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*The acquisition of Italian as L3 by
L1-Chinese learners under the influence
of L2-English: a study on determiners and
adjectives.*

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Declaration of Academic Integrity for Dissertation

I solemnly declare that the dissertation submitted by me is the result of independent research conducted under the guidance of my thesis supervisor. The dissertation does not include any other papers that have been previously published by individuals or groups, nor have they been published on the Internet, except for the contents that have been appropriately cited within the text.

Hereby declared.

Signature of the author: *Zhanghua Chen* Date: Agosto 20, 2023

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Abstract

This dissertation presents a comprehensive study on the acquisition of Italian articles and adjectival order by Chinese learners influenced by their prior acquisition of English. The study adopts a syntactic DP perspective and aims to investigate the challenges and difficulties faced by Chinese students when learning Italian, with a specific focus on DP structures. It further explores how Chinese students gradually acquire DP structures in Italian by comparing them with syntactic DP structures in English. Additionally, the research analyzes the developmental paths and evolutionary patterns of Chinese students' acquisition of DP structures. Factors influencing their acquisition, such as language backgrounds, learning strategies, and language input, are also examined. The study concludes by proposing teaching strategies and methods that can assist Chinese students in mastering the DP structure in Italian more effectively.

The research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

What are the patterns and challenges in the acquisition of determiners in L3-Italian by L1-Chinese learners under the influence of L2-English?

How does the acquisition of adjectival sequences in L3-Italian by L1-Chinese learners under the influence of L2-English occur and progress?

To address these questions, quantitative research and corpus methodology are employed, involving data collection through questionnaire and written tasks. The collected data were analyzed with SPSS.

The results of this study indicate that Chinese students learning Italian experience both positive and negative language transfer effects influenced by English. The learning process follows a general language acquisition trajectory, progressing from simpler to more complex structures. These findings hold significant implications for guiding Chinese students in learning L3-Italian while considering their L2-English acquisition. However, it's important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, which has a limited sample size, and primarily focuses on school students and may not be fully generalized to all Chinese learners of Italian.

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I. Introduction

As an influential international language, English has always occupied a prominent position among global languages. China, as a developing country, increasingly focuses on political, economic, and cultural exchanges with other nations, language plays a crucial role as a medium. Italy, as an important European country, has been fostering closer communication with China ever since establishing diplomatic relations in 1970. This has led to the widespread introduction of Italian language courses in numerous Chinese universities, cultivating a multitude of talents who contribute to China's development and facilitate exchange and trade between the two nations.

However, in light of recent changes in the global landscape, China has made a shift in its foreign language education. Russian, once taught as the primary foreign language, has been replaced by English. This comprehensive transition to prioritize English education now spans from elementary school to university. Following China's accession to the World Trade Organization, the influence of English education has grown significantly. Although Italian education has flourished in China concurrently, it remains primarily limited to being offered as a "minor foreign language" at the university level. Consequently, Chinese students' exposure to Italian is largely influenced by their acquisition of English, which begins as early as elementary school or even kindergarten.

The chosen topic for this dissertation is "*The acquisition of Italian as L3 by L1-Chinese learners under the influence of L2-English: a study on determiners and adjectives.*". The study aims to examine whether the acquisition of Italian syntax, particularly in the area of Determiner Phrase (DP), is influenced by the prior acquisition of English among Chinese students. Additionally, it seeks to explore the positive and negative aspects of language transfer in this context.

The decision to focus on the DP aspect of syntax, specifically the acquisition of articles and adjective sequences, is motivated by the absence of similar linguistic features in Chinese. Unlike Cinque's (1994) hierarchical sequences of adjectives, Chinese does not possess specific grammatical rules governing adjective sequences. Instead, adjective order in Chinese is primarily determined by factors such as pronunciation convenience and word length. Consequently, Chinese students lack both conceptual and linguistic foundations in these two areas when approaching foreign languages, particularly European languages. When Chinese students embark on their second foreign language acquisition, namely English, they begin to encounter concepts such as articles and adjectival sequences. However, due to the limited availability of scientific theoretical guidance on these aspects in China,

Chinese students often face difficulties in acquiring the appropriate articles and adjectival sequences in English. Unfortunately, this issue has not received adequate attention, exacerbating the challenges in these areas. Consequently, when Chinese students commence learning Italian as their third foreign language, the more intricate articles and adjectival sequences in Italian presents even greater challenges. Hence, conducting research on the acquisition of Italian articles and adjective sequences by Chinese learners, considering the influence of their prior language experiences, carries substantial practical significance. This study aims to offer valuable insights into how Chinese students acquire Italian, with a specific emphasis on these challenging aspects within the context of cross-language influence (CLI).

The objectives of this dissertation are as follows:

I) To examine the challenges and difficulties faced by Chinese students when acquiring Italian articles and its adjectival sequences, specifically in relation to DP structures, under the influence of English acquisition.

II) To explore the gradual acquisition of Italian articles and its adjectival sequences by Chinese students learning Italian under the influence of English acquisition, through a comparative analysis of the syntactic DP structures (more precisely articles and adjectival sequences) in English and Italian.

III) To analyze the developmental paths and evolutionary patterns observed in the acquisition of Italian articles and its adjectival sequences by Chinese students.

