	Hot! 'Spicy' would be *speziato*. 'Hot' is *piccante*. It means that... *Piccare* is when it's slightly stingy on your [...] on your tongue. So, it's more a hot food.
Nick:	Is it...
Francesca:	It's like it burns you a bit!
Nick:	Yeah!
Juliane:	[...]?
Francesca:	You can also say [She corrects herself before saying what she had in mind] ... No, ... *piccante*... and 'spicy' is *speziato*. OK? Juliet!
Juliane:	A little bit. Pepperoni is used
Francesca:	Chilli. *Peperoncino* is 'chilli'.
Juliane:	Chilli is used. You see? First you cut the... [she stops, hesitating on the translation of *cipolla*]

Francesca: ...onion...

Juliane: ...onion, really finely.

Francesca: Very good!

Juliane: Then you cut the...[she hesitates again]

Francesca: ...bacon!

Juliane: ... the bacon and the... the garlic.

Francesca: Rob!

Rob: What a nice smell!

Francesca: Right. Carry on.

Rob: We put the ... put the water [hesitates]

Francesca: ...on the fire...

Rob: ...on the fire...

Francesca: [She is thinking whether the translation is correct] No...
Rob: No...

Francesca: [She realises the translation was all right]Yeah!

Rob: We put the water with the pasta on the oven...hob

Francesca: The water **for** the pasta, it would be. We need the water to cook pasta. They
              know how you English cook pasta, by [...]

Rob: Then, when our friends arrive ... [he hesitates on the translation of *buttare la
              pasta*] we drain it?

Francesca: We?

Rob: ...Drain it?

Francesca: *Buttiamo* is literally 'we throw'. We say *buttare giù la pasta*, 'throw down the
              pasta'; it means... Ooh! [She now realises fully what Ross meant by 'draining
              the pasta' and what this entails regarding his knowledge on cooking pasta].
              You...you say (…) the pasta inside the boiling water? Don't put it like in the
              cold water and then they (...) together. You wait until the water boils, you add

	salt, **and then** you put the pasta, when it's boiling... No oil, no stock cube...**no!** [The last 'no!' sounds definitely Italian] OK? Eh, eh, Ross!
Rob:	...and we eat it ...[he is uncertain about *al dente*] Is that fresh?
Francesca:	*Al dente* is when it is hard inside!? *Al dente* means ... you need ... When you bite it's a little bit crunchy inside. We don't like it when it's soft and... bleah! OK.
Rob:	Listen, Paola, give me the salad from the fridge because we need to... [little hesitation] dress it.
Francesca:	OK. Laura!
Lisa:	We use...
Francesca:	No, no, no, no ... *non* 'we'!
Lisa:	I...
Francesca:	Good!
Lisa:	...use only olive ail and balsamic vinegar
Francesca:	Mh, mh, and again!
Lisa:	Allora?
Francesca:	*Allora*, so, or then.
Lisa:	... you know how to prepare... [She doesn't know how to translate *qualcosa* and soon after, *capirai!*]
Francesca:	...how to prepare something, the salad! And she's answering: 'The salad! You'll see' ... *Capirai* is like if you wanna dismiss what you've just been told. They can say: "Francesca [she uses her own name, here], you are very beautiful, the best dancer.' And I'd say: 'Capirai!' And I mean to dismiss what they say, as it for me it's something normal. Actually, when they pay you a compliment, you say, *capirai!*, you [...]. OK, Leo, *E' pronto*!
Leo:	How shall I say that... *E' pronto*?
Francesca:	It's ready
Leo:	It's ready [...] on the table. Let's eat!
Francesca:	Mh, mh... *Tutti a tavola!* How do you translate it?

Leo: Er... I don't know. Oh! Everybody sits erhm...

Francesca: ...at the table. OK, another one.

Leo: Er...

Francesca: *Salute* is...

Leo: Compliments to the chef...

Francesca: Yes,... Actually they are probably lifting their hands with glasses, having a toast to the health of the chef. *La salute* is 'health'. When you sneeze, they'll tell you: 'Salute!' It's the same thing. OK. They wish you good health while you are sneezing, and you say: 'Grazie!', and you don't [...]. Ehm... Have a nice meal, *buon appetito!* Vera!

Vera: What does *altrettanto* mean?

Francesca: And you too.

Vera: And you too!

Francesca: Go ahead ... The last one.

Vera: Renata! I can smell something burning. Oh no, my cake! Help! [The class laugh]

Francesca: OK, now... For... Per casa (**Homework**), please, pagina centonovantasei (**page hundred ninety-six**), exercise B, for homework. And also ...
[She turns to Leo and Vera and addresses to them]
               I know you are not going to do them, so what's the point,... eh?
[She addresses to the whole class again]
               Pagina centonovantanove A, comprensione, l'ordine giusto (**Page hundred ninety-nine A, comprehension, put in the correct order**).
[At this point the teacher notices that the book, in a section called *In altre parole* (**In other words**) is providing a better explanation of the idiom *capirai!* than the one she had given before. Therefore she reads it out]
               Oh! 'In altre parole!', *Capirai!*: 'Big deal!'
[The class don't respond, as she would have supposed. So she assumes that it's an American expression, as the textbook is published in the U.S.A.]
               Is it American? OK, OK. Now... A pagina duecento (On page two hundred)... We reach *pagina duecento* [...] book, yeah! [She stretches her arms to the ceiling with closed fists, in sign of victory] ... *Il si impersonale* (**The impersonal si**). You were expecting this, weren't you? [She reads from the book] "*In classe si parla italiano*" (**In class   Italian is spoken**) ... [She comments the example she's just read from the book] Not in this class, because otherwise you don't get it! [She reads more examples] "*Si mangia bene in*

Italia.” (**In Italy one eats well**). *“Mi dispiace, non si può fumare, qui!”* (**Sorry, smoking is not allowed here!**) *“Si preparano gli spaghetti all'amatriciana con la cipolla”* (**Spaghetti amatriciana is made with onion**).

[She tries to explain, now]

This construciton is also called *si passivante*, if you are looking in an Italian grammar, because, in a way, it makes the sentence slightly passive. You don't need any subject, therfore... passive... intonation of the sentence? No, I don't wanna confuse you. Let's move on.

[She goes on reading from the book].

Numero uno (**Number one**): *Si* plus *la terza persona singolare* (**the third singular person**) of the verb expresses an unspecified collective subject, corresponding in English to 'one' [and Francesca adds], or also 'you', 'we', 'they' [...].

[Reading]

"This construction is also used to express general rules, habits and customs. *Si* is used with the third person plural form when followed by a plural noun: *Si studia bene in biblioteca* (**One studies well, in the library**) *Si usano le spezie per cucinare bene* (**One uses spices to cook well**). In compound tenses, the 'si impersonale' construction is conjugated with *essere* (**to be**)..."

[She stops reading to stress the point]

OK? *Essere, non avere, OK? Essere* (**To be, not to have, OK? To be**.)

[Reading on]

"The past participle agrees in gender and number with the object: *Si sono mangiati troppi tortellini, ieri.* (**One ate too many tortellini, yesterday**). *Si è preparata una buona cena per gli amici* (**One prepared a good dinner for the friends**). *Si è mangiato bene in quella trattoria* (**One ate well in that restaurant**)".

[She makes comments on the last few examples]

What I'd like to say is all these past things, you have to learn them, but you'll find another way to say things. If you look at it, it sounds quite artificial. I would say: *Ho mangiato troppi tortellini, ieri*; or, a*bbiamo mangiato troppi tortellini, ieri*; because we know who was at the table. There's no need to say 'I'm told', or to use the impersonal. OK? It can be acceptable, but use it just for the present. Sometimes you can find [...] to express abstract ideas. So that's why you learn it. But in these examples I could see I would use another form. I don't need to use this one. OK?

[She goes on reading]

"An adjective that follows the verb *essere* in the *si impersonale* is in masculine plural form. The verb is singular: *Quando si è ricchi, si è contenti.* (**When one is rich, one is contented**). *Quando si è liberi, si è felici* (**When one is free, one is happy**)."

[She explains]

So it's like if you express it [...]

[She interrupts the explanation to report about what a couple of students are doing]

Ruth and Mia, they are yawning at the same time. Ruth was like this: [she puts her hand to her mouth, her palm facing her face] and Mia had half her hand inside her mouth!

[She turns towards the camera]

Are you recording, Gianni?

[To the class, again]

OK, I can see this is really interesting, OK.

[She reads on]

"Object pronouns precede *si*: *Marco è contento. Lo si vede dalla faccia* (**Marco is happy. One can tell from his face**). *Ma, è Linda Evangelista!'* (**Wow, that's Linda Evangelista!**) ... "

[She stops reading the example to comment]

Let me guess, she's American!

[She resumes reading]

"*...La si riconosce subito!* (**One can recognize her straight away!**). The only exception..."

[She interrupts the reading to remark]

…and the only exception, so it's worth remembering

[she reads on and ends the grammar section on *si passivante* with the last rule and the last two examples]

"…is *ne* which follow *si*: *Se ne parla sempre* (**They always speak about it**). And: *Secondo me, di gelati buoni, non se ne mangiano mai troppi* (**In my opinion, one just cannot have too many good ice-creams**)."

OK? So, done this, can we please do *esercizio A* (**exercise A**), now, in class, to see if you've got it, or not?

Laura: [has noticed a variation in the spelling of *si* in the last two examples] Why it it *se* here, and not *si*, in front of *ne*?

Francesca: [...] changes, '*se* ne parla'. *Grazie, Laura! Grazie, grazie!* (**Thank you, Laura! Thank you, thank you!**). So when you've got *ne*, *si* becomes *se*. I forgot to say it and the book forgot to say it too. ... Great book! ... Also, great teacher, I must say.

Oh, I [...] to do the exercise... [to Laura] And don't forget [...].

Laura: I'm not!

Francesca: ... You have a problem with the vocabulary? [Shouting] You shouldn't, because you were supposed to learn the vocabulary... Oh!

Laura: [...]

Francesca: [...]

Laura: [...]

Francesca: Laura, you are becoming very cheeky. Oh, you know what she's said, the one with the bubble here [she points her finger above her mouth. She is referring to Faye, who has got a big spot above her mouth. That's why she's 'the one with the bubble here']? She's said that you are rude.

Faye: […]

Francesca: Thank you! Now, I think that next time, who's gonna sit in the first row? Guess who's gonna be? Lisa!

[The class now works on the exercise, while the teacher goes round the class helping them. This goes on for few minutes]

OK, have you finished? OK, OK. Despite the fact that the first row…[The class are not paying any attention to what she is saying, so she shouts to make them stop talking among themselves and draw their attention back to her] Oh! Eh la Madonna! (For heaven's sake!)

Let me […] It's because you are doing […]

Allora, numero uno. In farmacia… (**So, number one. At the chemist's…**)

Linda!

Linda: *…si compra l'aspirina* (**…one buys aspirine**)

Francesca: *Si compra l'aspirina*, OK. *In libreria…*(**At the bookshop…**), Ana!

Ana: *…si compra il nuovo romanzo di Umberto Eco* (**…one buys Umberto Eco's new novel**).

Francesca: *Molto bene!* (**Very well!**) *Dal macellaio…* (**At the butcher's…**), Mia!

