"The Structure of Learner Variety", Paris 2009

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Discussion of some data of Italian as a SL from the perspective of

the organization of lexical units in word classes or parts-of-speech, with special reference to the word class of the verb. Theoretical premises

"Basic Variety" approach (Klein/Perdue 1997)

 development of finiteness in first and second language acquisition (Klein 1998; Dimroth *et alii* 2003, Gretsch / Perdue 2007). morphological-finiteness is 'the overt form that finiteness takes'

semantic-finiteness is 'the invisible function that finiteness serves'

(Lasser 1977: 77, quoted in Gretsch/Perdue 2007: 433).

Research questions:

- do data of Italian as a SL sustain the model just outlined? that is, are word classes already differentiated, although with significant limitations, in the Basic Variety in Italian L2?
- does semantic finiteness precedes its morphological expression? Is semantic finiteness marked earlier than its morphological expression, and if this is the case, by what means?

Data

three recordings of an untutored young learner of Italian called CHU

CHU: Chinese young man, aged 16 when he came to Italy

L1: Wu Chinese

contact with speakers of Italian on a daily basis

- beginning of data collection: eleven months after Chu's arrival in Italy
- data from the Pavia Data Base: collected longitudinally over a sixteen-month period
- analysis restricted to the first three recordings of CH: learner moving from the Basic Variety to the initial Post-Basic Variety;
- recorded data: free conversations with an interviewer and narratives.

<u>First two recordings:</u> CH masters neither verbal nor nominal morphology

 (1) CH: (loro) fano un + un + un + eh un (they) do-3PL a gioc/ giochi game-PL
 'They played a game' (CH02,11months: 26 days) <u>Third recording session</u>: development of tense/aspect verbal morphology (2) [picture description] \IT\ prova a vedere cosa succede try and see what's happening \CH\ ale sei davanti Fiàt porta c'è monti uomini at-the six in front of Fiat door there.is many men lolo lavolo Fiàt they work-1SG Fiat \IT\ e questa persona qua? and this man here? \CH\ un signore lavolo Fìat a man work-1SG Fiat lui c'è un molie un filio e un filia he there is a wife a son and a daughter \IT\ benissimo ++ poi alle due? very well; then, at two o'clock? \CH\ are due signore lavorato Fìat at-the two man work-PP Fiat

'at six o'clock there are a lot of people in front of the Fiat gates, they work for Fiat; a man works for Fiat; at two o'clock the man has finished working for Fiat' first two recordings: majority of utterances endowed with a lexical unit which belongs to the TL word class of the verb.

cf. following examples with full verbs (ex. 3), copula (ex. 4-8) and unanalyzed *c'è* (ex. 9)

3) io ha(i) vinto poco; has/have(-2SG) win-PP a little 'I won a little' io no ab/ + io no a/ abito (CH02,11mm:26 dd) no qua live-1SG no here l no 'I don't live there (in Beijing)' 4) macchina è roso; (CH01, 11 months:4 days) is red car Pechino è eh eh più bela (CH02,11mm:26 dd) Beijing is more beautiful

(5) cinese vin(o) (è) sono Chinese wine(-SG) is be.1SG/3PL eh I/I/ liquer liquore liqueur 'Chinese wine is a liqueur [= very alcoholic]' è Pechi/ eh Pechino eh (6) quest(a) this-(FEM.SG) is Beijing eh grande piazza big square 'this is a/the big square in Beijing'

(7) \IT\ dove hai abitato i primi giorni? where did you live the first days?
\CH\ primi giorni sono eh a casa di mio m/ m/ first day-PL be.1SG/PL at home of my-MASC.SG mia zio my-FEM.SG uncle
'the first days I lived with my uncle'

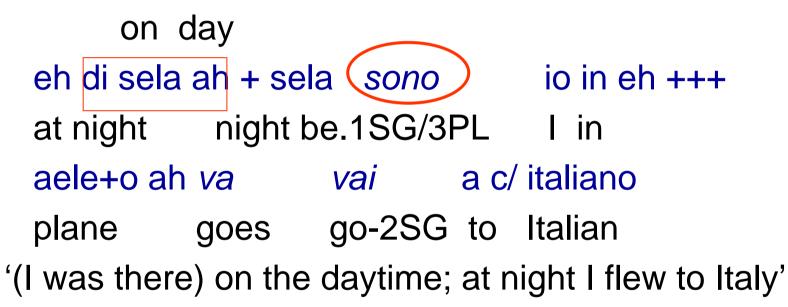
(8) cinese c/ c'è + eh u/ uguale c'è u/ + un festa + di Chinese there.is identical there.is a party of grand(i) big(MASC.PL)
'Chinese (New Year's Day) is the same (as in Italy): there is a big party' Only few utterances not equipped with verbs:

