



# ITALIAN L2 OF FRENCH-SPEAKING STUDENTS: THE CASE OF AN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY COURSE OF STUDY

Rosario Pellegrino

Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici - University of Salerno, Italy

## ABSTRACT

*The study analyzes the nature and the causes of the mistakes of French-speaking students enrolled at the Course of Study of Economics, Development, and Management of the Touristic Heritage (EVGPT) at the University of Salerno (level A2 of the CEFR). A brief identikit of the typical students of the Graduation Programme is provided as well as the reasons which lead them to learn the Italian language in an Italian-speaking context in order to obtain a double degree. In particular, linguistic-communicative competence is addressed as a meeting place where new identities are produced from the encounter of different linguistic and cultural codes. The issue of the common origin of the two languages (Italian and French), which does not always represent a form of facilitation for the learner, is highlighted from different points of view.*

*The choice of examining students in a guided learning context, through the use of L1, aims at solving or mitigating the specific problems that emerged from target tests. The subject of the research is a corpus made up of written productions collected between 2011 and 2018 written by French-speaking students attending the second year of the CdS in EVGPT in which the interference errors due to the transfer of constructions from L1 to L2 are highlighted. The research points out how Frenchisms and spelling represent the predominant items among the types of errors in productions.*

**Key words:** glottodidactics, Italian L<sup>2</sup>, language mistakes, language interferences

**Cite this Article:** Rosario Pellegrino, Italian L2 of French-Speaking Students: The Case of an International University Course of Study, *International Journal of Education (IJE)*, 3(1), 2020, pp. 1–11.

<http://www.iaeme.com/IJE/issues.asp?JType=IJE&VType=3&IType=1>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Experts believe that the Italian and French cultures, although close together, present such differences that, in the case of the learning/teaching process of one of the two languages, they require particular attention. In fact, the comparative study on Italian-speaking learners who approach the French language and of the French-speaking ones who learn the Italian language

demonstrates, as we will have the opportunity to verify, that cultural proximity may represent, in some cases, a sort of handicap as it creates the illusion that there would be a two-way relationship between the two languages. The latter concept is widely shared by non-experts. In fact, the temptation to translate *mot-à-mot* from one language to another, in the light of the numerous points in common between the two languages, is so frequent that it tends to discourage anyone who thinks they have to formulate a sentence directly in L2, limiting themselves to the literal translation. Probably for this reason, in the light of the communicative approach, there has been a tendency to exclude L1, considering it in the learning/teaching activities of L2 as a source of continuous interference.

The examined case is related to an inter-university degree course between the Université Paris-Nanterre and the University of Salerno. In 2011, after years of work and collaboration between the two universities, the French Embassy, the Paris Chamber of Commerce, and other involved institutions created a new experimental course of study entitled: Economics, Enhancement and Management of the Tourist Heritage (EVGPT), rendered in French as Valorisation et développement du Patrimoine Touristique et des Territoires.

The binational course of study was the first in Italy to involve the first-level degree since the others were connected to second-level university studies. It was created with a very specific objective that motivates the choice: to create the figure of a tour manager who masters the two languages, the two cultures, and, by spending an entire year in the host country, contributes to the enhancement of their own territory. The choice of the two regions, Campania and Ile-de-France, is anything but casual: these are two realities in which tourism occupies a privileged place, regions therefore with an undisputed tourist vocation, but in which there are two different concepts of enhancement and management of the territory. From the analysis of the two systems, from a study in small groups, from internships carried out in the two countries, students are wished to be able to enter the world of work directly with in-depth technical preparation, at an age which allows them to be particularly flexible and willing to move around without any difficulty. This wish occurred and was underlined on the occasion of the visit of the MIUR CEVs in 2018.

The new course of study also has the ambitious goal of involving the excellence of the two universities: Facoltà di Economia<sup>1</sup> and Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature straniere<sup>2</sup> in Salerno, departments of Géographie e Tourisme<sup>3</sup> at Nanterre in Paris. The number of students established by MIUR, which has remained unchanged over time, is 40: 20 students enrolled at the Université Paris-Nanterre and 20 enrolled at the Salerno University. Unlike the Italian students who, every year, almost reach the maximum number foreseen, the French ones, for reasons deriving essentially from the regulations on access to study courses in France, are fewer than the required number.

This study refers to students who arrive in Italy with a level of knowledge of Italian equal to A2, as required by the agreement stipulated between the two universities<sup>4</sup>.

