Chini, Marina (a cura di). (2015). *Il parlato in (italiano) L2:aspetti pragmatici e prosodici*. [(Italian) L2 spoken discourse: Prosodic and pragmatic aspects]. Milano, Italia: Franco Angeli.

JACOPO TORREGROSSA*
University of Hamburg
Book Review

ABSTRACT

EN The volume edited by Marina Chini serves as a forum for discussion among scholars working in interlanguage prosody and pragmatics. Pragmatics is understood here in a broad sense, encompassing the encoding of informational notions in sentence structure, categories of discourse management, and features of discourse interactions in educational settings. In this review I provide an overall evaluation of the volume together with a brief summary of the individual contributions.

Key words: L2 PROSODY, L2 PRAGMATICS, INTERACTION IN L2, INFORMATION STRUCTURE, DISCOURSE STRUCTURE

ES Este volumen, editado por Marina Chini, sirve como foro para la discusión entre académicos cuyas investigaciones se centran en la prosodia y pragmática entre una lengua y otra. Aquí se entiende la pragmática en un sentido amplio, incluyendo la codificación de los elementos que definen la estructura informativa en una frase, categorías de la gestión de discurso y características de interacciones discursivas en ambientes educativos. En esta reseña doy una evaluación general del volumen, además de un breve resumen de las contribuciones individuales.

Palabras clave: PROSODIA L2, PRAGMÁTICA L2, INTERACCIÓN EN L2, ESTRUCTURA INFORMATIVA, ESTRUCTURA DEL DISCURSO

IT Il volume curato da Marina Chini funge da forum di discussione per gli studiosi di prosodia e pragmatica dell'interlingua. La pragmatica viene qui intesa in senso lato, ed include i concetti quali la codifica degli elementi che definiscono la struttura informativa nella frase, le categorie di gestione del discorso, le caratteristiche delle interazioni discorsive in ambiti educativi. Questa recensione offre una valutazione complessiva del volume accompagnata da un breve riassunto dei singoli contributi.

Parole chiave: PROSODIA L2, PRAGMATICA L2, INTERAZIONE IN L2, STRUTTURA INFORMATIVA, STRUTTURA DEL DISCORSO

The volume *Il parlato in (italiano) L2: Aspetti pragmatici e prosodici* [(Italian) L2 Spoken Discourse: Prosodic and Pragmatic Aspects], edited by Marina Chini, is based on papers presented at the homonymous international conference held at the University of Pavia.

The main aim of the volume is to investigate how pragmatic categories are expressed morphosyntactically and prosodically in different interlanguages. The articles contained in the volume examine the L2 acquisition of pragmatics and its linguistic encoding on three different levels. First, some articles account for the structuring of L2 utterances according to informational criteria (e.g., topic/comment and given/new) – an area of research to which the Pavia Project on L2 Italian has made significant contributions (Andorno, 2000; Chini, 2010; Giacalone Ramat, 2003). On the discourse level, other articles investigate the linguistic means used by L2 learners to achieve discourse cohesion and coherence. Finally, some contributions focus on the expression of non-literal forms of communication, such as sarcasm or lying.

---

* Contact: Jacopo.Torregrossa@uni-hamburg.de

The investigations of L2 prosody contained in the volume involve all three domains in the acquisition of pragmatics (ranging from the analysis of single utterances to the management of non-literal meanings in discourse), and this ultimately adds to the coherence of the whole book. Many of these contributions give particular attention to the acquisition of suprasegmental (prosodic) features. Although initially disregarded in favor of the analysis of L2 speech at the segmental level (Rasier & Hiligsmann, 2007), this area of research has received increasing attention over the last few years. The volume represents a significant contribution to our understanding of L2 prosody.

The book has been conceived as a platform for discussions on interlanguage prosody and pragmatics as well as the factors affecting its variation across and within learners. The articles consider a variety of these factors, ranging from more traditional ones related to the role of L2 proficiency, the type of L1-L2 pair and the intercultural dimension (Bettoni, 2006), to more unexplored ones such as the type of acquisitional context (e.g., spontaneous acquisition vs. guided learning) or literacy practices (see also Bongartz & Torregrossa, 2017 on school biliteracy programs). In addition, the contributions address several methodological issues. For example, given its strong focus on communicative competence in L2, the volume provides an excellent overview of elicitation tasks, which are both spontaneous (e.g., classroom interactions) and semi-spontaneous (e.g., production of narratives, map tasks) in nature. Moreover, some authors engage in critical reflections on the nature of the interactional tasks and the factors that contribute to their complexity. Other methodological considerations concern the prosodic analysis of the data, including the formulation of a complex index for assessing L2 prosodic competence.