- (9) a. questo un la/ lago this-MASC.SG a lake
 b. plim(a) eh + eh un eh + un vi/ un v(e)ideo (prize) a videorecorder
- (10)\IT\ e poi? a Pechino ti sei fermato?
 And then? Did you stay in Beijing?
 \CH\ + poi eh + dempo Beghino
 then time Beijing

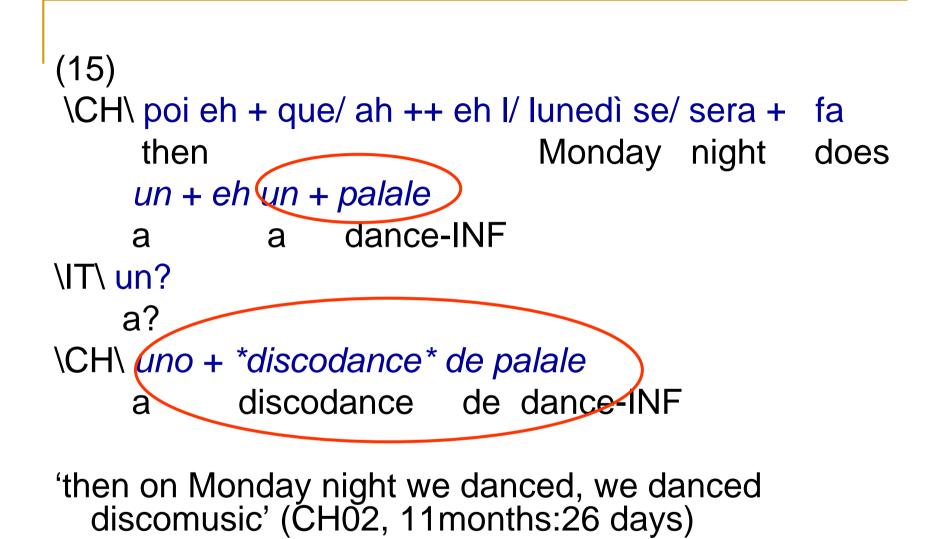
The copula cooccurs with words that are full verbs in the TL

(11) IT + che cosa avete fatto?and what did you do? \CH\ fatto eh + eh + prima eh + eh ++(sono lac/ (eh) listolande be.1SG/3PL restaurant do-PP first man/ mangia eat-3SG \IT\ mhm \CH\ sono mangiato be.1SG/3PL eat-PP poi + fa un festa di + eh +++ then do.3SG a party of 'first we ate in a restaurant, we have eaten, then we had a party'

(13) [talking of the former Chinese New Year's Day]
\IT\ mh che bello + ascolta eh: di sera o di giorno?
that's nice; listen, at night or during the day?
\CH\ eh di giorno



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(11) \IT\ e + che cosa avete fatto?
         and what did you do?
   \CH\ fatto eh + eh + prima eh + eh ++ sono lac/ (eh) listolande
                                          be.1SG/3PL restaurant
        do-PP
                        first
        man/ mangia
        eat-3SG
    \IT\ mhm
   CH(sono)
                      mangiato
        be.1SG/3PL eat-PP
        poi + fa un festa di + eh +++
       then do.3SG a party of
'first we ate in a restaurant, we have eaten, then we had a party'
(12) CH \in  on o eh \rightarrow eh +++ mi + a/ abito eh + eh Zhejiang
                                        live.1SG
                                                      Zhejiang
               be 13G/3PL
                                me
        'I used to live in Zhejiang'
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in the Basic Variety in Italian L2, as regards the word class of the verb, lexical units seem to be already differentiated, although with significant limitations, as examples (9) and (10) without verbs and example (14) with the verb *ballare* used in a NP show.

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the cooccurrence of the copula with full verbs demonstrate that the copula is used as a marker of assertion before verbal morphology starts developing. Use of the copula as a marker of finiteness investigated in an Eritrean learner of Italian as a SL (Bernini 2003)

16) MK: non non ha f:/ <u>siamo non ha fatto</u> not not has we-are not has done 'we did not do (our show)'

17) MK: <u>era si chiama</u> Giorgio no? was REFL calls Giorgio no 'he was called Giorgio' (Bernini 2003: 174) The use of the copula by CHU represents the immediately previous stage to that described by Bernini (2003).

Thank you!

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