It should be noted that, from the collected data, on average the French learner appears to be well disposed towards the Italian language they learn in the L2 context, probably also because Italian, unlike other widely used languages, does not have an “offensive” position, it is not a hegemonic language, and it is not a language of international communication. For these reasons, the average French student does not activate what Krashen defines as the “filtre affectif” (Krashen, 1983).

---

<sup>1</sup> Partner that, some years after the University reform, was named DISES (Dipartimento di studi economici e statistici).

<sup>2</sup> Partner that, some years after the University reform, was named DIPSUM (Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici).

<sup>3</sup> The department was named later *Géographie* and, more recently, *Géographie et Aménagement*.

<sup>4</sup> This convention was renewed every three years and signed by the rectors of the two universities.

From a cultural point of view, our countries share the same European civilization and there are no elements of culture shock for the examined learners who admit that they fall in love with Italy, with hospitality, and, last but not least, with our climate.

From a linguistic point of view, the common Romance root facilitates the understanding of the texts. False beginners (level A1) do not show difficulty in understanding texts in L2, on the contrary, they detect numerous affinities with the French language.

As for morphology, the two languages share some prefixes, roots, and suffixes; in particular, in syntax, there is a similar sequence of the parts of speech in simple and complex sentences. The greatest difficulties are encountered in phonetics and spelling. There are some in the pronunciation of consonant/vowel groups, in the intonation and placement of tonic accents<sup>5</sup>. Even at the idiomatic level, there are numerous points of contact, many proverbs and idioms appear certainly similar if not identical.

The promoters of the Degree Program have wondered what it is the identikit of the student who chooses it and the reasons that lead them to do so. The Italian language, despite the successive cuts in terms of teachers and chairs in French lycées, continues to exercise a certain attractiveness as it is considered one of the major languages of culture, of considerable interest for the development of tourism, the language of the Italian-speaking community living across the Alps and Italy and France are the two countries that have had the largest number of commercial relations in Europe for decades.

## 2. THEORETICAL REFERENCE FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVES

The attractiveness is not limited only to the cultural nature, this contribution starts from the studies of Ignazio Baldelli (1991) e Tullio De Mauro (2002), from which it emerges, among other things, that the relevance of the concept of attractiveness in language teaching is closely connected to that of motivation. From this point of view, Silvia Gilardoni states that without motivation there is no learning; in fact, the origin of motivation is Interest, which is the essential basis of learning (Gilardoni, 2005).

In the specific case, it is the interest that animates the mixed group of Italian and French students who, during the second year of studies, share courses and didactic and extracurricular experiences without interruption until the graduation which takes place in France at the end of the third year of studies spent entirely in Nanterre<sup>6</sup>. Relationships are established between students in which L2 becomes a kind of contact language for both groups. Since French students are the first to move, the prevailing L2 must necessarily be the Italian language. Motivation and interest are clear: perfect Italian to communicate with others, to understand the contents of the courses, and to facilitate the task of studying.

Speaking of “Italian as a contact language” means “considering linguistic-communicative competence as a place where different linguistic and cultural codes meet and produce new identities” (Vedovelli, 2002:174).

The birth of new identities is another of the aims of the Degree Course. Through the two years in which the groups meet up (second year for French students and third-year for Italian ones), spent in the host country, changes occur that can make Italian first and then French as contact languages, because of teaching, full immersion, communication, and the new identity of students.

---

<sup>5</sup> It is well known that a generalized oxytonic system has existed in the French language for centuries.

<sup>6</sup> After this achievement, a graduation day is scheduled during the month of July of each year during which students are proclaimed doctors in Economia, Valorizzazione e gestione del territorio, obtaining the so-called double degree, according to the provisions of the stipulated agreement. between the two academies.

For this to happen, Paolo E. Balboni indicates the four types of knowledge necessary to acquire communicative competence:

- know how to speak
- know how to do with the language
- know the language
- know how to integrate the language with non-verbal languages (Balboni, 2015:73).

In order to get the French student to be able to master the specific languages of the different subjects to be learned and on which they will be examined, they must acquire a set of skills and abilities which, together with the so-called basic literacy, gives them access to specific knowledge and allows them to progress in their studies (Bozzone Costa et al., 2003:73). Between the Italian-speaking and French-speaking groups, the second must necessarily study in L2, which requires that they can understand the content of the read/listened to texts, memorize new terms belonging to sectoral languages, be able to grasp concepts and abstractions to decode them (deverbalization), be able to express the concepts learned with words appropriate to their level of linguistic knowledge (verbalization). All this presupposes that the individual student can interact from the didactic point of view with their interlocutors in the university environment (Italian-speaking teachers and students) and, above all, be able to understand the language of the university texts being studied and that of the written tests which they are called to pass.