IV) To investigate the factors that impact Chinese students' acquisition of Italian articles and its adjectival sequences, including language background, learning strategies, language input, and others.

V) To propose effective teaching strategies and methods aimed at helping Chinese students master the Italian articles and its adjectival sequences more effectively.

In addition to the introductory section, this dissertation comprises the following components:

I. Introduction: This chapter will introduce the historical background and development of Italian language learning in China, and the reasons for choosing "articles" and "adjectival sequences" acquisition as the focus of this thesis.

II. Literature Review: This section will provide a comprehensive review of prior studies on Italian language acquisition and cross-language acquisition. It will specifically focus on previous research findings regarding cross-language influence (CLI) and Third language acquisition (TLA).

III. Theoretical Framework: This section will provide the theoretical foundation used in this study, which includes some theories about cross-Linguistic and language acquisition.

IV. Research Methodologies and Assumptions: This section will describe the methodology used in this study and make preliminary assumptions.

V. Contrast among Chinese, Italian and English in articles and adjectival sequencesExperiment: This section will present the similarities and differences in the DP syntactic systems of L1,L2,L3 in terms of their article systems and the comparison of their adjectival sequences.

VI. Data Collection and Analysis: This section will show the data collected on the opinions and views of the Chinese universities` teachers, as well as the data on the test questions done by the participants, and the results of the data analysis through SPSS.

VII. Conclusions and reflections: This section will show the conclusions obtained from the experimental data, as well as possible problems and recommendations for L1 students in terms of teaching and acquiring L3 articles and its adjectival sequences under the influence of L2.

II. Literature Review

Previous linguists have explored this topic through various avenues such as third language acquisition, multilingualism, language transfer, syntactic analysis, cross-language influence, language exposure, and linguistic analysis. The present dissertation will present a selection of some studies in these areas.

1. literature on language acquisition, acquisition of a second foreign language, acquisition of a third foreign language and cross-linguistic influences.

Taking a comprehensive view of the present dissertation, which deals with aspects of language acquisition and cross-linguistic influences in Chinese, English and Italian, the first part of the literature review is therefore devoted to language acquisition, acquisition of a second foreign language, acquisition of a third foreign language and cross-linguistic influences.

1) Hammarberg (2001) - Roles of L1 and L2 in L3 production and acquisition.

Hammarberg has published an academic article titled "Roles of L1 and L2 in L3 production and acquisition" in the International Journal of Multilingualism. In terms of research methodology, Hammarberg employed a longitudinal approach (more specifically a longitudinal corpus of audiotaped of conversation) in his study. The participant is one native English speaker, Sarah Williams who had previously studied French, German and Italian as second languages before learning Swedish as a third language. The German is her principal L2.

Hammarberg proposed a hypothesis from 4 factors to investigate the effect of L2 on L3:

1. **Typological similarity:** influence from L2 is favored if L2 is typologically close to L3, especially if L1 is more distant.
2. **Proficiency:** (i.e. L2 influence is favored if the learner has a high level of competence in L2, and if the L2 has been acquired and used in natural situations).
3. **Recency:** (i.e. an L2 is activated more easily if the speaker has used it recently and thus maintained easy access to it.)
4. **L2 status:** there appears to be a general tendency to activate an earlier secondary language in L3 performance rather than L1.

To gather data, Hammarberg employed a method that involved recording conversations between the interlocutor (BH) and the participant (SW). And then the researchers got a text corpus of interviews, discussion and picture story narrations,

and the researcher analyzed this corpus from the aspects of morphology, phonology and phonetic settings and the background language of the participant (SW). The corpus comprises about 55,000 words token in total, of which 37,000 make up the utterances of the participant (SW) and 18,000 those of the native interlocutor (BH).

From the analysis of this corpus, the researcher concluded that: The research highlights the unique aspects of the speaking process in polyglots compared to monolingual or bilingual speakers. The study confirms that prior knowledge of other languages significantly impacts the acquisition of L3. The polyglot's background languages (L1 and L2) have distinct roles, with L1 influencing the instrumental aspect and L2 acting as a supplier. Language switches during speech are not deliberate attempts to use L3 but temporary choices influenced by the conceptualizer. The construction of lexemes is influenced by pre-existing lemma content, often derived from L2 German. Word formation and morphology are externally influenced, while phonological aspects are shaped by L2. The study identifies a strong tendency for L2 German to dominate as the external supplier language, possibly due to its higher conditioning factors and constant role. Minimizing the number of co-activated languages appears to be more efficient for polyglots during speech formulation. The paragraph concludes by suggesting that further research on polyglot language learners could provide deeper insights into the role of background languages in language acquisition.

The longitudinal design of the study stands as a notable strength since it allowed for the observation of changes in the participant's language production and acquisition over two years. Furthermore, the utilization of multiple data (interviews, discussion and picture story narrations) provided a comprehensive perspective on the participants' language abilities.