Mia: *…si compra delle costolette di vitello.* (**veal ribs is bought**).

Francesca: Can you repeat?

Mia: *…si comprano delle costolette di vitello.* (**…veal ribs are bought**).

Francesca: OK. *Dal fioraio…* (**At the florist's…**), Nick!

Nick: *Dal fioraio si comprano rose e tulipani* (**At the florist's one buys roses and tulips**).

Francesca: *In profumeria…* (**In the perfume shop…**), Eve!

Eve: *…si comprano il bagnoschiuma al profumo di mughetto* (**lily of the valley scented bath foam are bought**)

Francesca: There is a mistake. *Il bagnoschiuma* (**The bath foam**) is singular!

Eve: *Si compra!* (**Is bought!**)

Francesca: *In pasticceria…*(**In a patisserie…**), Ella!

Ella: *…si comprano i biscotti.* (**…one buys biscuits**).

Francesca: Mh, mh! Lisa!

Lisa: I don't know if I've got this one right. *In tabaccheria si comprano le sigarette e i francobolli.* (**In a tobacconist's one buys cigarettes and stamps**).

Francesca: Very good. *Alla torrefazione…* (**At the coffee outlet[1]…**), Juliane!

Juliane: *…si compra rose e tulipani*?

Francesca: [shakes her head.] Chloë!

Chloë: *…il caffè Lavazza* (**Lavazza coffee**).

Francesca: OK, now. If you want caffè Lavazza, you go to the supermarket. If you go to *la torrefazione*, they gonna have their own brand of coffee. Like, in my region, we have *Moka Arabica*, *Moka* […]. And actually they've got these big bags, ehm…erhm… how do you call them? This… very thick material, very thick material.

Students: Sacks?

Francesca: Sacks of coffee in grains. And they ask you what kind of *caffettiera* (**coffee percolator**) you use at home of if you've got a small espresso maker, because then they can adjust the cut […] the powder, according to what you need. And […] people … It's quite expensive, you go there and you can mix different kinds of coffees, like there's a more toasted one, so it's gonna be slightly more bitter, then there's a lighter one, more creamy, and you can actually ask for your own mixture, and after a while, when they know you, they'll prepare it for you regularly, for they know you want half a kilo of this, 20 grams of that and 30 grams of the other one. They prepare it for my grandmother regularly, because she's quite keen on coffee, and it's really nice… I mean… You've got usually small quantity, because when you crash the grains, the beans, the coffee beans, there's a smell, so it's nice. And she's got a thing at home, to crush them at home with a… It's electrical and it's really… I assure you it's a completely different kind of coffee. Now, I am drinking Lavazza because I've no choice […] but you can perceive the difference. It's really… If you go and you have your own machine, it's worth trying. You spend a little bit more, Lavazza […] a couple of pounds a packet, this one no, but it's really worth buying. If you go to Italy, that's my advice. Go, find these *moka* places and… yeah! [She looks at her watch]
Now, can I, please, ask you to do… You can choose, actually, either exercise C and D. Now, I read these exercises *a pagina duecento e due* (**on page two hundred and two**) and of course they play around these wonderful American people. What I actually want you to do it, forget America, and do it with England. OK, so, you've got either this girl going to the States and she discovers that the universities there are amazing. And when Italian people usually go to American universities, they come back and they say they don't do anything at all. […] And the other one, of course, you are living in England,

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[1] A *Torrefazione* is actually the place where coffee is roasted. Sometimes there is also an outlet where customers can buy coffee.

so you can explain it better in England than in the States. I guess you don't know much about it.

Nick: Is it C or D?

Francesca: It's up to you. I leave you free to choose one and we'll correct them both next time.

Students: Is that the homework?

Francesca: Homework, yes. So, let's revise the homework I said. *Allora* (**So**), either C or D *a pagina duecentodue* (**on page two-hundred and two**). Then, did I say *pagina duecento* (**page two-hunred**) D?

Students: No!

Francesca: *Pagina duecento*, D! (**Page two-hundred, D!**).

Students: [Half protesting] What?

Francesca: I'm not joking. Or, actually, no. Let's say we will do it […] for next lesson, OK? And then, what did we have? *Centonovantasei* B (**hundred and ninety-six,** B)…and there was another one…

Rob: One nine nine, A!

Francesca: *Grazie* (**Thank you**). OK Rob, can you please tell them all, so if you don't do the exercises, we are blaming […]? *Dai* (**Go on**)!

Rob: One nine six B, erm…

Francesca: *In italiano, Rob!* (**In Italian, Rob!**)

Rob: Is it *centonovantasei B e centonovantanove A* [he pronounces 'A' /ei/] (**hundred and ninety-six B and hundred and ninety-nine A**)

Francesca: A [a]

Rob: A, and *duecentodue C o B*. (**two hundred and two C or B**).

[The students start leaving the classroom]

Francesca's spoken language class at Downtown University

Francesca: Allora … Nick, Esther, John, Mia, Vera and… *Allora* (**Now, then**), I have a couple of announcements. First, could you please check your e-mail, because I don't know whether you've got an interview with Gianni or not. So, he probably has sent you an e-mail if you have, can you please check it? Thank you very much. Second announcement: I have […] nearly finished … [student comes in. To the latecomer] Ciao!… I have nearly finished assessing your oral thing… I have to see one more student this afternoon before analyzing the average of marks and everything. So as many students they don't want to see the marks up either on the board or on my door, if you come up at 4.30 in my office today, I may be able to tell your mark, or if you can't and you wanna send me an e-mail I will reply you with your mark. But it's better if you come and see me though.
OK, what else? Another thing, … I don't know. That is it.
Now, the activity of today it's gonna be on food again, I'm afraid. Let's make sure you know […] things and to make sure you survive in Italy. …
Now don't panic because I've got a handout. Thank you, can you pass this around?
So, today you will do a group activity. Ah! Now I remember… Next week you are going to have again another assessment. There's nothing I want you to do particularly, apart from revising grammar and vocabulary… er… It's gonna be probably a workshop, so it's gonna be … you're gonna work in the whole class or with another person and I'll provide you with all the information on that day. So, try to come because if you miss too many assessment day you'll have a zero […] on your average of marks.
Now let's move to the activity of today. *Cosa mangi?* (**What do you eat?**) I pointed it out because I saw that many students make a mistake with prepositions. When you eat something, either you *la mangi a colazione o per colazione.* OK? So, if you ask what they eat at specific meal, *colazione, pranzo,…* it can be *merenda* or *cena, …* Do you all know what *merenda* is? *Merenda* is usually a break you have. With children is, it's usually a children thing and it's like half morning when they are at school, and it can be like *panino*, a sandwich, or a slice of pizza or some yogurt and fruit. … It depends on what their mums want them to eat. And then in the afternoon again, because in Italy around 1- 1.30 and then dinner from 7-7.30 until 8-8.30 […]. So, when it's 4.00 the children are jumping around saying "I'm starving, I'm starving! Give me something" and that's *merenda.* But adults are allowed… I'm keen on merenda and… So, we can consider it like a meal … So, it depends on how much you eat. Mine are meals.
So, you say: *Cosa mangi a colazione?*, non alla colazione. OK? It's a simple preposition. The same goes with *per*: *Cosa mangi per colazione? Cosa mangi per cena? …*
Mi raccomando, mi raccomando, (**Please, please,**) don't come with these *alla colazione* or *al pranzo,* because I'm gonna be merciless. OK?
When you eat out usually you say: *"Cosa prendi?"*: *"Cosa prendi quando vai al ristorante?"* "What do you have when you go to the restaurant?" OK?

Now, there's the…, another cathegory [ka'ϑigori], cathegory [ka'ϑegori], category [ka'tegori], category [ka'tigori] … er … Nick?

Nick: Category.

Francesca: OK, of meals that are the ones that people on diet aren't allowed at all, which are *uno spuntino. Uno spuntino* will be something you eat possibly in a secret way, er.., when it's not right time to eat, like between breakfast and *merenda*, or between *merenda* and pranzo, or in the middle of the night. *Spuntino* might vary: can have like… Can be like a Kit-Kat, or a bag of crisps, or like in my […] case can be half a chicken [Students laugh].
Make sure you always deny you have *uno spuntino*: "Me? No! *Uno spuntino?* (**A snack?**) Quando? When?". OK?
But, some people do, like you go clubbing, you come back, you are hungry, you have *uno spuntino*. Fine. You study all night, [pretending to laugh] ah, ah, ah, ah, when you end studying, […] and you can have *uno spuntino*. Yes, and you don't say *ha uno spuntino*. That's why I put it down. You say: *Fare uno spuntino*. So, you have got two different […] things:
Fare un meal, *fare un pasto*. It can be: *fare merenda, fare colazione*, or *fare uno spuntino*.
You don't say *fare pranzo* or *fare cena* despite the fact that in some regions this form is used. In standard Italian you say *pranzare* to have lunch , or *cenare*, to have dinner. OK? I won't take it as correct *fare pranzo* or *fare cena*, because it's regional. Are you with me? Is everything fine?
And then the last bit is to ask questions and to point out how you use prepositions.
Again, *cosa ti piace mangiare a colazione? Non alla colazione. Cosa ti piace mangiare per pranzo, o a pranzo?* O, *cosa ti piace cucinare…* (**what do you like eating for breakfast? Not for the breakfast. What do you like eating at lunch or for lunch? Or, what do you like cooking?**), if you are cooking. When you cook for someone, you always use the preposition *per*: *Cucino* (**I'm cooking**) *per il mio fidanzato*, for my boyfriend, *cucino per i miei amici* (**I'm cooking for my friends**). You can have a form with pronouns, but we won't do it today because we are still adjusting pronouns and it would be like an overload business dealing with it now.
Now, the activity I picked up for you today, it's a group activity, and I want you to fill in this grid, asking questions. Would you [addressing the 4 students on her left] please work in pairs, and you'll [addressing the 3 students on her right] work in three. What I want you to do, you put your partner's meal up here. [To the 3-manned group] You're gonna work like this; Vera you're gonna ask Mia a question; Mia is gonna ask Kelly and Kelly to Vera. So, you put your friend's name in this thing you fill in. You've got to ask what do they like eating, when do they eat, what do they eat and fill it completely. After this, you're gonna do an activity in groups, so I gonna mix you again and we are gonna write a short report, and then we are gonna read it, on the habits of this class in two groups… I would say two groups. OK? Is it everything clear? Now, you've got, I would say, 30-35 minutes to fill it in and I'm gonna be your vocabulary, because I know… your dictionary because I know you don't

know the vocabulary, after two groups of making me so many disappointments, I'll be your dictionary.

[Students speak among themselves in pairs/groups. One student in the 3-manned group asks for a handout page she has not got]

Francesca: Oh, you're… I'm sorry [handing her the missing sheet]

[Tom takes out a pocket dictionary, openly ignoring Francesca's instructions]

John: Cosa mangi a colazione?

Nick: Niente… ma Sabato e domenica, normalmente … [he turns to Francesca] normalmente?

Francesca: Normalmente. You can also say *di solito* [she writes both forms down on a transparency and projects the words on the screen]. By now try to be precise with times and everything and then… you'll work out things.