### **3. RESEARCH TOOLS, METHODOLOGY AND CORPUS**

A crucial figure for the learning of French-speaking students was that of the teacher/tutor who had to cover the role of learning facilitator. In fact, the teacher had to implement the interdisciplinary and transversal aspects of language education concerning specific disciplinary fields.

From the analysis that the CdS recorded every year it emerged that the texts subject to individual study generated some ambiguities as they were complex (especially since in France they were rather used to studying on handouts and extracts of the proposed texts). The lack of or poor understanding of a textbook poses a series of problems as it usually generates: a sort of skills gap for the Italian-French group and, consequently, total / partial exclusion from the regular course of lessons and of the university process.

There is a risk that language learning will not be able to proceed naturally as it is experienced by the French-speaking student as a form of misunderstanding since it does not produce the acquisition of new concepts. To avoid this risk, the role of the didactic tutor has proved to be crucial who, from the height of experience and in-depth knowledge of the two cultures, with a view to constant cultural mediation, has activated, among other things, the teaching of understanding written aimed at the study.

The constant reference to the two languages L1 and L2 has provided forms of didactic intervention in which the Italian language has fulfilled the task of simplifying and facilitating diversified learning. The French language course has adapted to the rhythms of French-speaking students in order to favour the correct acquisition of the Italian language through the constant comparison between the two languages.

The didactic interventions started from the assumption that the facilitated understanding of a scientific text is essential for the multidisciplinary approach of a student whose teaching language is L2. The choice of the texts object of study and linguistic analysis was appropriately evaluated to allow both an inductive reflection on the lexicon and on the morphosyntactic structures used, also aimed at favouring a logical-conceptual approach facilitated to access more complex knowledge. The texts were all authentic and were never

taught in order not to offer sweetened linguistic forms but always adhering to the academic linguistic context (Bozzone Costa et al., 2003).

In a contrastive perspective, through the analysis of a corpus of written productions collected during these years<sup>7</sup>, and precisely from 2011 to 2019, the interference errors due to the transfer of constructions of the L1 in the L2.

In particular, in the light of the specific characteristics of spoken French, we will highlight some types of transfer into Italian based on studies that have deepened the concept of contrastive analysis of languages whose goal is to compare phonological, morphological, syntactic systems and cultural of the languages in contact in the learning process, to identify similarities and differences, in order to predict the areas of greater or lesser difficulty for learners. A bibliographic reference in the development of contrastive analysis remains the study by Robert Lado, *Linguistics Across cultures* (Lado, 1957), in which the author states that in the process of learning a foreign language one tends to transfer the characteristics of one's mother tongue to it.

It is known that contrastive analysis examines the differences between two language systems in order to provide a plausible explanation for the mistakes made by a learner in L2. The results of the analysis are very useful for creating a sort of database in which they are recorded with rigor and punctuality. A course of study based on contrastive analysis requires that the accent is placed and only the traits for which the two languages differ are recorded, while the common traits are usually considered to be already known by the learner (D'Ambrosio, 1993).

The validity and fundamental data of the contrastive analysis have been subjected to numerous criticisms over the years, as it has been found that not all errors are attributable to the differences between the two languages, there are, in fact, mistakes due to the analogy between the two language systems or mistakes directly made in L2. Furthermore, not all the errors can be attributed to the interference between the mother tongue and L2 and a linguistic syllabus cannot assume that learning a foreign language simply means discovering the differences between the mother tongue and the target language. In fact, in the process of learning a foreign language, many other factors (in addition to language transfer) come into play and can exert a positive or negative influence on learning processes. Psycholinguistic analysis, for example, emphasizes the contextual, historical, and social factors (characteristic of the place where the learning of the new language occurs), and psychological factors such as motivation, age, and so on.

Although it is not able to account for all the errors present in the productions of learners, contrastive analysis, together with the analysis of errors (an approach that has reduced its role in language learning studies) is a discipline that contributes to solving numerous language teaching problems. Its aims are explicitly didactic and can be exploited to predict the mistakes that the speaker of a given language will make in the learning process of an L2.