One potential limitation of the study is the small sample size, comprising only one native speaker of English. Additionally, the fact that the study focused solely on one native English speaker may restrict the generalizability of the findings. In the present dissertation, for instance, the research investigated how Chinese students' acquisition of Italian articles and Italian adjectival sequences was influenced by their acquisition of English. Therefore, Hammarberg's findings may not directly apply to the research topic of the present dissertation due to the vast linguistic differences between Chinese, English, and Italian. Chinese, as a Sino-Tibetan language, differs significantly from English and Italian, both of which belong to the Indo-European language family. Moreover, Hammarberg's experimental subject (SW), being native English speaker, had English as her first language, which belongs to the Indo-European - Germanic languages, while her second foreign languages, German French and Italian, belong to the Indo-European - Germanic languages and Indo-European - Romance languages, and the third foreign language she acquired, Swedish, also belong to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family. Therefore, the study's representativeness and universality are limited.

To enhance the generalizability of Hammarberg's findings, it would be necessary to expand the participant pool and include a broader range of languages. For instance, the inclusion of participants from Eurasian, African, and even Native American language backgrounds would be beneficial. However, conducting such a comprehensive study would require collaboration among linguists from various disciplines specialized in third language acquisition. This collaborative effort would help establish more generalized patterns and conclusions.

In summary, the study's limitations include a small sample size and the narrow linguistic scope of the participants. Expanding the number of participants and incorporating a wider range of languages would improve the generalizability of the findings. However, accomplishing this task would necessitate extensive research collaboration across linguistic disciplines.

2) Kevin McManus (2021) -Crosslinguistic Influence and Second Language Learning.

When discussing third language acquisition, it is inevitable to mention the concept of "cross-linguistic influence". In *Kevin McManus (2021) <Crosslinguistic Influence and Second Language Learning>*, the issue of cross-linguistic influence in second language acquisition is explored, focusing on the influence of learners' native language on second language acquisition. So for the present dissertation, Italian as a L3 can also be seen as L2 (since in the linguistic definition L2=L2,L3) Therefore, Kevin McManus (2021) is also of great reference value.

Kevin McManus's (2021) theoretical framework builds upon Chomsky's generative grammar theory and the fundamental assumptions of second language acquisition. It highlights the universals inherent in the linguistic system and the learners' intrinsic knowledge, aiming to explore the relationship between cross-linguistic influences and second language acquisition.

Chomsky's generative grammar theory, one of the most renowned generative grammar theories, posits that language ability is innate in humans. It suggests that the human brain possesses a built-in linguistic system known as "universal grammar." This linguistic system encompasses the fundamental rules and structures that underlie all natural languages. In generative grammar, sentences are generated through a set of rules. These rules describe how words and phrases combine to form sentences and can be classified into two types: "phrase structure rules" and "transformation rules." Phrase structure rules specify the composition of words and phrases into more complex sentences, while transformation rules govern the conversion of one sentence into another. For instance, a phrase structure rule can be used to construct the simple sentence "*Mary loves Jack.*" If we want to transform it into a sentence with a subordinate clause, such as "I know that Mary loves Jack," we employ transformation rules, often expressed as "S ➔ S + that + S." Here, "S"

represents a sentence, "that" is a conjunction, and "S after that" signifies a subordinate clause. However, while the phrase "Mary rains Jack" may be grammatically correct, it lacks semantic coherence and is linguistically invalid.

The basic assumptions of second language acquisition encompass various elements that enjoy wide acceptance. These assumptions include the following:

1. Learners' language acquisition ability: Second language learners possess an innate ability to acquire language, akin to the crucial role played by this ability in children's language acquisition. Learners acquire grammatical structures and rules through exposure to and utilization of the second language.
2. Natural order: When acquiring a second language, learners naturally acquire different linguistic features and structures in a specific order. Although this order may vary among individuals, a general pathway of acquisition exists.
3. Importance of input: Learners require exposure to appropriate input at their language level, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The quality of input significantly impacts the outcome of language acquisition.
4. Distinction between acquisition and learning: Acquisition refers to the language skills acquired through communication and language use, while learning pertains to the language knowledge acquired through teaching and study. Acquisition focuses on the practical application and comprehension of language, while learning concentrates on the acquisition of language rules and knowledge.

By integrating previous theories, Kevin McManus argues that all languages possess universal linguistic rules and features that are connected to the innate mechanisms of human language acquisition. In the process of acquiring a second language, learners need to compare and analyze the similarities and differences between their native language and the target language in order to adapt their language systems and achieve better mastery of the target language. Moreover, Kevin McManus examines the impacts of language input, learning environment, and language output on second language acquisition. He emphasizes that meaningful and personally relevant language input is crucial for motivating learners. Additionally, a supportive and positive learning environment contributes to better learning experiences and feedback. Furthermore, language output plays a vital role in enhancing language proficiency and facilitating language acquisition as it assists learners in grasping language rules and contexts.

Within the context of cross-language learning, Kevin McManus also addresses the concept of "cross-language influence," which refers to the impact of knowledge from one's first language on the learning and usage of a second language. This influence can have both positive and negative effects depending on the degree of similarity or

difference between the two languages. Relevant to this thesis, cross-language influence can manifest at the lexical, phonological, pragmatic, and grammatical levels. Grammatical structure differences between the first and second languages can pose challenges for learners in acquiring grammar in the second language.

