**FRENCH FOREIGN ACCENT PRODUCED BY ITALIAN SPEAKERS:**
the relationship between effect of L1 prosodic background and L1 use

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**INTRODUCTION**

**PURPOSES:**

- to study the influence of Italian L1 prosodic system during the process of French L2 acquisition in terms of different rhythmical structure realization
- to explore the relationship between rhythmic foreign accent (FA) and the amount of L1 use
- to adopt the *imitation paradigm* to study the rhythmical convergence in case of L2 acquisition

**THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

**French/Italian metrical differences**

- **Foot structure:** French iambic language (stressed syllable is the last of Accenthedral Phrase) - Italian trochaic language (stressed syllable is the last of the Prosodic Word)
- **Phonology:** position of the metrical head
- **Phonetic:** implementation of metric head as increased syllable duration

**Effect of L1 use**

- Flege (1997) assessed the effect, in perception, of amount of L1 use on performance in an L2

**Imitation Paradigm**

Fine phonetic detail of tonal alignment appears to be successfully imitated by speakers of two varieties of Italian.

**QUESTIONS:**

- (a) Is French FA produced by advanced Italian L2 speakers due to metrical differences both at phonetic and phonological level?
- (b) Is there a relationship, in production, between FA degree (inter-speaker differences) and amount of L1 use?
- (c) Are learners able to modify rhythmic phonetic detail to imitate native speaker?

**HYPOTHESIS**

- (1) FA as result of longer duration of penultimate stressed syllable:
- FA during the Baseline longer duration of CV₂ and shorter duration of CV₁
- during the Imitation longer duration of CV₂ and shorter duration of CV₁
- (2) strengthening of FA indices for IT L2 learners of French will be more important for those who are major users of L1:
- IT-1Luse have longer duration of CV₂ and shorter duration of CV₁ compared to FNS and IT-2Luser
- IT-1Luse have less longer duration of CV₁ and equal duration CV₂ compared to FNS and IT-2Luser

**HYPOSETISIS:**

- **Italian Native Speaker**
- **L1 use**
- **FA**

**PRELIMINARY RESULTS**

**DISCUSSION**

**DIFFERENT STAGE IN THE LEARNING PROCESS?**

- Different stage in the learning process?
- FA might be related to amount of L1/L2 use and not to the failure acquisition of L2 phonetic implementation?
- Phonetic details can be imitated across languages?

**REFERENCES**


**PROCEDURE**

3 sessions:

- Participants were given a second set of sentences, which they had not previously seen nor heard the French speaker produce, and were asked to continue imitating the accent without the aid of any recordings

**GENERALIZATION**

After two generalizations:

- Participants were given a second set of sentences, which they had not previously seen nor heard the French speaker produce, and were asked to continue imitating the accent without the aid of any recordings

**MESURES**

- Duration of target syllable (CV₂)
- Duration of last syllable (CV₁)
- Duration ratio between CV₂ and CV₁ (FNS)
- EO questionnaire: response towards French culture, orientation towards the Italian culture, mixed answer

**METHODOLOGY**

**PARTICIPANTS**

40 Italian non-native speakers (20 IT-1Luse and 20 IT-2Luse)

**MATERIALS**

- 1 French native speaker (FRN)
- Ethnic Orientation test (EOT): 52 questions related to aspects of ethnic identity such as language use, make up of social network, community activities, attitudes toward culture heritage and a self-reported impressions of the individual speakers
- 20 neutral utterances (*repetitions* 2 speech rates *40 participants*) plus 40 fillers (IP/AP final)

Factors: lexical frequency (high/low); speech rate (normal/rapid); IP/AP final position

**TARGET WORD**

- 10 HP
- 10 LF

**FILLER**

- 10 HP
- 10 IP

**PROSODIC BOUNDARY**

- 10 HF
- 10 LF

**EX. (IP)**

- Le fil de la mémoire (IP of Paolo, doesn’t really make a difference)
- Le mémoire (in Italian), c’etait assez sale (The memoire, from what I’m told, it’s very dirty)