In the specific case, the proximity of the structures that derives, as for Italian and French, from belonging to the same linguistic group, if on the one hand, it facilitates understanding and production, on the other, it does not exclude that it may generate negative transfers. Furthermore, as we will recall, the role of L1 in foreign language learning is favoured by the intercomprehension strategies that learners resort to when approaching L2 in order to exploit, more or less consciously, the similarities between L1 and L2.

In this regard, the study by Deller and Rinvulcri (Deller and Rinvulcri, 2002) considers this use of the LM a real resource. For this reason, strategies are presented to the teacher

<sup>7</sup> The papers consist of compositions of about 180/200 words whose delivery is the result of specific dossiers explained in the classroom and on which each individual student is called to deepen aspects in view of the drafting of the composition.

through which to regulate, according to very specific times and methods, the use of the LM as a support tool, that is scaffolding. This attitude is in contrast with the language teaching approaches of the eighties and nineties of the last century (years characterized by the spread of the communicative approach) which were oriented towards the containment, if not the exclusion, of the LM from the language classroom, considered the reason for repeated interference and constant and deleterious use of LM in the learning process of another language<sup>8</sup>.

#### 4. ITALIAN LEARNED FROM FRENCH SPEAKERS, AMIDST ERRORS AND INTERFERENCE

This is demonstrated by the fact that the contrastive analysis applied to the learning of a foreign language argues that "individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings of their mother tongue and culture, and their distribution, into the foreign language and culture" (Lado, 1957:2). At the base of this conception, there is the tendency to consider the transference from the mother tongue to the foreign one as positive while the reverse would be negative. As it is known, the acquisition of a language cannot be separated from a constant reference to the LM, although the teacher tries to keep the two languages separate with the purpose of correct learning without an excessive number of interferences (Kuitche Talé, 2013).

The common features of the two languages, Italian and French, favour an oral and then written production in the language in the process of being learned undoubtedly quicker than in other so-called distant languages. Claudia Matthiae (2011) defines this precocity in oral / written comprehension as an "advantage" that French-speaking learners have over students of other languages. In fact, in her studies, the scholar emphasizes that the so-called phase of silence, common to most beginners in learning an L2, is practically unknown to French-speaking learners who engage "sin dalle prime lezioni in miniproduzioni orali o scritte e fornendo comunque una qualche risposta in italiano ("sì", "no", "no capito bene", "non so") a ogni domanda che viene loro rivolta» (Matthiae, 2011:140).

In particular, Gilles Kuitche Talé analyzes a sample of oral and written productions in Italian by French-speaking students who present: un'interferenza che si rivela notevole a tutti i livelli sia morfosintattico che, soprattutto lessicale. Oltre al rischio di inficiare più o meno pesantemente l'efficacia comunicativa, questo può condurre alla persistenza e, in certi casi, al consolidamento e alla successiva fossilizzazione di determinati errori. Proprio per la facilità comunicativa che sperimentano, i discenti francofoni possono tendere ad adagiarsi facilmente nella situazione di interlingua, applicare la legge del minimo sforzo e perdere la spinta verso un apprendimento più preciso. È abbastanza diffusa l'opinione secondo la quale è più difficile imparare lingue molto diverse dalla propria. Però l'elevato numero degli errori chiaramente imputabili all'interferenza linguistica tra il francese e l'italiano dimostra che l'apprendimento di lingue molto simili alla lingua madre e tra loro, spesso è fonte di maggiori problemi e difficoltà (Kuitche Talé, 2013).

Among the scholars who share the same thesis, we find Alessandra Spreafico who, in similar research (Spreafico, 2006: 109), specifies that the common origin of two languages such as Italian and French does not represent an advantage for the learner, as in many cases it may lead to make mistakes<sup>9</sup>.

---

<sup>8</sup> See in particular the application of the communicative approach until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<sup>9</sup> In this regard, see Silvi, 1995: the author highlights the most frequent errors of French speakers concerning: "prepositions (more frequent the replacement of da with di), signifiers (for example: envy / desire)," some "and" every "with the plural (for example: \* some people / \* each level), the articles (\* the students / \* the statute), the idioms, (\* as the author explains it), the word "people" (\* people who do not take into account ), the inversion of words (\* they drank too much), spelling (\* abbandono), confusion of genders and numbers (\* values), conjugation of verbs, etc.