Given the vast array of topics covered, this volume is intended for a diverse audience, ranging from researchers interested in theoretical and methodological issues involved in the description of interlanguages and their developmental stages, to scholars whose research is more concerned with the optimization of language teaching practices. For example, the volume implicitly investigates which pedagogical practices or language tasks most significantly account for the observed variation in L2 acquisition.

The book consists of 14 contributions preceded by an introduction, in which the editor Marina Chini outlines the main topics around which the following papers are organized: prosodic aspects (Part I of the volume), pragmatic aspects (Part II) and interactional and conversational features of L2 discourse (Part III). This tripartite structure renders the book well organized. Moreover, the fact that some issues (e.g., the expression of information structure) and methodologies (e.g., dialogic tasks) are considered across several contributions provides coherence and clarity to the book as a whole. Finally, it is remarkable that the 'multilingual approach' that informs the content of the various contributions is also reflected at the formal level: some papers are written in Italian (with an abstract in English) and others are written in English (with an abstract in Italian). In what follows, I provide a brief summary of each chapter, adhering to the order in which they appear in the volume.

In "Prosodic expression of sarcasm in L2 English," Aoju Chen and Diantha de Jong analyze the prosodic encoding of sarcasm in the oral production of L1 Dutch/L2 English speakers of different proficiency levels. Sarcastic and non-sarcastic sentences were elicited by means of a 'telephone conversation' task. The sarcastic sentences were of different types, including declaratives (simple or preceded by a specific discourse marker), exclamations and tag questions. Native English speakers were then asked to identify the degree of sarcasm expressed by each sentence. The results indicate that L2 learners do not fully master the prosodic means to encode sarcasm in English. Moreover, the authors report on the effects of the type of stimulus, language proficiency and aptitude.

In "Intonazione, ritmo e atti linguistici. L'italiano L2 di apprendenti senegalesi con diversi modelli di literacy," Marta Maffia uses an elicited imitation task to investigates the extent to which Senegalese speakers with low proficiency in L2 Italian are able to reproduce the intonation and rhythmic structure of Italian sentences. The participants experienced different literacy practices in their home country: one group attended French schools – focused on the teaching of reading and writing –, while the other group attended Koranic schools, where orally-based learning was emphasized (e.g., reciting of the Koran). By means of an algorithm, the author calculates the degree to which the prosodic contour of L2 utterances differs from the one produced by L1 Italian speakers. The results reveal the crucial role of the type of literacy instruction for L2 prosodic competence. The participants from the Koranic schools appear more sensitive to prosodic and rhythmic aspects of speech production than the participants from the French schools, who are more focused on reproduction at the segmental level, and the prosodic contours of the former more closely mirror those of native Italian speakers. Moreover, when unable to reproduce individual words, the participants from Koranic schools make extensive use of 'mumbling' as a strategy to maintain the rhythmical structure of the sentence.

In "Misurare la competenza prosodica. Le richieste in italiano e in inglese lingue straniere," Marilisa Vitale, Elisa Pellegrino, Anna de Meo and Margaret Rasulo offer a methodological contribution: they elaborate a formula that enables researchers to calculate the degree of similarity between two intonation contours. This formula compares two (or more) intonation contours in terms of their frequency values, the durations of certain intonational events and the number of incorrectly positioned intonational peaks. By this means, the authors are able to assess developmental sequences – considering the contours produced by learners of different proficiency levels and the native contours – and patterns of L1 influence of L2 speech – comparing the learners' contours in their L1 and L2. The authors test the formula on the production of questions (open, closed and alternative) in L2 Italian (L1 English) and L2 English (L1 Italian). The results show a developmental progression in L2 prosody, especially in correspondence with closed questions in both interlanguages. Moreover, the production of questions in L2 English is seen to be more sensitive to L1 influence.