In summary, Kevin McManus underscores the universality inherent in the language system and the intrinsic knowledge of learners, while exploring the influence of language input, learning environment, and language output on language acquisition. Regarding the merits of "Crosslinguistic Influence and Second Language Learning" by Kevin McManus (2021), it is worth noting that the author extensively reviews and compounds a vast body of literature and research on cross-language influences in second language acquisition. This comprehensive review provides a valuable reference for the present study. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of this study, rooted in Chomsky's generative grammar theory and incorporating the fundamental assumptions of second language acquisition, offers a comprehensive foundation for understanding second language acquisition. By exploring the effects of language input, learning environment, and language output on learning, the paper addresses crucial aspects in the field of second language acquisition. However, it is important to acknowledge that Kevin McManus's study does not include original experiments or data analysis but rather provides a review and summary of previous research. Consequently, the conclusions may lack some uniqueness and innovation. Additionally, certain parts of the study are described in an abstract manner, which may hinder the ease of understanding and practical application in research.

Overall, while the study contributes significantly by synthesizing existing knowledge and providing a solid theoretical framework, it may benefit from incorporating more original research and presenting the findings in a more accessible and applicable manner.

3) I.N. Jensen, N. Mitrofanova et al (2021) - Crosslinguistic influence in L3 acquisition across linguistic modules.

In the study titled "Crosslinguistic influence in L3 acquisition across linguistic modules" by I.N. Jensen, N. Mitrofanova et al. (2021), the concept of "cross-linguistic influence" is further explored. This research investigated a total of 31 individuals who were bilingual in Russian and Norwegian, in addition to 90 native speakers of Norwegian and 74 native speakers of Russian. The bilingual participants had acquired Russian and Norwegian from birth or early childhood, while the monolingual participants were solely proficient in their native language. All participants began learning English at school around the age of six, with the bilingual participants also attending a Russian-speaking evening/sunday school in Norway. To ensure comparability, the participants' English vocabulary skills were matched using a modified British picture vocabulary scale.

The experimental methods employed in the study included the “Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT)”, in which participants were required to assess the grammaticality of English sentences by assigning them a "good" or "bad" value. The sentences covered various linguistic characteristics and were divided into two lists, ensuring that participants only viewed one sentence from each pair. Native English speakers had previously examined these sentences to assess their naturalness and grammaticality. By examining the accuracy of bilingual and monolingual participants in completing language tasks under different language conditions, the researchers aimed to investigate the role of previously acquired language knowledge during the learning of a third language (L3).

Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the impact of cross-linguistic influence on third language acquisition, utilizing diverse participant groups and employing rigorous experimental methods such as the Acceptability Judgment Task. The study employed a comprehensive set of syntactic and semantic tasks that includes various aspects of syntactic, morphological, and syntactic-semantic interfaces. It was guided by the “Linear Progression Model (LPM)” and “Scalpel Model”, which enabled I.N. Jensen, N. Mitrofanova et al. to present predictions regarding the influence of previously acquired language on third language (L3) learners. These predictions suggested that L3 learners would experience both inhibitory and facilitative effects of cross-linguistic influence (CLI) stemming from the similarities between language structures. The study covered seven linguistic properties across three language modules: morphology, syntax, and syntax-semantics.

Throughout the experiment, the researchers thoroughly analyzed the results in relation to their research questions and predictions. The primary focus was on comparing the accuracy scores of different participant groups across various test conditions. The predictions were formulated based on the LPM (Linear Progression Model), Scalpel model, TPM (Typological Preference Model), and CEM (Cumulative Enhancement Model). By considering these models, the study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics involved in the influence of previously acquired languages on the acquisition of an L3.

Here, four models need to be explained:

LPM (Linear Progression Model): The LPM is a theoretical model in linguistics that describes and explains language development and acquisition. This model proposes a hypothesis about the acquisition of grammatical structures in the language learning process, assuming that language acquisition progresses gradually in a linear order. According to the LPM, language learners gradually acquire different grammatical features or rules in a specific developmental sequence when acquiring grammatical structures. The core assumption of the LPM is that the acquisition of grammatical structures is sequential, with learners first acquiring relatively simple grammatical features and then gradually acquiring more complex features.

Scalpel Model: The Scalpel Model suggests that language learners acquire grammatical structures by using a scalpel-like strategy to break down sentences into smaller components in order to understand and master the structure of the sentence. This process involves dissecting sentences into phrases, phrases into words, and further analyzing the relationships and roles among them. By dissecting and breaking down sentences, language learners are able to gradually reveal the rules and patterns of grammatical structure. Unlike the LPM, which emphasizes both the order of acquisition and the process of decomposition and combination within grammatical structure, the Scalpel Model focuses on the gradual process of analysis and understanding of grammatical structures by language learners. The model assumes that through dissecting and decomposing sentences, language learners can discover the connections between grammatical rules and structures, and gradually develop the ability to understand and apply complex structures.

TPM (Typological Primacy Model): The TPM is a theoretical model of language structure acquisition, which suggests that language acquisition is influenced by language typology. It proposes that language learners tend to first learn grammatical structures that are more common and typologically preferred across different languages. This model differs from Universal Grammar, which posits that the structures and mechanisms underlying language acquisition are innate and have less influence from language typology. The TPM places greater emphasis on the importance of language typology and argues that language learners are influenced by commonalities and universals in language typology during acquisition.