Nick: Ehm … *Sabato e Domenica mangio a colazione più tardi, di solito …* (**On Saturdays and Sundays I have breakfast later, usually …**) midday … *mezzogiorno … a mezzogiorno*.

John: *Cosa mangi per colazione Sabato?*(**What do you have for breakfast on Saturdays?**)

Nick: Sabato … (**Saturday …**) cereals – cereali [sere'ali]

Francesca: Cereali [tɕere'ali]

Nick: Cereali

Student X: […]

Francesca: Toast is *pane tostato*. It can be *con burro e marmellata* (**with butter and jam**)or it can be just *con il burro* (**with butter**).

Nick: *… e domenica* (**… and Sunday**)

Francesca: It's because *burro e marmellata* (**butter and jam**)is sort of, er… an expression and we don't use the article. It would be *con il burro e la marmellata* (lit. **with the butter and the jam**), you can still use it, but we say *burro e marmellata*. But when you say just 'butter' you say *con il burro* and you need the article. And then you've got *il tè, caffè, caffelatte*,(**tea, coffee, milky coffee**) and so on and so far. Some people might have *uova*, eggs for breakfast. I knew, I knew you didn't know the words.

Esther: […]

Nick: Io il domenica mangio i cereali …(**On Sundays I have cereals …**)

Francesca: Now, before you ask, I'll tell you straight away we don't have baked beans, we don't have jacket potatoes … in Italy … we don't have them. So …

Nick: …cereali [sere'ali]

Francesca: …so we found a sort of compromise with the other group and we called the jacket potato, we called it *jacket patata* …

[Students laugh]

Francesca: And we called the ba…

Nick: [consulting his pocket dictionary] Er… Here … They say here jacket … er… baked potato …… […]

Francesca: Yes, we say *patata al forno*, but we skin them.

Nick: *Patata cotta al forno con la buccia.*

Francesca: Eh! We'll call it *jacket patata*. And baked beans, we decided they're gonna be *fagioli*, beans, *al pomodoro*, tomato sauce. But luckily we don't have this kind of things in Italy [she smiles].

Nick: E tu, per colazione? (**And you, for breakfast?**)

John: Io mangio uova … (**I have eggs …**)

Nick: Tutti i giorni? (**Every day?**)

John: Tutti i giorni.(**Every day.**)

Nick: Champignoni? [Starts looking up in the dictionary]

Francesca: [gets there] What do you need, Nick?

Nick: Mushrooms, champignoni. Is championi mushrooms?

Francesca: Championi… *Chiampione* is a champion, but very well mispronounced … *Funghi* [writes it and projects the word on screen].

Nick: *Funghi*! Yeah, there we are … *Funghi. Tutti i giorni mangiari …* (**Mashrooms. Every day eat …**)

John: Il Sabato e la domenica (**On Saturday and Sunday**)

Francesca: From Latin: *fungus ... fungus, fungi*
[addressing the 3-manned group] Latté ...

Vera: Sorry...

Francesca: ... and then you drink a glass of water in the air

Mia: Yeah ...

Francesca: La frutta ... Pannini is fine but have just one 'n'

Nick: *... carne e frutta...*(**...meat and fruit...**)

Francesca: You have un panino, which is either with the baguette or a slice of bread, but not the sliced one in there. That would be *un tramezzino* with the white...OK? ... And you usually say *al* or a... So it would be tuna, *al tonno*; ham, *al prosciutto, al salame* (**salami**).

Esther: Hot milk; what would it be?

Francesca: *Latte caldo ...*

Dolores: Is it masculine?

Francesca: Yes, it's masculine. *Il latte.*
[goes to Nick]
               Why don't you ... under the...

Nick: I don't like eating... er... *Non posso mangiare ...* er ... *durante...* er... *durante ...* er...early. (**I can't eat … er… during… er… during … er… early.**)

Francesca: Ah! *Presto*! (**Early!**)

Nick: *Presto.*

Dolores: *Alle otto* (**At eight**).

Francesca: How many *panini ...*

Esther: *Trenta* (**Thirty**).

Francesca: No marmelade, *marmellata*, we also use it for jam... For lunch?

Kelly: Yeah!

Francesca: She's lying ... [...]
               Patatine fritte. [Then she corrects herself] No, patatine, just patatine: crisps. Patatine fritte is chips

Nick:	[...] *biscotti*
Francesca:	Those are *biscotti al cioccolato* (**chocolate biscuits**). *Carne* is meat and then you've got *pesce* (**meat**).
John:	OK, *cosa mangi per pranzo il mercoledì?* (**What do you have for lunch on Wednesdays?**)
Francesca:	[Talking to 3-manned group] *Le banane...* I want to see... *alle banane.* (**Bananas … I want to see … banana flavoured**). I'm not joking, Vera, I'll wait for you in my office.
Nick:	A pasty [looks up in dictionary]... pasty... *pasticcio di carne.*
Francesca:	What is it?
Nick:	Pasty... y'know what a pasty is? Cornish pasty, *pasticcio di carne...* They're pastries...
Francesca:	I know what it is but [...] mainly vegetable.
Nick:	No, meat ...
Francesca:	There is meat as well.
Nick:	Meat and vegetable.
Francesca:	OK.
Dolores :	How do you say yogurt?
Francesca:	Yogurt, we just pronounce it yogurt ['jogurt]
Esther:	Mangiare biscotti
Francesca:	Il, oh, oh, ...il cioccolatte.What kind of cioccolatte is because it's [...]
Esther:	How do you say a lump of chocolate?
Francesca:	A lump? You say *mangio della cioccolata* (**I eat some chocolate**), because you can't say ... And if you drink it è una cioccolata calda.

[Goes to group near the door. Looks at Dolores's form and points out one word in it]
Past tense!

Dolores:	Oh, I knew it.
Francesca:	I know you knew it

Vera:	*Per cena mangio ...* (**For dinner I have…**)
Nick:	Yogurt?
Francesca:	Yogurt. [Looking at Tom's form] *Che giorno?* (**What day?**)
Nick:	*Che giorno!* (**What a day!**)
Francesca:	No, ... *che giorno?* [She pokes him with her elbow]
Nick:	Ah!
Francesca:	[Looking at John] You don't have lunch, never ever...
Nick:	I do, but ...
Francesca:	Ah ... you go ... Ah, [Turning to the whole class] Is anyone of you interested in the word riso: rice?
Nick:	Yeah
Francesca:	Another way of eating la pasta it can be *al ragù*, with the meat ... That's the *Bolognese.* You say *pasta al ragù*, and then you can also say *al ragù di carne*, but if you just say al ragù is fine.
Nick:	*Un curry, sì un curry* ... Do you have curry? *Un curry.*
Francesca:	We don't say *un curry* ... (**a curry …**) *Un pollo al ...* (**A** [curry] **chicken…**)
Nick:	So, it'll be a chicken, *per esempio* (**for example**), chicken korma, chicken tikka masala.
Francesca:	I know what you mean, but in Italy we don't have these Indian habits. So, sometimes we can say *un pollo al curry* because we use the spice, rather than the curry. So if you eat Indian food, you say what you eat [...].
Nick:	Un pollo [he pronounces it the Spanish way] *al curry* ['kwri], *un pollo* [Spanish pron.] *al curry* ['kwri]
Francesca:	Un pollo [she pronounces it correctly] *al curry* ['kwri] *o un pollo al curry* ['kari] [...] My father says curry ['kwri], because it's really up to you to read the label of the curry [...] Peas are piselli.

[To 3-manned group, who are giggling]

What are you doing? Now you're gonna have some like panino con l'arancia (**orange roll**)... What're you gonna do?

Nick:	What about *il pranzo*?
John:	[...] *pizza*.
Kelly:	You say *fare uno spuntino*?
Francesca:	Mh, mh, and you have to say: *A che ora fai uno spuntino?*(**What time do you have a snack?**)
Vera:	[...]
Francesca:	You say *uvetta* (**raisins**)or *uva sultana* (**sultanas**).
Vera:	... And then *mangio uva sultana.*
Francesca:	Just say *mangio dell'uvetta* (**I have some raisins**) and remember to use *dell'*(**some**): it's uncountable. *Dell'. Mangio dell'uvetta.*
Kelly:	*Uvetta*?
Francesca:	It's raisins...
Kelly:	Oh, raisins!
Francesca:	Mangio dell'uvetta.
John:	*Pollo, carne ...* (**Chicken, meat…**)
Nick:	Fish and ...
Francesca:	It's *pesce*
Nick:	And then *bistecca ...*
John:	Steak ...
Nick	*Bistecca.*
Francesca:	[to 3-manned group] Now, you're still doing Monday. I don't wanna do any comments ... You are disorganised. Spuntini, ... riso? Would that be wise ? Mia you're like a dustbin, aren't you like a hoover?
Esther:	*A che ora fai colazione*? (**What time do you have breakfast?**)
Dolores:	*Alle otto.*(**At eight**).

Nick:	*Gelato* (**Ice-cream**)[...] *Pasticcio*, pie: *pasticcio significa con carne, più che* ...(*pasticcio* **means with meat, more than**) er ... *pasticcio* is steak and pie, as far as I [...]
Francesca:	Can I ask you a question?
Nick:	Yes.
Francesca.:	Don't you think this traditional kind of English food it might have a false translation in Italian, because actually we don't know what you are talking about? ... What do you want to say?
Nick:	It's pie. I mean it's sweet pie. As savoury pie is *pasticcio*, is sweet pie *pasticcio* as well?
Francesca:	Erm...
Nick:	Er... apple ... apple pie.
Francesca:	We would say *torta di mele.*
Nick:	*Torta di mele..*
Francesca:	In Italian will be fine, very open. Specifically it's quite hard to find a translation. Because we've got mainly the same things, but don't say pie.
John:	*Cosa tu mangi per pranzo?*(**What do you eat for lunch?**)
Nick:	*Pollo* [Spanish pronunciation] Eh... What's that? Eh ... [...]
Esther:	How do you say 'early'?
Francesca:	[to Esther] *Presto*.
Esther:	I thought it was *presto*, but I didn't say it.
Francesca:	*Presto*, and the opposite *tardi*. *Mangio presto, oggi*; or *mangio tardi* (**I'm eating early today, or I'm eating late**). *Tardi* is the opposite, so early and late.
Esther:	*Mangio presto e...*
Dolores:	*E cosa mangi*? (**And what do you have?**)
Francesca:	You've got a quarter of an hour to finish the whole thing ... [Shouting at her] Mia! You don't ... you [...] You diet [...].
Nick:	[Reading from the pocket dictionary] Patata cotta al forno con la buccia ...

Francesca: Yeah. I would say, as we said before, *'jacket patata'*

Nick: *Jacket patata*

Francesca: Because we don't actually eat it in Italy!

John: What is it?

Nick: You know, a jacket potato?

John: No.

Nick: It's like a baked potato

John: [...]

Nick: Yeah, you chop it [...] cheese, coleslaw ...

Francesca: In Italy we don't eat... we are not used to eat them. I know that the first time I
               went to Exeter, they were eating this thing and I thought: 'Oh my God, where
               am I going to end up? I mean, they are so poor they eat the skin as well!'
               My mum came to see me. Now I'm quite used to it, I sometimes eat it because
               I like it. She said: "Poor daughter, you don't have any money, you are eating
               the skin as well." "No", I said, "it's crunchy." But we don't actually have it.
               That's why you are finding with *buccia*, with the skin on it, because we are
               really not used to it.