At this point, I consider it appropriate to point out that the choice to examine students in a guided learning context is also aimed at solving or mitigating any specific problems. We are well aware that the schematization sometimes corresponds to simplifications, although they are always indicative and useful for the purposes of the investigation. This study should be understood from this perspective.

We have chosen to record the so-called deviations from the norm attributable to interference errors with the French language, leaving out the concept of learning errors in general, which, as it is well known, appear to be in greater number and fall into broader categories.

The study found several morphosyntactic and lexical interferences in greater numbers than the phonetic/orthographic deviations. We have examined the written productions of about fifty learners attending the CdS in question (54 with precision). We also examined the metalinguistic questionnaire in Italian aimed at identifying any criticalities from a morphosyntactic point of view (articles and verbs in the first place, followed immediately after by prepositions and direct/indirect/relative pronouns), lexical (faux-amis), phonetic and orthographic (double; phonemes / gl / , / qu / and / ch /).

The deviations from the norm reported below are both the result of inferences (the learner makes hypotheses on metalinguistic contents not yet acquired in guided learning through simplifications and analogies) and an indication of the failure to correctly acquire notions learned in class (rooted errors). The study yielded the following results:

- morphosyntactic errors (57%),
- lexical deviations (31%)
- spelling and phonetic errors (12%)

Here is the list of the most common faux-amis for the A1-A2 language proficiency levels found in relation to oral and written productions<sup>10</sup> (only the corrections relating to the faux-amis data taken into consideration are reported in brackets):

**Table 1** Some of the main false friends

Abitano in una villa importante (“ville” = “città”).
Avanti di partire per Paris (“avant” = “prima”).
Come sono stanco, mi riposo (“comme” = “poiché/siccome”).
Da un anno lavoro per una firma internazionale (“firme” = “società”).
Fermate la finestra (“fermer” = “chiudere”).
Finalmente abbiamo avuto un posto (“finalement” sta per “alla fine”).
Ha avuto un accidente (“accident” = “incidente”).
Ha studiato assai (“assez” = “abbastanza”).
Ho già signato l’assegno? (signer=firmare).
Il bambino ha salito il gembiule (“salir” = “sporcare”).
Io sono grande (“grand” = “alto”).
Jean ha comprato un magazzino (magazine=rivista).
Jean porta un costume nuovo (“costume” = “completo da uomo”).
Mia sorella porta una roba nera (“robe” = “vestito”).
Ogni giorno mangio alla cantina (“cantine” = “mensa”).
Riguardavo un monumento (“regarder”=guardare).
Siamo arrivati alla gara (“gare” = “stazione”).
Sono al regime (“régime” = “dieta”).
I tuoi parenti lavorano con lui (“parents” = “genitori”).

<sup>10</sup> Only the corrections relating to the faux-amis data taken into consideration are reported in brackets, not to other types of errors

There is a sort of contrast between linguistic and pragmatic errors that derive from a lack of attention to the communicative situation or from a lack of knowledge of the function. They are errors related to limited knowledge of the nature of speech acts.

The analysis of the data of our corpus highlights a high number of deviations which confirms the strong tendency to transfer from L1 to L2. Here there are only some illustrative examples of the negative transfer:

**Table 2** Some of the main results of the negative transference

EXPRESSIONS PRESENT IN THE CORPUS	FRENCH CORRESPONDING	CORRECT EXPRESSION IN ITALIAN
ieri ho preso alcune foto	<i>Hier j'ai pris des photos</i>	Ieri ho fatto alcune foto
mia sorella ha arrossito	<i>Ma soeur a rougi</i>	Mia sorella è arrossita
ci sei uscito	<i>Tu t'en es sorti</i>	te la sei cavata
come andate ? *andiamo bene	<i>comment allez-vous? Nous allons bien</i>	come state? Stiamo bene
i miei amici si sono passeggiati	<i>Mes amis se sont promenés</i>	I miei amici hanno fatto una passeggiata
studiamo molti di libri	<i>Nous étudions beaucoup de livres</i>	Studiamo molti libri
non ho visto nessuno d'altro	<i>Je n'ai vu personne d'autre</i>	Non ho visto nessun altro
mi sono passato della scuola	<i>Je me suis passé de l'école</i>	Ho fatto a meno della scuola
tutto il mondo era allo stadio	<i>tout le monde était au stade</i>	tutti erano allo stadio
Jean era in treno di ascoltare la radio	<i>Jean était en train d'écouter la radio</i>	Jean stava ascoltando la radio