The Cumulative Enhancement Model (CEM): The CEM is a theoretical model that describes language acquisition and language variation as a cumulative enhancement process. It suggests that language structure and language variation are gradually strengthened and consolidated through repeated input and use. The theoretical framework of the CEM is applicable to various language learning and language variation situations. For example, it can explain the gradual reinforcement process in children's language acquisition and the gradual acquisition of new language structures and variants by learners in second language acquisition.

With the theoretical model analysis described above, the experimental results of I.N. Jensen, N. Mitrofanova et al (2021) showed that in most conditions, L3 learners (Russian-Norwegian bilinguals who are studying English) showed similar accuracy on certain attributes to the more accurate L2 group (Russian/Norwegian monolinguals), supporting the predictions and the LPM/Scalpel Model. However, in some conditions, the accuracy scores of L3 learners were intermediate between the two L2 groups, suggesting an effect of non-convenience. The study also found that CLI is not only present in one language domain, but is prevalent across language domains, but that different attributes have different slopes of development, associated with language salience and complexity. In conclusion, the study reveals differences in syntactic

knowledge and linguistic competence between groups, highlighting the influence of language background and bilingualism on syntactic competence.

The experiment conducted by I.N. Jensen, N. Mitrofanova et al. (2021) possesses several strengths, which are attributed to its experimental approach, scientific methodology (theoretical framework and experimental model), and the obtained findings: the diversity of its study population, which covers learners from different language backgrounds. The research method used an experimental design to analyze language impact through comparison of task completion accuracy, providing direct data support for the researchers. The experiments also used a variety of theoretical models, such as LPM, Scalpel Model and other linguistic models, which also made the experiments more scientific and reasonable. In addition, the study uses a variety of syntactic and semantic properties to increase the understanding of how CLI behaves in different language domains.

However, this study also has some shortcomings. First, the relatively small sample size of the study may limit the comprehensive understanding of CLI. Second, it does not provide a detailed description of the language background and learning experiences of L3 learners, nor does it employ a longitudinal study approach as we have seen previously used by Hammarberg (2001), which may pose challenges for the interpretation of the findings. This is because the scientific validity of the results of this experiment can only be enhanced if the parameter of the experimenter's linguistic background is controlled for, and only the results observed in the longitudinal time period can better explain the effect of cross-linguistic influences on L3.

4) Javiera Paz Duhalde Solís - Third Language Acquisition: Cross-Linguistic Influence from L1 and L2.

In <Javiera Paz Duhalde Solís' (2015) - Third Language Acquisition: Cross-Linguistic Influence from L1 and L2>, the author focuses on third language acquisition (TLA). The background of this research can be traced to factors such as the rise of global multilingual cultures, concerns about preserving minority languages, and the growth of emigrants or immigrants with linguistic backgrounds from different countries.

The author argues in favor of Chomsky's Universal Grammar perspective that the study of multilingual phenomena is based on the fact that humans are born with the ability to learn and use more than two languages. Therefore, second language acquisition (SLA) has also become an important topic in the study of TLA. And cross-Linguistic Influence (CLI) is an unavoidable factor in the SLA process, as it involves learners' linguistic knowledge prior to acquiring a third language and the influence of this knowledge on the Target Language (TL).

Traditionally, CLI research has focused on the field of second language acquisition

(SLA), which explores how the learner's native language system influences or interferes with the acquisition of a second language. Because the native language is the only prior language system that learners use when acquiring a second language, learners tend to transfer many features of their native language to the second language until they become proficient in the second language. Thus, in TLA, CLI becomes a more interesting and complex object of study because it involves two previously acquired languages and requires a decision about which language system to choose as the language provider (or source language).

However, CLA research is not sufficient to address the numerous issues in TLA, as the field of TLA still has many unanswered questions and uncertainties that require further exploration. Although several theories, frameworks, and methods have been developed in applied areas such as formal language, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and education, these theoretical approaches are more applicable to SLA. The researchers and linguists in TLA argue for the development of its own independent and exclusive scientific theory, as there does not seem to be a clear definition of TLA so far. Moreover, as García-Mayo (2012) points out, the use of L3 acquisition as a field of study had been controversial. In other words, until a few years ago, TLA was not even considered as a separate field of study, but had been included in the category of second language acquisition phenomena. As a result, no attempt was made to study third language acquisition as a separate trend for decades. However, the concept of TLA proposed by Hammarberg (2010) seems to be the most appropriate. He points out that the terms L1, L2, L3, and Ln are usually understood as a concept of sequential acquisition in a chronological order, but in fact do not fully correspond to most practical situations. Therefore, it is important to have a research system of its own for L3 acquisition that does not just follow exactly the framework of L2 acquisition, because in recent history most linguists (including Singh and Carroll 1979, Mitchell and Myles 1998, etc.) have argued that there is no difference in the acquisition of a second (L2) or a third (L3) or an n-th language that are acquired after the native language are referred to as second languages. The "no difference" assumption is based on the fact that most TLA research was originally based on second language acquisition (SLA) research, and therefore the application of SLA theory and methods to TLA was used as a starting point. At one time, third language acquisition (L3) was classified as a second language acquisition (SLA) domain, where "second language" means any non-native language other than the first language. In recent years, some researchers have begun to seriously investigate L3/multilingual acquisition as a separate field of study (Leung, 2007: 95). Other researchers such as Hufeisen and Marx (2004) also advocate that TLA should not be considered as equivalent to SLA, but as a sub-theme of SLA. They encourage scholars to develop a theoretical framework on TLA, or a broader model of SLA. For example, in the study of this dissertation, if the acquisition of Italian by Chinese students were to be understood only according to the SLA model, the main references to language transfer and cross-linguistic influence would focus mainly on the transfer and influence of Chinese. However, due to the linguistic typology classification, Chinese

students acquiring Italian under the influence of English are significantly less influenced by Chinese language transfer and influence than English. This is because linguistically typologically, Chinese and Italian are much more different than English and Italian.