John: So, you say jacket patata?

Francesca: It's the translation we found with the other groups, because in Italian we don't
               have it. So we just agreed on that [...].
[To the 3-manned group]
               You are giggling along. Is there a question you want to ask, or are you fine?
               [...] Stop! What's ...

Nick: Hamburger [pronounces it the English way]

Francesca: No, not *hamburger*, *amburger* [am'burger]

Nick: *Amburger.*

Francesca: *Amburger*! In Italilan it wouldn't be **hamburger**, but amburger, amburger [...]
               Salad is insalata, in case you need it.
               Oh! Are you doing the exercise, or are you just laughing? Ehm!

John: *Come si dice* (**How do you say**) ketchup?

Francesca: Ketchup!

John: All right, ketchup [...]

Nick: Chilli ... chilli con carne ... You say that?

Francesca: Sì, yes ... We don't have it, but you can say it.

Nick: [laughs] [...]

Kelly: How do you say hamburger?

Francesca: *Amburgher.*

Kelly: Just, how do you spell ...

Francesca: It's spelt the same, but we say *amburgher*. [...]
                Now [...] but you've got ten minutes to finish and you're still doing Tuesday

Nick: What is poppadoms?

Francesca: Poppadoms ... We don't have them, because we do not have many Indian food
                ... You're being quite cheeky, aren't you? Why don't we talk of Chinese food?

John: I love Indian.

Francesca: So do I. *Dai!* (**Chop, chop!**)

Nick: Chinese ... Noodles.

Francesca: *Spaghettini di riso.*

Nick: All right [Picks up the dictionary and checks].

Francesca: [Goes to Tom and takes the dictionary out of his hands. Then she walks back
                to her previous position holding the dictionary].

Nick: We have a lot of foreign foods [...] Caught on camera

Francesca: [laughs] Yeah. [...]

John: *Pollo fritto* (**Fried chicken**).

Francesca: Oh, very light!

John: *Più pesce* (**More fish**), prowns.

Nick: [to Francesca] *Gamba* ... prowns.

Francesca: *I gamberi.* It's because they've got the tail

Nick: *Gamba…*

Francesca: Leg, which is *gamba.*

Nick: All right!

Francesca: *Gamberi. Gambero* is the singular. We also have got an expression: we say you walk like a *gambe... Cammini come un gambero* (**You are walking like a prown**). It means you are jumping backwards.

Nick: [...]

Francesca: [To the 3-manned group] Oh, you [...] skip meals [...]. That's a good thing.

[The students in the group giggle]

Nick: Paella [pa'jella]. *Una* paella [pa'jella]

John: Yeah.

Francesca: Una paella [pronounces it the Spanish way]. Paella [pronounces it the Italian way /pa'ella/].
               [Pats Michelle on the shoulders and points at something on her sheet] Excuse me, *alla marmellata*, it's feminine.

[Moves to Tom and Jason]

               You are not having *merenda* [...]

Nick: [...] I'm eating loads [...] Trying to put off weight, I mean, you know...

Francesca: [Moves to Esther and Dolores]

Esther: Pollo [pronounces it the Spanish way]

Francesca: *Pollo*! [Italian pronounciation] She always eats *pollo* [To Esther] You like it... Ti piace il pollo, Esther (**You like chicken, Esther**). [Esther nods, smiling]. Good!

[Francesca moves back to Nick and John]

Nick: Excuse me: *spaghettini al* (**noodles with**) [...]

Francesca: *Che è al* (**What is with**) [...]?

Nick: *Spaghettini*. Chinese food.

Francesca: *Spaghettini cinesi.*

Nick & John: *Cinesi.*

Francesca: I would say *spaghettini di riso*, made of rice, you know...

Nick: [...] not only with rice.

Francesca: OK. *Spaghettini cinesi.*

[Moves to 3-manned group]

               Now, now... This group is not serious at all. Now you start skipping meals to save time. You've got five minutes to finish it and if you don't, you're in real trouble.

Nick: Mustard, mustard ...

Francesca: Eh?

Nick: Mustard ...

Francesca: Mostarda

Nick & John: Mostarda!

Francesca: [Goes to OHP] ... Actually, is it the yellow stingy...

Nick: Yeah!

John: [In the background] Come si dice hot dog?

Francesca: [Still answering the previous question] *Senape.*

Nick: *Senape*, right. What about hot dog?

John: Hot dog [American pronounciation]

Nick: Hot dog [Mimicks the American pronounciation] [laughs] Hot dog.

Francesca: What? Hot dog? *Ot dog.*

[Moves to 3-manned group]
               [...] Stop laughing [...]
[To Vera]
               Un bicchiere di succo di frutta (**A glass of fruit juice**).

Nick:	*Spuntini: cioccolata, biscotti, tiramisù, gelato, yogurt...* (**Snacks: chocolate, biscuits, tiramisù, ice-cream, yogurt**)
Francesca:	Nick, you are supposed to write down what he eats. Are you actually asking him what he is eating?
Nick:	Yes.
Francesca:	'Cause, I can't hear you asking things. You say *yogurt, tiramisù, gelato…*
Nick:	[...]
Francesca:	But, I mean do you ask the questions?
Nick:	Yes.
Francesca:	When did you ask the question?
Nick:	About to minutes before you were listening.
John:	What about *spuntini* (**snacks**)? *Che cosa mangi per spuntini* (lit. **What do you have for snacks**)?
Francesca:	[Correcting John] *Fare uno spntino* (**To have a snack**)!
John:	…per fare uno spuntino, che cosa mangi?
Nick:	Mangio ...(**I eat…**)
Francesca:	[To Kelly, in the 3-manned group] You've got like five things ... *Bicchiere* (**Glass**).
Kelly:	[...]

Francesca: *Bicchiere di ... succo di frutta. Bicchiere di succo d'arancia* (**Glass of … fruit juice. Glass of orange juice**).

Kelly,Vera& Mia:	[...]
Francesca:	[to Kelly] *Al pomodoro* (**Tomato flavoured**).
Nick:	Pop corn ... [to Francesca] Pop corn?
John:	Pop corn?
Nick:	Peanuts?

Francesca: [Writing *nocciolina/e* on OHP transparency] Peanuts are *noccioline.*[...].
Now, as the boys have finished, I would split you into two **groups**, I would say, [...] working in a group and you'll provide a report with the average [...] statistic. So, you need some structures which I'm gonna give you and it doesn't matter where you've got to…, you know. Pretend that you've done everything..
So, you can say ... er ... You should get a bit closer: *Nel nostro gruppo* (**In our group**)... and then I want you to start using the impersonal form with *si*. So, what I intend is *si fa colazione* (**one has breakfast**), for example, or *si mangia* (**one eats**), and you don't need a subject, because *si* acts as subject.
Si mangia alle cinque (**One eats at five**), for example, *o si pranza alle otto* (**or one has lunch at eight**)... Is it clear?
Or you can say and using the normal [...] person. *Le persone del nostro gruppo* (**The people in our group**) and then you use the third plural, normally, OK? You can also want to say: *Due persone nel nostro gruppo mangiano e due persone no* (**Two people in our group eat and two don't**). OK? So, you use numbers, you must know them.
You can find this useful: *in media*, that is in average. You can say: *in media, mangiamo la pasta tre volte alla settimana*, in an average we eat pasta three times a week, because you have to check, now, what you have done within the group and [...] the data you collected together. When you've got to say 'round' referring to time, you have to use *verso*. So, you can say: *Si mangia verso le cinque* (**One eats around five**). OK? And then, *tutti*, everyone, or/and *nessuno*, no one. *Spesso* is often, *di solito* or *normalmente* is normally or usually, and then you've got *sempre* (**always**) or *quasi sempre* (**almost always**) and *mai*, which is the opposite, never.
So, now write down this report and then I'll ask you to read it aloud, a bit each. You've got ten minutes.
The two boys merge with Esther and Dolores; the three girs stay as they were before.
[To the 3-manned group] Remember that *persona* is feminine, so even if you've got boys in your group you say *'tutte le persone'*. You use the feminine *'persona'*, feminine, *'persone',* plural.

John: Are we turning it in one paper?

Nick: Yeah [...]

Francesca: [goes near John] Yes, you must have a report and a statistic for the whole group. [Goes near Nck] And [...] That's right, put them in a sentence, because then you gonna read it. What you gonna read *alle otto e mezzo* (**at half past eight**)?

Nick: *... Nel nostro gruppo si fa colazione alle otto e mezzo* (**…In our group we have breakfast at half past eight**).

Francesca: Mh, mh

Nick: In media?

Francesca: I would say *verso* (**at around**).

Nick: *Verso, verso alle otto e mezzo…*

Francesca: [Correcting Nick] *Verso le otto e mezzo* (**At around half past eight**).

Kelly: *Si … si mangia…* (**One… one eats…**)

Francesca: No, if you use the term *'le persone'* you've got the subject, you don't need the
             si form. *Si* when you don't have the subject [Katherine shakes her head]
             [Teacher points to the OHP projection] The first *'Nel nostro gruppo si fa
             colazione'* is third singular and *si* acts as subject. If you put *tutte le persone si
             fa* is wrong , 'cause it's like you have two subjects.

Kelly: [...]

Francesca: [Nods to her].

Nick: *Sabato e domenica, ehm, di solito* (**On Saturdays and Sundays, ehm,
             usually**) [...] [To the teacher] I don't get up until ...

Francesca: No, we are talking about eating habits, we don't care when you get up!

Nick: No, ... If I'm not awake, I can't eat, that's why I ...

Francesca: So, you just miss the breakfast: *Non faccio colazione.*(**I don't have
             breakfast**).

Nick: [Dictating to Esther] *Non faccio ... Una... un pesona nel nostro gruppo* (**I
             don't have… A… a person in our group**) …

Francesca: [to Tom] <u>*Una persona*</u>? [Tom hesitates and looks back at the teacher]
             What did you say? I didn't get it.

Nick: *Un persona.*

Francesca: *Una persona*, even if you are a boy, because persona keeps the gender. I would
             say *non fa mai colazione.*

Nick: No, but then on Sunday and Saturday [...] except

Francesca: *…non fa mai colazione* (**…never has breakfast**)*,* comma, *la fa solo nel
             weekend, nel fine settimana* (**he/she only ha sit at the weekend**).