In "Mentire in due lingue: la prosodia del parlato ingannevole in italiano e cinese L1/L2," Anna de Meo and Ying Xu analyze deceptive speech across languages (Italian vs. Chinese) and interlanguages (L2 Italian vs. L2 Chinese). The data were elicited using a false opinion paradigm: speakers were required to discuss a certain social issue in line with their true opinion in some cases, and opposite to their true opinion in others. The analysis is based on various (potential) prosodic indicators of deception. The results show that some of these indicators are sensitive to cross-linguistic difference between Italian and Chinese (e.g., duration of articulated speech sequences), others to the L1 vs. L2 distinction (e.g., response latency in L1 Chinese vs. L2 Italian), and still others to the truth of the conveyed message (e.g., occurrence of pauses in L2 Chinese true statements vs. L2 Chinese false statements).

In "Prosody and information status in Italian and German L2 intonation," Cinzia Avesani, Giuliano Bocci, Mario Vayra and Alessandra Zappoli investigate the prosodic marking of information structure (givenness, newness and contrast) in L2 German (L1 Italian) and L2 Italian (L1 German). While in Italian the distribution of pitch accents is constrained only by metrical prosodic structure, in German pragmatic factors can override metrical principles: given information can be deaccented even if it occurs at the right edge of a metrical domain. Deaccentuation can thus be classified as a marked structure. The analysis in the paper is based on noun-adjective sequences as produced during an alignment task, in which the information status of the noun and the adjective were manipulated. The results show that L2 Italian speakers master the distribution of pitch accents in Italian earlier than L2 German speakers do in German. The authors interpret this finding in light of later acquisition of marked structures in German.

In "La trascrizione di varietà di apprendimento iniziali," Jacopo Saturno provides methodological guidelines for the transcription of L2 speech. In particular, the author emphasizes the limits of orthographic transcriptions, which are usually adapted to the forms of the target language and are thus not able to account for regularities within interlanguages. On the contrary, phonetic transcriptions reflect the learners' production *per se* and are less sensitive to overinterpretations by researchers. For example, the use of phonetic transcriptions may be useful to identify basic forms or observe the emergence of certain morphological oppositions in the early stages of L2 development. The author shows that these methodological issues are particularly relevant when transcribing early L2 productions of morphologically complex languages like Polish, just as the one collected in the VILLA Project, from which the data discussed in the paper are drawn.

"La periferia sinistra nell'interlingua degli apprendenti ispanofoni di italiano L2: i temi sospesi" by Margarita Borreguero Zuloaga marks the beginning of Part II and the emphasis of pragmatic aspects. Drawing on a corpus of symmetrical and asymmetrical semi-spontaneous conversations, the author analyzes the production of hanging topics (HT) by L2 Italian speakers (L1 Spanish) of different levels of proficiency. The L2 acquisition of HTs exhibits a clear developmental sequence, which takes into account both the type of constituent involved (e.g., pronouns vs. full nouns/prepositional phrases) and their pragmatic function. While in initial varieties HTs are mainly first person singular pronouns, which mark the speaker as a deictic center, intermediate learners start to make use of full nouns. Moreover, these forms are usually associated with a raising intonation, which seems to indicate ongoing language planning. Finally, among advanced learners, HTs achieve their informational function of introducing a new discourse topic, thus approximating the native use.

In "Ipotesi di sviluppo di ordini sintattici marcati in giovanissimi apprendenti di italiano L2," Elena Nuzzo studies the emergence of VS structures in the oral production of immigrant children, ranging in age from 6 to 12 years old and learning Italian as an L2. The analysis is based on narrative production.

Theoretically couched within Processability Theory, the paper shows that the target structure first emerges with monoargumental verbs for which VS is the canonical word order, and then with monoargumental verbs in which the VS order is motivated by considerations of information structure. Lastly, VS emerges in association with biargumental verbs, in which the subject is focalized and the object is either expressed by a clitic (or left-dislocated clitic constituent) or prosodically marginalized. These structures have the greatest complexity because they require the mastery of the syntax of clitics, the integration of syntax with information structure, and the processing of a greater number of arguments. Moreover, the author observes the emergence of VS in association with the interphrasal procedure in morphological development.

In "La struttura informativa dell'enunciato in apprendenti tedescofoni di italiano L2: apprendimento spontaneo e guidato a confronto," Valentina Repetto deals with the informational partitioning of sentences produced in Italian by intermediate L2 Italian speakers (L1 German), who have learned Italian in two different contexts, i.e., spontaneous vs. guided learning. The data consists of spontaneous or semi-spontaneous dialogues with native speakers either in naturalistic contexts or in language examinations. The results show that all learners tend to structure their utterances following a topic-comment order, and there is no evidence for cross-linguistic inference of the L1 on the L2. However, a closer analysis of the constituent that serves as topic reveals that guided learners tend to map topics onto subjects, which suggests that the structuring of their sentences is sensitive to grammatical constraints. On the contrary, spontaneous learners allow for a greater variation of type of topic constituents (especially adverbials of setting) and appear more sensitive to discourse-pragmatic principles.