Thus, this study addresses two primary factors of Crosslinguistic Influence (CLI): (i) linguistic typological distance and the status of the second language (L2), and (ii) how these factors influence the activation of learners' first language (L1) or second language (L2) in the acquisition of a third language (L3).

Regarding linguistic or typological distance, the author highlights that it is an extensively studied factor in the field of second language acquisition. It encompasses the similarities and differences between languages, which may be based on genetic relationships, formal similarities, or learners' perceptions of language similarity. Research indicates that learners often rely on source languages that are closely related to the target language when acquiring a third language. For instance, despite Spanish and English belonging to different language families (Romance and Germanic, respectively), they both fall under the Indo-European family, resulting in numerous lexical similarities. This makes Spanish a frequently used source language for learners acquiring English.

Furthermore, linguistic distance has been given attention at the morphosyntactic level in the context of third language acquisition. Researchers have aimed to provide empirical evidence on Universal Grammar (UG) in second languages to determine whether learners' prior knowledge of a non-native language can be applied to a third language. Currently, two dominant models prevail in this regard: the cumulative enhancement model (CEM) and the type-first model (TPM). The CEM posits that transfer from a previously acquired language can occur in third language acquisition, while the TPM suggests that linguistic typological distance plays a crucial role in language selection when learning a third language.

Taken collectively, the study of Javiera Paz Duhalde Solís possesses several notable strengths:

1. **Topic significance:** The investigation of third language acquisition and cross-linguistic influences is a vital and meaningful area of study. Given the ongoing process of globalization and increased interaction among diverse language communities, research on third language acquisition holds practical importance.

2. **Theoretical framework:** The study adopts the Universal Grammar perspective, a widely employed theoretical framework in language acquisition research. By employing Universal Grammar theory, researchers can explore universal patterns and examine the impact of cross-linguistic influences in language acquisition.

3. **Bridging research gaps:** Third language acquisition represents a relatively new and

underexplored research field, particularly regarding the influence of first and second languages on the acquisition of a third language. This study has the potential to fill this research gap and provide a foundational basis for further investigation.

However, it is important to acknowledge several limitations:

1. Insufficient research details and empirical studies: The available information does not provide specific insights into the research methods employed or the empirical findings obtained in this literature. The absence of study design, data collection procedures, and analytical methods restricts the readers' ability to gain in-depth understanding and evaluate the study's conclusions.

2. Inadequate information coverage: The provided description fails to offer comprehensive details regarding the literature's content and scope. The absence of specific case studies, illustrative analyses, or detailed descriptions of the findings makes it challenging for readers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the study's intricacies and discoveries.

2. Literature on the Italian articles.

The most difficult part of the acquisition of the Italian articles for Chinese students is the omission of the definite article, in addition to the use of different articles in the same lexical gender and the use of different articles in the feminine and masculine gender, so this section reviews the literature on the acquisition of the omission of the definite article.

1) Ida Ferrari, Simona Matteini - Sensitive Contexts for D Omission in Italian L1: A Case Study.

Ida Ferrari and Simona Matteini conducted a study titled "Sensitive Contexts for D Omission in Italian L1: A Case Study" focusing on the omission of definite articles in Italian in the acquisition of functional element categories. This phenomenon, known as coronal omission, is common in early grammar and varies across languages. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of prosodic and syntactic constraints in explaining coronal omission. Some studies emphasize the correlation between prosodic properties and omission, while others focus on the position of the noun in the sentence.

In this context, Ferrari and Matteini's study falls into the latter category, aiming to examine the specific syntactic contexts that are sensitive to D omission and the role of structural configurations in early language development. By investigating these aspects, the study aims to provide a detailed understanding of the factors influencing D omission.

This study employed "quantitative analysis" and conducted "corpus analysis" with an

original corpus consisting of 11 recordings of a female native Italian-speaking child named Sabrina from the Tuscany region. The corpus transcriptions were in CHAT format, adhering to the CHILDES standard, and underwent double-checking. The researchers aimed to identify factors associated with coronal omission by examining the correlation between coronal omission and noun properties, such as gender, number, and mass distinction, as well as the position and function of nouns in sentences.

Through quantitative analysis and corpus investigation, the study revealed interesting findings regarding the gender attribute. The omission rate of coronals in feminine nouns was found to be 26% (100/381), compared to 20% (56/280) in masculine nouns, approaching statistical significance (Fisher's test p -value = 0.06). This difference can be explained by two factors: (i) masculine coronals exhibit more variant forms in Italian, and (ii) the masculine singular coronal "il" and the masculine plural coronal "gli" are more phonologically complex. Consequently, the child is more likely to omit the coronal in the former context but not in the latter.