Nick: *Durante la…* (**During the…**)

Francesca:	*Durante la settimana non fai colazione, nel fine settimana sì* (**In the week you don't have breakfast, at the weekend you do**).
Kelly:	At times…?
Francesca:	*Qualche volta*
Nick:	*Una persona nel nostro gruppo non fai colazione durante la settimana ... La settimana* (**One person in our group doesn't have breakfast in the week … The week**).
Dolores:	*Solamente il fine settimana* (**Just at the weekend**)?
Nick:	It's very difficult. Spanish and Italian are so similar [...]
Francesca:	[To the 3-manned group] It's not an expression we use, *mangiare la colazione.* We say *mangiare a colazione* or *fare coalazione.*
Kelly:	OK
Nick:	What types of things do we eat for breakfast? *Cereali* [sere'ali]
Francesca:	*Cereali* [tɕere'ali] (**Cereals**).
Dolores:	*Pane tostato.*
Nick:	*Pane tostato... uva* (**Toast… grapes**). Drinks: *tè, caffè* (**tea, coffee**).
Kelly:	[To the teacher] *Quando si...* (**When one…**)
Francesca:	*...si fa colazione* (**…one has breakfast**) …
Nick:	*Pranzo* (**Lunch**) ... What time do we eat *pranzo*? *In media*, in average, *le persone del nostro gruppo mangiano cereali, pane tostato ...*
Francesca:	You've got three minutes!
Nick:	Right, ... *Pranzo*, er... *Mezzogiorno* (**Midday**), er... [To the teacher] *Mangiamo al pranzo*? *No, a pranzo*!
Francesca:	*Bravo, bravo* (**Good, good**)! Few ideas, but very clear!
Nick:	*Mangiamo a pranzo verso* [...] *mezzogiorno* (**We eat for lunch at around […] midday**).
Esther:	*Mezzogiorno*?

Nick:	*A mezzogiorno...* [Asks Francesca] *Verso a mezzogiorno*?
Francesca:	*Verso mezzogiorno.*
Nick:	OK, what type of things we eat?
John:	Er... *spaghetti, pollo, spaghetti, pizza, carne, pasta...*
Esther:	*Pesce*
Nick:	*Pesce, gelato* [...] *Per esemplo hoy ... John e yo...*
Francesca:	Nick, you're speaking Spanish now! For example *hoy*
Nick:	For examp ...
Francesca:	*Per esempio, oggi...* (**For example, today…**)
Nick:	Per esempio oggi, *yo...*
Francesca:	*Io* ['io]!
Nick:	Ah, *io.*
John:	*Noi non mangiamo merenda.*(**We don't have a snack**)
Francesca:	[Stressing the different verb] *facciamo merenda.*
John:	Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. *Facciamo merenda*. Yeah, *Non facciamo.*
Dolores:	*Le persone del nostro gruppo non fac... fanno ...*
Nick:	*Non facc ... facciano ...*
Francesca:	*Non fanno...*
Nick:	*Non fanno*. Oh, it's irregular.
Francesca:	*Oh, Madonna mia* (**Oh my goodness**)! *Non fanno* (**They don't do**)[goes round the table, to the OHP]. Another way to say *in media*, especially if we are talking about *normally in this group*, we can say *in genere* (**generally**). [She writes *in genere* on the transparency]. So, we can say: *in genere nel nostro gruppo tre fanno colazione... si fa colazione, ma uno non la fa ... ma una persona non la fa* (**generally, in our group three have breakfast… we have breakfast, but one person doesn't**)[...] and the pronouns.
Nick:	*Non fanno la merenda* (**They don't have a snack**).

Dolores: I think it's *merenda* without *la*

Nick: *la* ... Non fanno merenda.

Dolores: [To Francesca] It's *fanno merenda* or *fanno la merenda*?

Francesca: *Fanno merenda.*
[Addressing the whole class] OK, now I'm afraid that what is done is done. Can you, please, start reading? So, [addressing the 4-manned group] this group. Dolores will you start?

Dolores: *Nel nostro gruppo si fa colazione verso le otto e mezza* (**In our group we have breakfast around eight thirty**)

Francesca: Then, Esther!

Esther: What... sorry?

Francesca: Second thing about your group...

Esther: *Ehm ... In media mangiamo cereali, pane tostato, uva, tè e caffè* (**In average we have cereals, toast, grapes, tea and coffee**).

Francesca: Mh, mh... Nick!

Nick: We said: *c'è una persona che non fai...* (**there's one person who don't have**)…

Francesca: *...che non fa* (**…who doesn't have**)…

Nick: *...che non fa colazione durante la settimana* (**…who doesn't have breakfast in the week**).

Francesca: Mh, mh... John!

John: *Due persone no fanno merenda* (**Two people don't have snacks**).

Francesca: *...<u>non</u> fanno merenda*.

John: *..non fanno merenda*

Francesca: And that's all you get? Yes!

Nick: No, we've got the foods we eat: *pollo* [he pronounces it the Spanish way]. *Mangiamo...*(**we eat…**)

Francesca: What do you eat?

Nick:	*Pollo* [he pronounces it the Italian way, now}
Francesca:	Ah! John, eh!?
Nick:	*...gli spaget...gli spaghetti...*
Francesca:	*Gli spaghetti.*
Nick:	*...pizza, pesce ...*
Francesca:	[...] *pollo*, because Esther eats daily [Esther smiles and nods] [Turns to the other group] What about you reading eaters? Vicky, do you wanna start?
Vera	OK. *Nel nostro gruppo tutti le persone mangiano* (**In our group everybody eats**) [...]
Francesca:	[Corrects the ending] *Tutt<u>e</u> le persone.* OK, Mia!
Mia:	*Quando si fa la colazione si prende i cereali e latte.* (**When we have breakfast, we eat cereals and milk**).
Francesca:	[Corrects the verb form] Ehm ... I would say *si prendono i cereali e latte*, but it's fine ... And Kelly!
Kelly:	*Di solito si mangiano molti tramezzini* (**We usually have many sandwiches**).
Francesca:	OK, good. [She hands the dictionary back to Tom] Now, you can have this back. And ... I will see some of you next week, some of you tomorrow. And if you wanna come up in the afternoon for the marks I wanna be in the office.

Jean's written language and grammar class at Seaview University

Jean: Right. So next task to carry on from yesterday was to catch straight the subjunctive. So I started talking about the subjunctive yesterday and … Forgive me if I've got to refer to French, Spanish, etcetera, but it's gonna help people who are already linguists, […]. So, yesterday I mentioned that the subjunctive isn't a tense as such and what we tend to call it, in grammatical terms, is a mood. OK. So, that, in a sense, tells us what we're trying to do. We're trying to express with the subjunctive an idea, a hypothesis, a feeling… something, which is unclear and uncertain. So, I can say: *"Megumi è giapponese"* (**"Megumi is Japanese"**). I made you a statement: *"E' giapponese"*. I haven't met her and someone has been talking about, and I say: *"*Megumi*? Credo che sia giapponese!"* (**"Megumi? I believe she is Japanese"**). I'm giving you my opinion, I'm not making a statement, I'm just giving my… She might be – *credo che sia* – I think she is… So, in Italian there we'd use the subjunctive. We are not making a statement, we're throwing out our own idea, a hypothesis, etcetera. So, as I said yesterday, if you've done French you'll know it from things like, *il faut que je fasse, il faut que j'aille*. There are all those set phrases in French where you use it. Italian uses it a lot more… it does it a lot more. The good news is it uses it less than […] used […] less as much. So, to try and mitigate the horror of having to do the subjunctive, we use it a lot in Italian, but we use it less as much. In German, […] uses it too. I know that German has it as well. So, the handout that you've got, it might look like a daunting two-sided sheet of paper, but to be perfectly frank it is everything you have ever wanted to know about the subjunctive and more. So, it's everything you wanted to know and ways to avoid it, etc.. So, maybe, what we can do is starting to look at it together. You ask me questions if there's anything you want to know, if anybody wants a bit of clarifying and I'll try and do that; but these are the main points. I mean, they're not in any particular order of importance, but side 1 is a little bit more compulsory than side 2, put it that way. So, we had a look at imperatives two, three weeks ago, we were working at imperatives, when you're giving somebody an order, you're making a very strong statement telling them… ehm… to do something. In Italian we use the subjunctive as a polite imperative as well. So, something like [she reads the examples from the handout]: *"Porti la valigia!"* – "Take this suitcase!" – *"Venda questa macchina!"* – "Sell this car!"; then, *"Senta!"* – "Listen!" – *"Finisca questo lavoro!"* – "Finish this work!" –*"Stia zitto!"* – "Shut up!": it's a polite imperative, so [class laugh] *"Stia zitto!"* – "Please, be quiet!" –, *"Viva la regina!"* – "Long live the queen!"; and everybody knows the tune, but did they know it was a subjunctive? *"Nessun dorma!"* Well, why is it a subjunctive? Why is *nessun dorma* a subjunctive? What does the title of the song actually mean? I mean we all remember the World Cup…

Tim: None shall sleep

Jean: Let nobody sleep! Yes, nobody shall sleep. So, what in fact he's saying, the person who's singing it is: "You lot, you all stay awake, let nobody sleep until

we resolve this mystery!" But, yesterday, I mentioned that quite often you are going to have the subjunctive introduced by the word *che*, which signifies *that*. If anybody did Latin, the good thing is it's like *ut* and subjunctive. *Che* is the same thing as *ut*. So, what would be expressing uncertainty, as the handout says, opinion, unlikelihood… For example [she reads more example sentences from the handout], "*Credo che raccontino la verità*", "I think they are telling the truth". You're not making a statement, you're not saying they are telling the truth, you're saying: "<u>I think</u> (…) they're telling the truth". Uncertainty: "*E' possible che Mario decida di restare*", "It's possible that Mario will decide – it's a future, in English – to stay". Unlikelihood: "*Non è molto probabile che io ti veda domani*", "I probably won't see you tomorrow". So, this is 'uncertainty', 'opinion', 'unlikelihood'. Again, think of them as not being statements of fact. And states of mind, that I mentioned yesterday, that will use the subjunctive too. In form of states of mind, for example, "*Spero che Giovanna non mi parli*", "I hope Giovanna doesn't speak to me"; "*Pensavo che Paolo mi amasse*", "I thought Paul loved me". Feeling: "*Sono contento che tu ci accompagni*", "I'm pleased you are coming with us"; "*Mi spiace che non ci possano accompagnare*", "I'm sorry they can't come with us"; "*Voglio che lui mi guardi*", "I want him to look at me"; "*Non vuole che ne parlino con nessuno*"… What does that mean? Let's have a bit of audience participation, making some lively camera work for Gianni: "*Non vuole che ne parlino con nessuno*"…

Anna:	He doesn't want that nobody speaks with anybody, or that anybody with…erm… nobody speaks with each other
Jean:	What does *ne* stand for in the sentence?
Anna:	It.
Tim:	Of it.
Jean:	Right. OK. Can you get into the sentence?
Anna:	I do not want…
Tim:	…to speak about it with anybody.
Laura:	It's not 'I'!
Jean:	Right
Anna:	… that nobody speaks about it with anybody
Jean:	It's *non vuole*… Tim.
Tim:	He doesn't want.
Jean:	He doesn't want. Right. He doesn't want… what?