Below there are the most common deviations from the norm we found:

**Table 3** Main deviations from the norm found in the corpus

<b>“molto di + plural nouns”</b> from “beaucoup de + plural nouns (molto di libri);
<b>“qualche”</b> form “quelque”, used with plural nouns (compro qualche libri);
<b>some article prepositions</b> (“de la” from “della”, “a la” from “alla”, “in la” from “nella”);
<b>passé récent “venir de”</b> (veniamo di/da leggere un libro);
<b>complement of agent / efficient cause expressed with “per”</b> from “par” (“Questa mela è mangiata <b>per</b> lui”);
<b>conjugation of some verbs</b> , (io ando/veno).
<b>wrong collocation of quantitive adverbs between auxiliary and past participle</b> (l'anno scorso abbiamo molto/troppo studiato);
<b>wrong auxiliary verbs</b> like “cambiare”, “piacere” (la situazione ha cambiato);
<b>use of the suffixes “-zione” and “-mento”</b> (invito, governo);
<b>idiomatic expressions</b> (come lo diceva l'autore);
<b>gender errors</b> (il coppia, < le couple; il scelta < le choix, la mare < la mer, la pianeta < la planète...);
<b>some meanings</b> (i.e.: invidia/voglia);
<b>the term “gens”</b> (*la gente non amano leggere);
<b>use of “voi”</b> instead of “lei” (voi parlate bene);
<b>current use of “più... che...”</b> instead of di “più di ...” (Parigi è più grande che Roma);
<b>wrong verb after impersonal “si”</b> (si compra molte cose);
<b>wrong use of subjunctive tense after opinion verbs</b> (Credo che sei sincero);
<b>omission of “a” preposition after movement verbs with infinitive tense</b> (Vado leggere un libro);
<b>double personal pronouns</b> (gli lo, lo gli);
<b>direct and indirect personal pronouns “gli”/“le”</b> (parlo con Maria perché devo gli dire...);
<b>misspellings: double consonants</b> (abandono,< abandon, comunicare < communiquer, persona < personne);
<b>repetition of the article in the relative superlative form</b> (Maria è la donna la più bella del mondo);



<b>abuse of the partitive articles</b> (mangio del pane e del cioccolato);
<b>no article before possessive adjectives</b> (prendo mio libro), <b>abuse of possessive adjectives</b> (metto mio cappotto);
<b>use of “chi” relative pronoun instead of “che” as a subject</b> (l'uomo chi parla);
<b>wrong use of the article</b> (i sposi, il sposo).

From the corpora analyzed it emerges, confirming what it was hypothesized at the beginning of the study, that the written productions of the French ones are usually longer than those of learners whose languages are not considered close to Italian and, also, for this reason, contain a greater number of "errors". The diagrams show present linguistic interferences of various kinds which are added to the well-known learning errors.

We point out that French learners when returning a sheet of paper with numerous corrections are puzzled: they do not imagine that they could have made so many mistakes in a single test and in a language that they consider so similar to theirs.

The teacher invites learners to understand the need to respect the instructions regarding the topics and the length of the exercise in order to express more simplified concepts, and consequently more correct because it is easy for a long text to run the risk of not properly dwelling on the content.

Nonetheless, in the written productions examined, learners tend to deliver longer texts than required (max 150 words): 30% settle on 200 words, 50% on 225 words, the rest even exceeds the latter data.

Below there are the results of numbers and percentages of "errors" found in these productions:

**Table 4** Types of errors, frequency, and percentage

<b>KIND OF MISTAKES</b>	<b>FREQUENCY<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
French interferences	311	25,80%
Prepositions	244	20,25%
Spelling	209	17,35%
Pronouns	107	8,90%
Verbs	102	8,46%
Adjectives	86	7,13%
Articles	79	6,55%
Plural of noun/adjectives	67	5,56%

Following the correction, the teacher recommended a hypothesis of resizing the formulation of the concepts by presenting specific forms of self-correction, group correction, a distinction of morphosyntactic or lexical errors. The proposed activities have proved to be useful for identifying linguistic interference, establishing themselves as a valid expedient to avoid forms of onset or stabilization, among other things, of false friends, improper casts, and other deviations due to interference.

We also need to point out the proposal of the so-called correction classification in which the teacher, through the presentation of a grid of recurring mistakes of different nature, asks the student to intervene on the different types<sup>12</sup>, to identify their own and others' errors and, by placing them in the right boxes, to be able to explain its characteristics and nature.