Regarding the position of nouns, the study examined four contexts: DP-V, V-DP, P-DP, and isolated DP. The researchers found that the position of the noun in the sentence played a crucial role in coronal omission. Particularly, the highest percentage of coronal omission was observed in the context of P-DP (preposition-crown phrase) at 49% (42/85). This indicated that the context of [P + D] posed challenges for the child in terms of coronal insertion, leading to a higher tendency to omit the determiner. The researchers proposed two hypotheses to explain this phenomenon. Firstly, by omitting the determiner, children might avoid the additional complexities involved in the derivation of complex prepositions in Italian. Secondly, the omission of the determiner is influenced by the nature of the two heads (P and D) in this structure, irrespective of the head merging process. Both P and D are heads of NP functional extension projections and contribute to NP case assignment. Thus, in order to alleviate the burden on the still developing computational and expressive system, a child may choose to omit one of them. Omitting the determiner (D) might be preferred over omitting the preposition (P) to maintain the interpretability of the entire prepositional phrase (PP).

Based on all the experimental components discussed above, the researchers conclude that the omission of the definite article (D) is a residual phenomenon primarily associated with the structural configurations in which the nominals occur, rather than being influenced by other factors such as gender, number, or +/- quality distinction of the nominals. This conclusion is based on the analysis conducted during the analyzed period.

Regarding this literature, it exhibits the following strengths:

1. Quantitative analysis method: The study employs a quantitative analysis method

to investigate the phenomenon of D omission in children's language acquisition. This approach allows for the use of numerical data and statistical analyses, enhancing the accuracy and explanatory power of the findings.

2. Actual corpus data: The study utilizes authentic corpus data for analysis, providing realistic and reliable evidence for the phenomenon under investigation. This strengthens the validity and applicability of the results.

3. Emphasis on structural configuration: The study emphasizes the significance of structural configuration in understanding D omission. By highlighting the role of structural factors, the study offers valuable insights into the complexities of D omission in children's language acquisition.

However, there are some limitations to consider:

1. Lack of detailed process descriptions of the corpus: The literature does not provide data collection procedures of the corpus. The absence of these details limits our comprehensive understanding and assessment of the study's methodology.

Limited sample size: The study relies on a corpus consisting of recordings from only one child, resulting in a small sample size. This restricts the generalizability of the findings and raises questions about the broader scientific validity of the study.

In conclusion, while the literature benefits from its quantitative analysis, use of actual corpus data, and focus on structural configuration, the lack of data collection procedures of the corpus and the limited sample size are notable limitations that should be addressed in future research.

3. Literature on the adjectival sequences in Italian and Chinese.

1) Guglielmo Cinque.(1995).Italian syntax and Universal Grammar.

"Italian Syntax and Universal Grammar" is a paper published by the Italian linguist Guglielmo Cinque in 1995. The paper explores the relationship between Italian syntax and universal grammar, presenting several significant points. One of these is the proposal of a new theory of syntax called "functional projection." According to this theory, all sentences are composed of five fundamental functional projections: mood, tense, subject, object, and appositive. These functional projections can appear in different orders within a sentence, but their presence is essential. The theory has had a profound impact on generative grammar and has been widely applied in the study of various languages.

In his work, Cinque highlights several key ideas:

Universality of Syntactic Structure: Cinque argues that the syntactic structure of languages is universal, meaning that they share common syntactic features and structures. He posits that these shared features arise from the universal principles and parameter settings of universal grammar.

Verb Position: Cinque proposes a universal model for verb position, asserting that the placement of a verb in a sentence is linked to its semantic role. He contends that the position of the verb reveals both its semantic nature and its syntactic function.

Verb Movement: Cinque posits that in certain languages, such as Italian, verbs can undergo displacement to achieve specific syntactic and semantic effects. He presents a theory of verb displacement that explains the different positions and functions of verbs within sentences.

Phrase Structure: Cinque investigates phrase structures in Italian and puts forth an analytical framework based on functional projections. He argues that distinct types of phrases possess different functional projections, which play a crucial role in syntax.

Syntactic Parameters: Cinque suggests that language differences can be attributed to the various settings of syntactic parameters. He provides analyses of syntactic parameter variation between Italian and other languages, aiming to explain how these differences relate to the parameter settings in universal grammar.

Regarding phrase structure, Cinque also introduces the concept of "The Hierarchy of Adjectives." He proposes that adjectives in Italian can be classified based on a hierarchy that reflects their functional projection within the syntactic structure.

The hierarchy of adjectives, from highest to lowest, is as follows:

Possessive > Cardinal > Ordinal > Quality > Dimension > Shape > Color > Origin > Object denoting N.

Possessive (possessive adjectives): Adjectives used to describe a characteristic or property possessed by someone or something.

Cardinal (Cardinal adjectives): Cardinal adjectives indicate the quantity or number of objects.

Ordinal (Ordinal adjectives): Ordinal adjectives describe the position or order of objects in a series.

Quality (Quality adjectives): Quality adjectives describe the inherent qualities or characteristics of an object.

Dimension (dimension adjectives): Used to describe the size of a noun, such as large,

small, etc.

Shape (shape adjectives): Used to describe the shape of a noun, such as round, square, etc.

Color (color adjectives): Used to describe the color of a noun, such as red, blue, etc.

Origin (origin adjectives): Used to describe the origin of a noun, such as country, region, etc.