Tim:	…that…they…
Jean:	…they…
Tim:	…they speak about it to anybody.
Jean:	Well done! So the sentence actually means 'he doesn't want them to speak about it with anyone.' It's a difficult one, isn't it? OK, well done! *Preferisci che io arrivi più presto?*
Anna:	Do you prefer that I arrive earlier?
Jean:	Would you prefer me to arrive – the English would say - would you prefer me to arrive earlier? Yes, in fact, Anna said it exactly as it's constructed: 'Would you prefer that I arrive earlier?', absolutely! That is what the Italian construction is, isn't it? *Aspetto che arrivino gli ospiti…* How about that?
Tim:	I expect that they… that the guests arrive
Jean:	What is *aspettare*?
Tim:	Well, I wait or I expect.
Jean:	Yes, …
Tim:	So, I wait …
Jean:	I'm waiting for the guests to arrive. OK. Point 4. I mean, I don't want to bombard you with too much information… Too much, too much information, but let's have a look at clauses usually introduced by *che*, which follow impersonal verb form, where these express opinion, uncertainty, states of mind, etcetera, or not so, some of them are going to be multiples of each other: *E' possibile o impossibile, probabile, necessario, essenziale, naturale, normale, giusto, meglio, un peccato… che lui decida di aiutarci.* (**It is possible or impossible, likely, necessary, essential, natural, normal, right, better, a pity… that he decides to help us**). So, are we OK there? This is a sort of opinions, […] that we were going along the wrong ground, repeating what I said before. *Sembrava che Giovanno* – this is a misprint – *fosse pronto*. What does that mean, *Sembrava che Giovanni fosse pronto*?
Tim:	It seemed that Giovanni… *Fosse*... is the… Is that *essere* (**to be**)?
Jean:	Yes!
Tim:	…Would, we would say, would be early.

Jean: It seemed…

Tim: It seemed that he would be early, would be…

Jean: Well, we've got, we've got a word wrong, here, Tony. "It seemed that Giovanni was…" What's *pronto*, is it 'early'?

Tim: … Early, yes.

Jean: Ready?

Tim: Ready, yes.

Jean: Yes, "It seemed that Giovanni was ready".
            Non è certo che Carlo venga stasera. How about that?

Sarah: I'm not sure that Carlo […]

Tim: … this evening.

Jean: Right. *Non è certo…* Is it […]

Sarah: […]

Jean: OK. It's not clear or it's not certain that Carlo is coming tonight.
            Il fatto che mio figlio si comporti male, mi dà fastidio …

Tim: The fact that my son behaves badly… gives me a headache? [He laughs]

Laura: [whispers] […]

Jean: Laura, louder

Laura: …annoys me.

Jean: Annoys me. *Dare fastidio*, yeah, 'to annoy'… Spoken by a true father of sons there too [class laugh]

Tim: [laughing] I had lots of practice too!

Jean: Indeed, right. So while we're on the subject of *che's* , point 5, we've got clauses usually introduced by *che*, command, and request, suggestion. *Il generale ordinò che i soldati si ritirassero;* request:
            La polizia chiede che i passeggeri rimangano nei loro veicoli; suggestion: *Propongo che ognuno paghi per sé.*
            So, these are slightly more […] formal sentences, command, request, or suggestion. So, you get these in more situations. The first one, command: *Il generale ordinò che i soldati si ritirassero.* Have you got any ideas there?

Tim:	The general orders the soldiers to retreat.
Jean:	OK. What tense is *ordinò*?
Anna & Tim:	It's the future.
Jean:	Is it?
Anna:	No!
Tim:	Oh, it's the past… *passato remoto*
Jean:	*Passato remoto* – Excellent, yes, *passato remoto*. *Il generale ordinò che i soldati si ritirassero*. And look…
Tim:	Sorry, what tense is that?
Jean:	Auh, but that's… you've just pre-empted the question. What tense is *si ritirassero*? What tense is it? "The general ordered that the soldiers retreat"
Tim:	Should be *presente*
Jean:	Right. What tense is it? You know it's subjunctive. You know **that I know it**, don't you? It's going to be a bit of a question of guess-working. This is the imperfect subjunctive. So, what we are going to look at is present subjunctive, the imperfect subjunctive, eventually the perfect too. What about *La polizia chiede che i passeggeri rimangano nei loro veicoli*?
Tim:	The police ask the passengers to remain in their vehicles.
Jean:	Very good, yeah! And, *Propongo che ognuno paghi per sé*… Any offers from the floor? … What's…
Tim:	I propose that everyone pays for themselves
Jean:	Yeah. Tony?
Tim:	I'm not sure that *propongo* is 'propose'…
Jean:	Yeah…
Tim:	…or 'they propose' that everyone pays…
Jean:	*Propongo*, I propose.
Tim:	I propose.

Jean: Right. Could we put it in more colloquial English…

Anna: Everybody…

Laura: Suggest…

Jean: Suggest! Why not? I suggest everybody pays for themselves, Yeah?
           Can we have a look at page three two one? [The students take out their books
           and open it on the required page. This takes some seconds] OK. I mean, quite
           often in Italian schools, when kids are learning their subjunctive, when they're
           learning to recite it , they use the personal pronouns and *che: che io…, che tu*
           … Because if you look at the way they're conjugated you'll see that the first
           two persons and sometimes the first three persons have got the same ending.
           So, this is one of those cases – having spent the entire year so far, telling you
           no to use personal pronouns – this is the chase where you do use the personal
           pronoun to avoid confusion. So we've got *paghi, paghi, paghi* (**pay, pay,
           pay**)for the first three persons of the *–are* conjugation. So, to make it clear we
           would use the personal pronoun, to make it clear who it is. I mean, usually
           form the context of what's going on you know who it is, when it 's in a
           conversation or in a piece of writing you'll know, but in order… for clarity
           sake, I would say put it in. So, *parlare* (**to speak**), this is our model *–are* verb[2]:
           Parli
           Parli
           Parli
           The nice thing about the first person plural is that it's the same as the
           indicative. By pure chance it's the same:
           Parliamo
           Parliate,
           the voi form (**the *plural you* form**), and
           Parlino
           for the *loro* (**they**). OK, that's for your -*are*'s
           Ripetere is the *–ere* form:
           Ripeta
           Ripeta
           Ripeta
           Ripetiamo
           Ripetiate
           Ripetano
           Va bene? (**All right?**) 'Dormire': -*ire*'s
           Dorma
           Dorma
           Dorma
           Dormiamo
           Dormiate
           Dormano

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[2] Italian verbs are divided into three main conjugations, according to the infinitive endings: The first conjugation
ends in –are, the second in –ere and the third in –ire.

So, the funny thing is that –*are*'s go *i* and the –*ere*'s and –*ire*'s go *a*. So, in a sense, what you're doing is swapping around – maybe this is an 'aide-memoir' that you don't […], the other way round. OK. Here is your –*isco* verb[3]:

Capisca
Capisca
Capisca
Capiamo
Capiate
Capiscano

Va bene? (**All right?**) So, we've got some examples:

Vuole che parliate piano, 'She wants you to speak slowly'. I mean you might want to put in the personal pronoun here to signify *lei*: *Lei vuole che parliate piano*.

E' necessario che io lo ripeta, 'It is necessary that I repeat it' or 'It is necessary for me to repeat it'.

When I think of … when you put this into English, you want to put it into the English you would use. So, we are not sticking strictly to the grammatical structure. We are going to put it into a language that we would commonly use.

Pensano che tu dorma, 'They think you are sleeping'.

Sei sicuro che capiscano?, 'Are you sure they'll understand?'

Tim: In the first one, where we've got *parliate*, pagina…[…], how do you come to 'she'?

Jean: You don't, Tim, you don't. I mean, they are saying 'she'…ehm… So, you know, if you wanted to make it clear, you'd put the personal pronoun.

Tim: *Lei*, or *lui*. (**She or he**).

Jean: Yeah, either one would do… You go with the context presumably, but obviously out of context, you know…

Anna: Er… It would be *che parli piano:* 'she wants you to speak'

Jean: So, … if she's speaking to who? To a singular, to you-singular?

Anna: Yes!

Jean: Sure!

Anna: But the translation would be the same…

Jean: It would be the same in English, absolutely, yeah! Yeah, that's right!

Tim: But, *parliate* really refers to the plural

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[3] This is not a grammatical category. However, there is a group of regular verbs in the third conjugation which display a variation in the declension. Grammar books for foreign students treat them separately to facilitate memorising.

Laura: That's like normal!

Jean: Yeah, Anna's point is that you in English is the same word in the singular and in the plural… Ehm… From a foreinger's point of view it's not vey clear. You know, we've got two or we've got four, in Italian. You and you, I mean… unless you go up north that divine village in Cumbria where they still use 'thee' and 'thou', that's much more clear, you know, old-fashioned English, fusing dialects, but, yes, it's not clear in English, is it?
E' meglio che ripetano, nessuno ha capito, 'It's better that they repeat, no one has understood'.
E' sicuro che lei ne parli, prima o poi, 'It's sure she'll talk about it, sooner or later'.
You see? Let me put the *lei* in, for clarity sake, 'she', we put the personal pronoun in.
Dubita che Lia resti a casa, 'He doubts that Lia will remain at home'.

Anna: Is that a female or a male?

Jean: *Lia*? Female. Generally, nine out of ten names ending in –*a*. Rather few exceptions, like *Andrea, Luca*… There are one or two ending in –*a* which…erm… are masculine.
Credo che lavori in centro, 'I think he works downtown, or in town, or in the centre'
Voglio che tu torni prima di mezzanotte, 'I want you to return before midnight'.
' *E' incredibile che tu preferisca la birra al vino*', 'It's incredible you prefer beer to wine'. … Is it?

            Tim: Yes.
Jean: Is it?

Laura: No.

Jean: No?! Good stuff, beer…
Avere and *essere* (**To have and to be**)[4]. We need to know these because we're gonna use compounds eventually, aren't we?
Abbia
Abbia
Abbia
Abbiamo
Abbiate
Abbiano

Sia
Sia

---
[4] These verbs are also used as auxiliary verbs for the formation of compound tenses.

Sia
Siamo
Siate
Siano
They are vey simple. You've just got to learn them, obviously.
Non crede che io abbia i gioielli. 'He doesn't believe I've got the jewels'.
Penso che lei sia malata. 'I think she's ill'.
Non voglio che tu abbia paura. 'I don't want you to be afraid'.
Dubito che siano degli agricoltori. 'I doubt they're farmers'.
Er… I always want to put these in context: where did you get 'I doubt they are farmers'? What was the situation that gave rise to that sentence, 'I doubt they are farmers'?

Tim: They are probably generated by a computer.

Jean: Yes, feed another one with a few nouns, a few verbs, a few objects… yes.

Anna: Does this now mean that you doubt they are farmers, so you think they are something else?

Jean: Yeah, yeah. I think they are probably cat burglars or something pretending to be farmers! [Jean formulates her next sentence as if it was one of the examples from the textbook]. *Penso che abbiate ragione,* 'I think you are right'. So, these things like *penso che…*, *credo che…*, they 're used as standards. Think of it: *credo che sia*; *penso che sia…* These are used standard forms, you've just got to have those on the tip of your tongue.

Tim: [Talking to Anna] *Penso che tu abbia ragione!*(**I think you're right!**)

Anna: [Laughing] *Sì, sì, sì…* (**Yes, yes, yes…**)

Jean: No, Tony, you must learn that, you've got to say to the wife, I'm sure you're right, I'm sure you're right, I'm sure you're right, you're definitely right, don't get me wrong, you're right!

Tony: *Penso che tu abbia ragione!*

Jean: Absolutely!

Tim: Why is the […]?