<sup>11</sup> The number of errors refers to n. 1103 compositions examined.

<sup>12</sup> An example can be represented by the different types: accent, chord, article, auxiliary, adverb, conjunction, double, gender, lexicon, negation, number, spelling, past participle, person, preposition, pronoun, punctuation, style, tense, tu /lei...

To this end, the association of a symbol for each type (eg. By gender = ♀ ♂) usually helps a better and faster identification and, consequently, the lasting appropriation of the correct form. The teacher should explain in a legend, placed in the margin of the table presented, the meaning of the symbols used so that the learner can read them, can easily understand their meaning, and become familiar with each symbol for quick and correct use.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The linguistic interference of the French, as of other L2 or L3 learners, is an integral part of the learning/acquisition process of the latter and it is undeniably useful for the teacher to be aware of it. Considering them positive or negative seems simplistic if not misleading. Categorizing and "exploiting" them by transforming them from an "obstacle" into a "resource" facilitates a more homogeneous linguistic progression in the four linguistic skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) favouring the construction of an interlanguage increasingly projected towards Italian and the emergence of a metalinguistic awareness that conveys the markedness of the language to be acquired without penalizing the communicative and "creative" strategies of the learner or the use of L1 since, referring again to what Deller and Rinvoluti affirmed, we are convinced that L1 is the mother of the other acquired languages. In fact, the mother tongue embodies all the others in the learner's imagination, for this reason, its exclusion in the processes of teaching / learning a language corresponds to depriving the person who approaches the study of a new language of a vital heritage which, undeniably, it may be of great use to them in establishing parallels and differences between codes and cultures that are never too foreign (Deller and Rinvoluti, 2002).

## REFERENCES

- [1] Ambrosio C. (1993). *Analisi degli errori*, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma.
- [2] Balboni P. E. (2015). *Le sfide di Babele. Insegnare le lingue nelle società complesse*, UTET Università, Torino, 73.
- [3] Baldelli I (1991). *Le sorti della lingua italiana oggi nel mondo*, in I. Baldelli - B. M. Da Rif, *Lingua e letteratura italiana nel mondo oggi. Atti del XIII Congresso A.I.S.L.L.I.*, Perugia, 30 maggio-3 giugno 1988, Leo Olschki Editore, Firenze, 13-24.
- [4] Bozzone Costa R., Grass R., Valentini A., (dir.) (2003). *L'italiano per lo studio nella scuola plurilingue: tra semplificazione e facilitazione*, Atti del Convegno-Seminario "Alunni stranieri nella scuola: l'italiano per lo studio", Bergamo, 17-19 giugno 2002, Guerra, Perugia, 7.
- [5] De Mauro T., Vedovelli M., Barni M., Miraglia L (2002). *Italiano 2000. I pubblici e le motivazioni dell'italiano diffuso fra stranieri*, Bulzoni, Roma.
- [6] Deller S., Rinvoluti M. (2002). *Using the Mother Tongue. Making the Most of the Learner's Language*, Delta, London, 2002.
- [7] Gilardoni S.(2005). *La didattica dell'italiano L2: approcci teorici e orientamenti applicativi*, ISU, Milano 2005.
- [8] Krashen S. D., Terrell T. (1983). *The natural approach*, Pergamon Press, N.Y.
- [9] Kuitche Talé G. (2013). *Variazione diatopica del francese e didattica dell'italiano L2: i transfer negativi degli apprendenti camerunensi nell'italiano*, in *Italiano LinguaDue* vol. V n. 2, <https://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/promoitals/article/view/3753>

- [10] Lado R. (1957) *Linguistics Across Cultures: Applied Linguistics for Language Teachers*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press.
- [11] Matthiae C. (2011). Gli apprendenti francesi e la lingua italiana: vicini ma non troppo, in *Italiano Lingua Due*, 1, 139-145:140,  
<http://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/promoitals/article/view/1230/1442>
- [12] Silvi R. (1995). *Gli errori dei francesi nell'apprendimento dell'italiano*, Guerra, Perugia.
- [13] Spreafico A. (2006). Analisi contrastiva Italiano/Francese: il caso di discenti di italiano L2 Camerunesi, in *Itals*, 12, Guerra, Perugia, 109.
- [14] Vedovelli M. (2002). *Guida all'italiano per stranieri. La prospettiva del Quadro comune europeo per le lingue*, Carocci, 174.