In "Forme connettive nell'italiano parlato da stranieri e livelli di competenza: alcune evidenze dal corpus LIPS," Francesca Gallina shifts attention from sentences to discourses, and accounts for the use of connectives by L2 learners of Italian. The data are drawn from the LIPS corpus, which was created based on oral texts (dialogues and monologues) produced during proficiency exams. In particular, the author aims to establish a developmental sequence for the emergence of connectives in the interlanguage as well as for the functions that these connectives express. For example, connectives endowed with an interactional function (i.e., related to the structuring of dialogic interactions, such as expression of agreement, turn taking and request of attention) emerge earlier than connectives with a metatextual function (i.e., related to the structuring of discourse, such as introductions, conclusions or exemplifications), and appear even in the very early stages of L2 acquisition. The author discusses the pedagogical implications of the study and argues in favor of an explicit focus on the use of connectives during language teaching.

In "La percezione e la correzione dell'errore in italiano L2: l'influenza della L1 sulla riparazione spontanea di errori pragmatici," Manuela Visigalli investigates the extent to which the number and type of L2 self-repairs are dependent on the perceived similarity between the learners' L1 and the target language. The analysis is based on the occurrence of morphosyntactic and pragmatic repairs in the speech of two groups of L2 learners: L1 German and L1 Spanish. The participants took part in a picture narrative task and were asked to answer questions related to the perceived degree of difficulty of learning Italian. Although proficiency in Italian was the same in both groups, German learners' self-repairs were more oriented towards morphosyntactic forms, which correlated with their perceived degree of difficulty in learning Italian. On the contrary, Spanish learners exhibited a stronger focus on pragmatics (e.g., appropriate use of referring expressions, register). The perceived similarity between the L1 and the target language was found to favor the automatization of L2 morphosyntactic elements elements, which allowed learners to pay more attention to pragmatics. The contribution "La difficoltà interazionale dei task: definizione operativa e risultati di ricerca" by Gabriele Pallotti and Fabiana Rosi opens Part III of the volume, which explores interactional features in L2 speech. The authors approach the issue from a methodological point of view by assessing the degree of complexity of different interactional tasks. The authors describe interactional difficulty in terms of a construct defined by three main components: number of turns, amount of initiating moves and presence vs. absence of visual access. The validity of this construct is tested against the oral production of native and non-native Italian speakers in various oral tasks, including film retelling, interviews, problem solving tasks, telephone tasks and map-tasks. The authors order these tasks in terms of their interactional difficulty (film retelling < interview < problem solving < map task < telephone task), and show that the outlined hierarchy applies across the two groups of speakers considered in the study (natives and non-natives). The results are discussed in terms of implications for language testing.

In "Procedure conversazionali e strategie comunicative nell'interazione nativo/non-nativo in italiano L2: il caso di apprendenti cinesi," Luisa Salvati accounts for L2 production of argumentative texts. The starting point for the author's considerations is the analysis of the oral production of L2 Italian speakers (L1

Chinese) involved in a public debate with native Italian speakers on a socially relevant topic. The author notices that the L2 speakers resort to a simpler style of argumentation than monolingual native speakers, which is the result of both limited communicative resources as well as the avoidance of contradiction with one's opponents – in line with a behavioral norm existing in the culture of origin. The results of the study are discussed in light of the fundamental role of intercultural practices in L2 acquisition. The author argues that successful L2 communication should be informed by awareness of the L2 cultural grammar, including, for example, an understanding of how argumentative texts are structured in the target language, which inference rules are admitted, and which linguistic and extra-linguistic behaviors are usually expected.

In "Cooperare in L2. Le conversazioni tra bambini italofoni e non italofoni in alcune situazioni di apprendimento cooperativo," Silvia Sordella shows how interactional tasks can be used as tools for facilitating language learning in multilingual elementary classes. In particular, the author provides some examples of the negotiation of meaning among native and non-native speakers during cooperative learning activities. In these activities, children work in groups and each child is responsible for the achievement of a learning goal. All children (including those with limited language proficiency) are thus encouraged to optimize their communicational strategies, modelling their production on the input from their peers, and thus (co-)constructing meaning in interaction. The contribution is based on the analysis of a child's L2-speech across different classroom activities (such as vocabulary or reading tasks). The author shows that cooperative learning enhances the child's linguistic production.