Jean: It's wise, because you're using subjunctive terms you keep your fingers crossed. So, you're not making a statement, OK? It's like the old I'll keep my fingers crossed, but I think you're right.
Well, that's our sort of introduction to the subjunctive. I don't […] you with too much information. We'll do a bit more on Thursday. But that's to start thinking about it, certainly. Have a look at the verb forms in the book and, you

know, obviously you'll spend the entire Easter holiday learning them, yeah. *No?*

Tim: Not the entire…

Jean: Not the entire Easter holiday? Now, let's have a look at the anthology, a little bit of light relief. Let's do some reading, looking at the anthology. Does anybody need a copy? Has everybody got their copy with them? Yes? No? OK? Just let me have your bags. I know you've got a secret collection at home. You're selling them off, these have become collector's items. …Has anybody read a passage that they particularly enjoyed and they want to share that enjoyment with us?

Anna: There's…

Tim: What about *"La Donna in Italia"*?

Anna: There's a very nice poem…

Jean: Ah, Anna… has found a poem. *Pagina…?* (**Page…?**)

Anna: *Ventidue*? (**Twenty-two?**)

Jean: *Ventidue. Guardiamo un po' pagina ventidue, allora… Ah,… Ventuno, ventidue!* (**Twenty-two. Let's have a look at page twenty-two, then…Ah,… Twenty-one, twenty-two!**) Which one? *Quale? Anna, quale poesia ti piace?*(**Which one? Anna, which poem do you like?**)

Anna: Ehrm…*Pudore*? (**Modesty**)?

Jean: Would you read it for us?

Anna: OK.
Se qualcuna delle mie parole
ti piace
e tu me lo dici
sia pur solo con gli occhi
io mi spalanco
in un riso beato –
ma tremo
come una mamma piccola giovane
che perfino arrossi… arrossisc… arrosische

Jean: *Arrossisce*

Anna: *…arrossisce*
se un passante le dice
che il suo bambino è bello.

(If you like/ any of my words/ and you tell me so/ even if just with a glance/ I throw myself open/ in a blissful laugh – / but tremble like a little, young mum/ who even blushes/ if a passer-by tells her/ her child is beautiful)

Jean: OK

Tim: What's *pudore*?

Jean: What's *pudore*? *Pudore*… Who's got a dictionary? We won't find it in a little one, that's it! It's quite a special, or specialised word, *pudore*. [To Anna, referring to another poem, on the same page of the anthology] Did you read *Ed è subito sera*, Angelica, by Quasimodo?

Tim: 'Modesty'.

Jean: Yeah, 'modesty'… Well, right, so, what about the meaning of the poem? *Se qualcuna delle mie parole/ ti piace/ e tu me lo dici/ sia pur solo con gli occhi/ io mi spalanco/ in un riso beato-/ ma tremo/ come una mamma piccola giovane/ che perfino arrossisce/ se un passante le dice/ che il suo bambino è bello.* Why did you like it, Anna?

Anna: Ehrm… Because, I think, the time when it was written… It's quite, yeah, nearly a century ago…

Jean: Yeah… It's true, actually, it's incredible!

Anna: …and it's still – how to say? – I can't say present, but…

Jean: It's still relevant today.

Anna: It's still relevant.

Jean: Shall we have a look at the vocabulary? There's somewhat one or two nice words in there. I mean, I think we're all OK with the first couple of lines, are we?
         Qualcuna delle mie parole. So, everybody OK with the fact that it's *qualcuna*?

Anna: *Parola.*

Jean: It's *parola.*

Tim: [Gives a literal translation] 'If there is anyone of my words you like'.

Jean: Right. *E tu me lo dici, sia pur solo con gli occhi'. What's that <u>sia</u> pur solo*?

Tim: That's subjunctive

Jean:	[Approving] Mh. So, let's have a look at this bit, *e tu me lo dici*, first. 'If any of my words please you …
Anna:	[attempts a translation] 'and tell them to me' …
Tim:	'and you tell me'…
Jean:	Go on, it's *sia pur solo con gli occhi*…
Tim:	'with the eyes… Only with the eyes…'
Jean:	Good, … only. Could we say only with a glance or you tell me with your eyes… OK? … *Spalanco*. Now, that's a word you'll have to remember: it's *spalancare*. Do you know what *spalancare'* is? Laura, have you heard of *spalancare*?
Laura:	No.
Jean:	No? It's what you do to windows and to doors on really hot days… to throw them open. *Spalancare le finestre, spalancare la porta* (**to throw the windows open, to throw the door open**). So, the person who's narrating, who's saying this poem says: 'If you like any one of my words, and you tell me, even just with a glance, *io mi spalanco in un riso beato*' …Do you know that sometime we've had that phrase *beata te!*, *Beato lui!*… It came up in one of the videos that we watched. It means 'lucky you'. *Beato*. Literally it means 'blessed'.
Anna:	[...] the idyllic smile?
Jean:	It is, OK.
Tim:	[cannot get what Anna (whose mother tongue is not English) means] The idyllic smile?
Anna:	Yeah.
Jean:	OK… What about *io mi spalanco*, then? I've given you literally just 'throw open'
Anna:	Ehm,… I'll be absolutely pleased… I'll say… er… will welcome you…
Jean:	Oh keep going, you're doing well… Go on give her a hand…
Tim:	[whispering] I didn't hear what she said
Jean:	You weren't paying attention to me…
Tim:	No, I've just come into the class? I throw open myself, is it? *Io mi spalanco* … Does that mean 'I open up myself' or is it referring to the smile?

Jean:	Is it?
Tim:	A beautiful smile or…
Jean:	It is. It's referring to the smile. I think you ought to be a bit, sort of loose here. It is poetry, after all. You don't want to stick exactly… So, Laura, what are you thinking?
Laura:	Ehm… Of course it's got the reflexive pronoun, so it's I'm opening, opening myself to you, with this smile, with this blessed smile, because… to open…
Jean:	Yes, so […], yes…
Tim:	But I tremble […]
Jean:	So you're avoiding… you can go to trembling [class laugh]. You're avoiding bursting into a big smile… Keep on with the rest, it helps us understand what […] before… Right! So we've got a sort of interpretation with that. I mean, poetry… typical thing to translate…something like 'I burst into a blessed smile, I burst into a joyous smile', something like that. *Ma tremo*, 'but I tremble': in what fashion?
Tim:	Well, like a little, young mother.
Jean:	Yes…
Tim:	[laughs] Eh, eh! After that my Italian fails me!
Jean:	All right, Tim did the easy bit. Come on girls, let's deal with that… *Arrossisce … Rosso* is… what?
Tim:	Red.
Jean:	Yeah. What's *arrossire*?
Laura:	To blush!
Jean:	To blush, very good, yes! So, 'I tremble like a little, young mother, who'… Didn't we have that yesterday? Who's got, who's got a good memory? *Perfino* came up yesterday.
Tim:	Well, I wasn't here.
Jean:	Well that's an excuse, that's excuse, yes. Does anyone remember *perfino*? We had the synonym *persino*; we had these two parallel words *perfino/persino*. It means 'even', we can say 'who actually blushes if…'

Laura:	…a passer-by
Jean:	Yes…
Laura:	… tells her that her baby is beautiful
Jean:	Yeah. I don't see why we should be so sort of modest about it. I think myself as the most beautiful thing that's ever walked the earth and I'm not ashamed to say. Yeah! They're absolutely fantatstic…they're so beautiful. That's lovely. And the one underneath. That's one of my very famous, so I'm being a bit self-indulgent here. This is one of them, it's almost a cliché so well known in Italian: [She reads] *Ognuno sta solo sul cuor della terra* *trafitto da un raggio di sole:* *ed è subito sera.* **(Everyone's lonely on this earth,** **stabbed through by a ray of sun:** **and suddenly the night's here**.) It's almost become a cliché in Italian. It's a very beautiful three-line little gem of a poem.
Tim:	Passer-by?
Jean:	Yeah, passer-by …Sorry. OK.
Anna:	Passer-by?
Tim:	Yeah, someone who walks by…
Anna:	The name of this person is a 'passer-by'? [She pulls an incredulous face and shakes her head]
Tim:	Yes. It's called a passer-by, because they pass by you. It's very logical, just like German.
Jean:	Just like German, yeah, just not quite as long a word… Can we have a look at *Ed è subito sera*? Because, given that we have thrown ourselves into the deep end not even going to have a look at prose, doing poetry, I mean, let's really go for it. Let's have a look at *Quasimodo*. Take a couple of seconds and just read the poem, and we'll discuss its meaning… Right. *Ognuno sta solo sul cuor della terra/ trafitto da un raggio di sole:/ ed è subito sera* It's a sort of great existentialist idea here…
Tim:	*Raggio di sole* is 'a ray of sun'
Jean:	It is, yeah, yeah… And *ognuno*…

Laura: Everyone?

Jean: Everyone, each one of us, yeah. So, each one of us is… what?

Laura: Alone.

Jean: Yeah

Laura: Literally, it says on the heart of the earth…

Jean: Literally it says on the heart of the earth, yeah. So, literally 'Everyone of us is
            alone…', could we say 'on this earth'? [Laura nods]. 'Everyone of us is alone
            on this earth'. *Trafitto*, right. What part of the verb is *trafitto*?

Tim: It's the past participle

Jean: Past participle. What could the infinitive be?

Tim: Trafi…ehm…

Anna: Trafire?

Jean: I'm being a bit unfair: it's irregular. OK, but… Right. Could you actually work
            it out from the context, what it might mean? … It's difficult, I agree, but have
            you got any ideas?

Laura: Something by a ray of sun…

Jean: 'We are all standing alone on this earth and we are something by a ray of
            sunshine…'

Tim: We are illuminated by a ray of sunshine, or we are touched, or we are…

Jean: Touched! Go on…

Laura: Warmed

Jean: Warmed, touched…

Anna: Struck

Jean: Struck?

Tim: … by a ray of light

Jean: She [meaning Sarah said 'struck'…

Tim: No it was her [he means Anna]

Jean: Anna said struck, yeah. Warmed, touched, struck. Yeah it's that sort of thing… *trafitto* … literally it is 'speared by', right through us.

Anna: Like a spotlight?

Jean: But it comes out the other end. Right through us [class laugh]

Tim: Well, that doesn't sound very nice, but 'we are penetrated'… [class laugh] Poets wouldn't use that word…

Jean: No, yeah, no, if you were translating this, you probably wouldn't want to use 'penetrated', right.

Anna: Ultraviolet!

Tim: Let's forget science!

Jean: Let's not go down the scientific road… You can see the difficulty now, translating, can't you? I mean, it's not that prose is not difficult to translate, think of problems that… I don't think that it's such a good idea to translate poetry. Am I being really old fashioned?

Tim: I mean, you can , but you have to understand what the poet is trying to say, and then you've got to use the appropriate…

Laura: Yeah, I think…

Jean: Just think it's easier…

Tim: But it's the sound, isn't it? That is important with poetry…

Laura: […] [Although what Laura says is inaudible, the gist of it is that whenever she reads a poem in translation, when she compares it with the original, then, she realises the two are far apart]

Anna: I just know that if you know something behind… about the life of the poet, sometimes the first interpretation, and then you read about it and you find out what he has done and then you sometimes have got a totally different view, interpretation.

