

THE INTERFERENCE OF L1 LATIN-BASED LANGUAGES ON STUDENTS STUDYING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Dott. Federico Valente

Dott. Francesco Spilabotte

University of Cassino and Southern Lazio, **Italy**

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate borrowings among Latin-based L1 learners of English as a foreign language analyzing the interference of L1 and positive transfer of Italian and Spanish so as to provide significant empirical evidence which could contribute to SLA research and identify potential implications for L2 pedagogy. The focus of this investigation is to help move opinions on borrowings or L1 transfer from superficial to detailed and analytical insight into a specific group of EFL learners.

The stimulus for this inquiry comes from our teaching experiences of English as a foreign language at the University of Cassino and from articles of TESOL that we read in order to have a broader view of this topic. This study was conducted at the University of Malta and the data gathering process consists of a qualitative and a quantitative approach through 3 tasks plus a questionnaire structured for twelve Italian and Spanish undergraduate EFL students. The literature review analyses theoretical issues regarding borrowings in SLA and the interference of L1 on EFL students. Findings suggest that Latin-based native speakers have a good ability to acquire English grammar, however, they also show evidence of L1 interference and processing difficulties that are in part due to the L1 background.

Keywords: borrowings, EFL learners, interference, Latin-based, L2 pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

First and foremost, language transfer, namely the borrowing from one language for communication into another is a theory that has been advanced since the 1950s and appears to be still relevant to the present day [15] [8] [2] [6] [12] [5].

The aim of this paper is to investigate such borrowings among Latin-based L1 (Italian and Spanish speakers) on English as a foreign language, adapting Jarvis analysis [4], with particular attention on the interference of L1 Latin-based languages on English so as to supply verifiable and demonstrable findings which can provide an effective contribution in FL pedagogy and emphasize potential results for SLA research.

This study focuses on moving beliefs and hypotheses on L1 transfer or borrowings from a superficial to a detailed and analytical perception into a specific group of EFL students attending a University Course for Modern Languages (UCML). The context that has been identified for this analysis is the University of Malta where European and overseas students are given the opportunity to study modern foreign languages of which the most