

Morphosyntactic complexities in L2 Italian: A cross-sectional study

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In this study we deal with three topics concerning the morphosyntax of Italian (a. auxiliary selection, b. clitics, c. null, overt and postverbal subjects) which the relevant literature has highlighted as complex in L2 acquisition (e. g. Belletti & Guasti 2015 and the references quoted there). We examine these topics through the administration of seven tasks – originally created for this study- to three groups of L2ers of Italian, belonging to three different levels of proficiency: A2 (22 participants), B1 (33 participants), and C1-C2 (22 participants). Results show that the three phenomena are complex (as highlighted by the previous literature) at all levels of proficiency. Results also show that there is improvement towards target (i.e. native-like) productions/choices/interpretations which reaches significance in the advanced group (C1-C2). In addition, they show that avoidance strategies (more than errors) are quite widespread in the less advanced groups (A2 and B1) for what concerns auxiliary selection and clitics. Finally, some residual problems remain even in the more advanced group.