Jean: Yes, that too, yes! I mean, how… Megumi, how do you translate haiku? And you could do it, could you? I mean it's so difficult, because it's so specific to the culture…

Megumi: Yeah […] [Megumi whispers, however she confirms what Jean has just said and adds that even if she tried to translate haiku, she could not come up with anything close to the original, in English].

Jean: I say, proof: that's the proof. So, here we are: 'We are all alone…', I'm almost ashamed we're in it on our own, kids. However, we've got this ray of sun that shines through us, and then what happens?

Tim: It's immediately evening

Jean: It is. Oh dear! And it's true, those years… It shines through us a ray of sunshine… they don't half go fast. Next thing you know… age, in fact. How about a bit of prose, then? Is there anything that anyone wants to pick…? Antonio did you have one you liked?

Tim: This one about… *la donna*…(**the woman…**)

Jean: Where is that? *Che pagina?* (**What page?**)

Tim: *La donna in Italia* (**The woman in Italy**), that's on page six. As it's me […] is a woman

Anna: I liked the story on page nine, actually.

Tim: [Jokingly disappointed] Oh, we're really getting on with it today, aren't we?

Jean: […] Go on. OK, let's have it. There's one born every minute. You've got me. It's not April the first, is it? No.

Anna: […]

Jean: True… Right, so are we going to go for the story on page 9, or shall we have a look at this *La donna in Italia*? It's a long one, so we'll need to sort of belt through it. *Vogliamo cominciare a leggere? Cominciamo a leggere una o due frasi*…I mean…[to Tim] *Vuoi cominciare?*(**Shall we start reading? Let's start reading one or two sentences each… I mean … [to Tim] Would you like to start?**)

Tim: *Comincio io?*(**Shall I start**)

Jean: *Sì, grazie.* (**Yes, please.**)

Tim: [Reads] *Da sempre abbiamo sentito parlare delle qualità della donna italiana: ottima moglie, ottima madre, ben felice della sua condizione nella vita di ogni giorno. Gelosa. Si è voluto, si è voluto che la donna fosse specialmente "moglie e madre".*

Anna: [Reads on] *L'idea vera della donna non era quella della figura quasi maschile, che vuole diventare "qualcuno" anche in campi che non sembravano proprio femminili, nella s…scienza, nell'arte, negli affari. La donna era tale in quanto poteva rispondere: "Io sono la moglie di…", "Io sono la madre di…".*

Laura: [Reads on] *Oggi se una donna guarda al valore della sua vita a trenta anni, si accorge che non è molto. Non si deve dimenticare che in passato una grande famiglia impegnava la donna in un lavoro tale da darle il senso della propria utile presenza: si facevano I vestiti in casa per tutti, si preparava una buona cucina per molte persone e tutte le donne della famiglia curavano "il buon governo" della casa che dava sempre i suoi frutti. La donna prendeva parte ai lavori dell'agricoltura e aiutava spesso negli altri lavori*

Sarah: [Reads on] *Era un modo per dimostrare il potere proprio di creare qualcosa. Oggi la donna ha intorno il vuoto, un vuoto che spesso la donna chiam mancanza d'amore. E non è contenta.*

Megumi: [Reads on] *Una inchiesta di qualche mese fa, infatti, ha abbastanza chiaramente detto che la donna italiana non è felice, è profondamente sola, è profondamente delusa.*

Tim: *Eppure, - dicono gli uomini – molte di queste donne dovrebbero essere serene e felici; hanno case con tutte le macchine che rendono la vita più comoda, hanno un marito che amano e che le ama, i figli sono pieni di salute, di intelligenza, di vita.*

Anna: *La verità è un'altra. La donna di casa è troppo occupata. Tutto ciò che un tempo poteva essere sufficiente per completarla e riempirne la vita, oggi non basta più. Casa, figli, marito non le lasciano un minuto per respirare e per riposare.*

Laura: *Non ha tempo per leggere, per incontrarsi e parlare con altri, vive in un mondo troppo piccolo e povero per sentirsi completa.*

Sarah: *Quali strade si aprono alla donna italian per fare migliore la propria vita? Non già quella del divorzio, o quella di abbandonare i figli e la casa. La s... sc... scelta non è tra matrimonio e libertà.*

Megumi: *Il lavoro in casa non è certo tutto, ma solo un compito da portare a fine nel modo più semplice e rapido. Il matrimonio, i figli, sono importanti nella vita di una donna, ma non sono il solo punto di arrivo.*

Tim: *La donna vuole un proprio personale lavoro, che dia la misura della propria personalità. Il suo non vuole essere un qualsiasi lavoro fuori casa, ma qualcosa di serio, con problemi veri.*

Anna: *Non accetta più l'idea della donna in rapporto all'uomo, e dell'uomo che cerca ed ha bisogno di affetto materno. Insomma: l'uomo non deve più essere il padrone che può permettersi tutto e la donna non deve esistere solo per aiutarlo.*

(The woman in Italy

Forever have we have been hearing of the qualities of the Italian woman: excellent wife and excellent mother, happy with her condition in everyday life. Jealous. She was to be especially "a wife and mother".

The idea of a real woman was not that of the nearly male figure, who wants to be "somebody" even in sectors which did not exactly seem feminine, in science, art, business. A woman used to be what she was, because she could say: "I'm the wife of...", "I'm the mother of...".

Today, if a woman looks at the value of her own life at the age of thirty, she realises it's not much. It must not be forgotten that in the past a large family used to absorb a woman to such a degree as to give her an actual feeling of how useful her presence was: clothes were home-made for everybody, one had to prepare good food for many people, and "all women" in the family were in charge of the house "good management", which always gave its fruits. A women took part in agricultural work and helped out in others.

It was a way to show her own ability to create something. Today a woman is surrounded by a vacuum, a vacuum which she often refers to as absence of love. And she is not happy.

A survey, a few months ago, in fact, said quite clearly that the Italian woman is not happy, feels deeply lonely and deeply disappointed.

And yet – men say – many of these women should be serene and happy; they have homes with all the machines which make life more comfortable, they have got husbands they love and who love them, their children are full of health, intelligence, and life.

The truth is something else. The housewife is too busy. Whatever once could be enough for her to feel personally fulfilled in her life, today is no longer sufficient. A house, the children, a husband do not leave her a minute to breathe and rest.

She has not got time to read, to meet and talk to other people, she lives in too small a world to feel fulfilled.

What options stand in front of the Italian woman, today, in order to make her life better? Definitely not the one of divorce, or that of leaving her children and home. The choice is not one between marriage and freedom.

Housework is certainly not all, but just a task to complete as simply and rapidly as possible. Marriage and the children are important in a woman's life, but they are not the sole goal.

Women want their own personal job, where they can show and see they have got personality. They do not want to have just any outdoors job, but something relevant, with genuine problems.

They no longer accept the idea of a woman dependent on a man, and of a man who looks for and is in need of motherly affection. In other words, a man must no longer be a master who can afford anything, while a woman must not exist just to help him)

Sarah: That's true.

Jean: Good, very good. Right… So, what a meaty passage, isn't it? A lot in there, a lot in there… That's interesting. And Jennifer says it's the truth. So, your mission… is… your mission now for Thursday is to tell me what you think. I'd really like to know what you think about this passage, so it means re-reading it, obviously, and you can look out for things that we've already looked at… subjunctives, there was a *migliore* there… We looked at comparatives and superlatives, yesterday, so, look out for those things, and tell me what you

think. Right, Tim, Sarah's given us a point of… *un punto di partenza* (**a starting point**). She said it's true, she reckons it's all true. So, what would you say? We've got different cultures here. We're gonna get, dare I say, a middle-aged man […], dare I say that? A middle-aged one? [The girls laugh]

Tim: […] might be very glad.

Jean: From a middle-aged man's point of view we'll get to a young person's from Mittel-Europe, a couple of, say, Brits' and our student from Japan. An Oriental student, see what she thinks. Because Japanese women are thought to be in a certain mould, everybody thinks. It's not true, it's not true, I know, but we've got one in the family, I know. … Right, we did not look… We've not left a gap for the exercise, so remind me on Thursday, we'll do the five minutes do the exercise from straight to finish, and we are having such fun. Ehm… it does, doesn't it? It's amazing, and the author…

Anna: […]

Jean: Yeah, right! Yes, yes, remind me. You didn't have that.

Sarah: …*sapere, conoscere*

Jean: The *sapere* and *conoscere*, *giusto!* So, there's one of these each and there's one with […] at home.

Tim: And are these for Thursday, then?

Jean: Yes, if we've got time, I mean, we might carry on with that interesting discussion and…

Tim: Was something in the book?

Jean: *Scusa?*(**Pardon?**)

Tim: […]

Jean: Yeah, there is, yeah. [She looks among her pack of handouts] Right, the thing in the book… ehm… look at imperfect and pluperfect and subjunctive forms page 357-359, *trecentocinquantasette-trecentocinquantanove*, and those here for the vacation. I'm not actually gonna ask you to do any work for Thursday's class as such… written work. We'll have a chance to do the exercises. It might be quite nice to discuss this, have a few ideas, and that's it really, isn't it? If anyone wants to hand in their work now, I'll take it in now. The sentences on *si*, I'll take it now. If not, can you let me have them in my pigeon-hole tomorrow?

LIST OF CONTENTS IN APPENDIX 4

The material included in appendix 4 is as shown below. A full description of the materials used in the classes that were analysed in the thesis can be found in chapter 7 of the thesis (section 7.4).

1) Copies of the relevant pages from the textbook used by Francesca:
   Branciforte, S., Grassi, A. (1998) *Parliamo Italiano – A communicative approach*, boston, Houghton Mifflin Company. From page 187 to page 202.

2) A 2-sided handout. On page one under the heading "Cosa mangi?" ("What do you eat?") Francesca listed some phrases, words and questions that she wanted her students to use in the activity they did in the oral class. This list was supposed to be an aide-memoire for students to use. It included appropriate prepositions, verbs or terms for the questions they asked and answered during a group activity.
   Page 2 was the worksheet to be used while doing the activity. This consisted of a grid, a weekly planning table, topped by the headline "Mangio e bevo" ("I eat and drink"). On the right side there were 7 boxes with the days of the week, arranged vertically; on the top 6 boxes arranged horizontally, one for each of the meals or snacks that one can have every day.

3) Copies of the relevant pages from the textbook used by Jean (the other teacher in the study):
   Speroni, C., Golino, C.L., Caiti, B. (1993) *Basic Italian* (7th edition), Fort Worth, TX; London: Harcourt Brace Jovanich. From page 321 to page 322.

4) A 2-sided handout summarising use of the subjunctive mood in Italian. Cases in which this mood is used in Italian were listed in order of priority (in some cases the use of the subjunctive is compulsory, in others optional) and examples were given for each case.

5) A collection of texts (poems, articles, stories, idioms and proverbs) from different sources (books, easy readers, magazines, newspapers) that Jean had put together over the years. Most texts did not have a reference to the original source. Jean normally referred to this collection as to "the anthology". Every student in her class had a copy of it and they were encouraged to read text from it in their own time. In the class I observed about half of the time was devoted to reading texts from the anthology, translating them into English to ensure comprehension and discussing the issues arising from them in English