As previously noted, the volume edited by Marina Chini reflects a collaborative effort among researchers working on interlanguage prosody and pragmatics. The contributions address central questions in L2 acquisition research, in particular, what it means for a learner to be proficient in a L2, how language proficiency can be operationalized, which factors affect L2 development, and which teaching practices more effectively foster L2 acquisition. These topics are investigated from a variety of perspectives and with diversity in expertise (including expertise from researchers and teachers), and they are analyzed within different theoretical frameworks (such as Processability Theory and the complexity, accuracy and fluency model of L2 acquisition). On the one hand, this wealth of information provides a very good overview of studies on L2 acquisition and opens up new domains of research. The discussion can be extended in several directions to include, for instance, the assessment of developmental sequences at the syntax-discourse-prosody interface or the validation of the analyses reported in the volume with acquisitional data from other languages. On the other hand, the prodigious amount of variety found in the volume may render the exposition dense at times, especially for readers who are not familiar with the topics covered. Nevertheless, each contribution is effective in providing a detailed state-of-the-art survey of the research questions, previous findings and employed methodologies. In addition, the tripartite structure (prosodic and phonological aspects, pragmatic aspects and aspects of interaction and conversation in L2) as well as the introduction by Marina Chini ensure that the volume is in general clearly organized and very readable.

References

Andorno, Cecilia (2000). *Focalizzatori tra connessione e messa a fuoco. Il punto di vista delle varietà di apprendimento*. Milano, Italia: Franco Angeli.

Bettoni, Camilla (2006). *Usare un'altra lingua. Guida alla pragmatica interculturale*. Roma/Bari, Italia: Laterza.

Bongartz, Christiane, & Torregrossa, Jacopo (2017). The effects of balanced biliteracy on Greek-German bilingual children's secondary discourse abilities. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. DOI: 10.1080/13670050.2017.1355888.

Chini, Marina (Ed.). (2010). *Topic, struttura dell'informazione e acquisizione linguistica*. Milano, Italia: Franco Angeli.

Giacalone-Ramat, Anna (Ed.). (2003). *Verso l'italiano. Percorsi e strategie d'acquisizione*. Roma, Italia: Carocci.

Rasier, Laurent, & Hiligsmann, Philippe (2007). Prosodic transfer from L1 to L2. Theoretical and methodological issues. *Nouveaux cahiers de linguistique française, 28*, 41-66.

Jacopo Torregrossa, University of Hamburg
jacopo.torregrossa@uni-hamburg.de

EN	**Jacopo Torregrossa** is Professor of Romance Linguistics at the University of Hamburg. His research interests focus on monolingual and bilingual acquisition of linguistic phenomena at the syntax-semantics and syntax-phonology interface and the interaction between language, literacy, and cognitive abilities. Since January 2017 he has worked as the Co-Principal Investigator for the project "Reference management in bilingual narratives" of the Collaborative Research Center 1252 "Prominence in Language" at the University of Cologne," at the University of Cologne, in collaboration with Professor Christiane Bongartz.

ES	**Jacopo Torregrossa** es profesor de Lingüística Románica en la Universidad de Hamburgo. Su línea de investigación se centra en la adquisición monolingüe y bilingüe de fenómenos lingüísticos en la interrelación de sintaxis-semántica y sintaxis-fonología y la interacción entre habilidades cognitivas, literacidad y lingüísticas. Desde enero de 2017 es el investigador principal asociado del proyecto "Reference management in bilingual narratives" del Centro de Investigación Colaborativa 1252 "Prominence in Language" de la Universidad de Colonia, en colaboración con la profesora Christiane Bongartz.

IT	**Jacopo Torregrossa** è professore di Linguistica Romanza all'Università di Amburgo. La sua ricerca è incentrata sull'acquisizione monolingue e bilingue di fenomeni linguistici a livello sintattico-semantico e sintattico-fonologico e, sull'interazione tra la lingua, contesti educativi e le abilità cognitive. Da gennaio 2017 è co-responsabile del progetto "Reference management in bilingual narratives" del Centro di Ricerca Collaborativo 1252 "Prominence in Language," presso l'Università di Colonia, in collaborazione con la professoressa Christiane Bongartz.