Object denoting N (noun denoting an object): Adjectives are used to describe characteristics associated with an object, such as its materials and purposes.

This hierarchy explains the fixed order of adjectives in Italian, such as "il bel grande cane" (the big beautiful dog), rather than "il grande bel cane." Cinque argues that this fixed order is determined by the hierarchy of functional projections, with each adjective occupying a distinct syntactic position.

"The Hierarchy of Adjectives" serves as a significant viewpoint proposed by Cinque regarding the structure of adjectives in Italian phrases. It provides a theoretical foundation for explaining the order of adjectives and syntactic structure.

The present dissertation utilizes Cinque's "The Hierarchy of Adjectives" to investigate the acquisition of adjectival order among Chinese students under the influence of English acquisition. Cinque (1995) will serve as primary material for this aspect of the present research.

2) 李天广.(2012).现代汉语多个形容词定语短语的定语顺序

There has been no scientific definition of the hierarchical order of Chinese adjectives in Chinese linguistics, and this area has been on the fringe of Chinese linguistics, but there are some Chinese linguists or sinologists who have studied it.

Li Tianguang (2012) explored the issue of the adjectival sequences in Chinese. He points out the difficulties that Chinese learners may encounter in mastering multiple adjectives modifying the noun. This is important for the present dissertation because the present study partly focuses on Chinese learners acquiring Italian adjectival sequences under the influence of English acquisition. By understanding the Chinese adjectival sequences, a deeper understanding of Chinese learners' acquisition of Italian adjectival sequences under the influence of English acquisition can be gained.

For the Chinese adjectival sequences, the researcher proposed a hypothesis that when there are two or more adjectives in front of nouns, there is a certain relationship between these adjectives. According to this hypothesis, the researcher classified adjectival sequences into 递加关系(additive relation), 并列关系 (parallel

relation) and 一体关系 (integral relation)

1. 递加关系 (**additive relation**): When there is no direct relationship between multiple adjectival determiners, this type is called additive relation. For example, Li Tianguang points out with an example: “大太太从红木手饰盒里拿出一块四方型的女式手表来 (引自周而复《上海的早晨》)。” In this example, the "红木首饰盒 (Red Wooden Jewelry Box)" is first modified by "wooden" and then by "red" together (In Chinese, it is common to place adjectives close to nouns to express a higher hierarchy.), and there is no direct relation between "红 (red)" and "木 (wooden)"; similarly, the "四方型的女式手表 (Quadrilateral for women watches*)" (In Chinese, all the adjectives are placed before the noun) is first modified by "for women" and then by "quadrilateral", and there is no direct modification between "quadrilateral" and "for women".

2. 并列关系 (**parallel relation**): When each adjective can independently modify the noun, this type is called parallel relation. For example, "这个仅仅只有三个月团龄的支部书记, 正用全部纯洁而高尚的感情" (引自刘心武的《班主任》) " In this example, "纯洁 (pure)" can modify "感情 (feelings)" independently, and "高尚 (noble)" can modify "感情 (feelings)" independently too., and these adjectives are in parallel with each other, and their positions can be interchanged without affecting the semantic expression.

3. 一体关系 (**integral relation**): When each adjective cannot modify the central word independently, but must be taken as an integral part, this type is called integral relation. For example, "黑白电视机(black white TV set*)", "贫富差距(poor rich gap*)", "大小区别(big small difference*)", "高矮差异(tall short difference)". For these adjectives, it is impossible to separate them in front of the noun. For example, "黑白 (black white*)" are the opposites in color, "贫富 (poor rich*)" refer to income status in general...

Although the researcher proposes these three models of adjectival sequences, these sequences are affected by a variety of restrictive factors due to the lack of explicit grammatical regulations in Chinese to guide the ordering rules when adjectives are used as determiners.

Among the restrictive factors proposed by the researcher, the main ones include the following:

1. Cognitive constraints:

(1) Cognition constraints on the additive relation model.

The natural process by which people come to know things is the process of gradually grasping the essence of things from shallow to deep, from surface to inside, from far

to near, from big to small. The syntactic structure and the conceptual structure are similar, and the adjectival sequences map out the order of people's cognition of things. This model can be reasonably explained by the cognitive law, where adjectives indicating important or essential attributes are always placed after adjectives of non-important or secondary attributes, closer to the central noun.

Objective adjectives that express color, shape, texture, gender, etc. express properties that often objectively exist together with the noun, and are more objective and stable, so people often connect such properties with the noun first in their cognition, and we call them objective property adjectives. Some adjectives that express psychology feeling and judgment are non-important properties of the central noun, which are more subjective and less definite, and people do not often connect immediately such properties with the central noun in their understanding. Objective adjectives in the additive relation model are close to the central noun in conceptual sense, while subjective adjectives are far from the central noun.

(2) Cognition determines the parallel relation model.

The natural process of people knowing things is referred above. The outermost layer of adjectives mostly indicates the time, the distance of location, the size, thickness and width of volume, while those closer to the noun indicate details, texture, essence and other aspects. People's cognition order is consistent with the order of parallel relation model.

For example, "(a) 她一进门，便被一个高大丰满的女人热情地拥抱。巨大、空旷的房间里，一些陌生的中年男女（王朔《刘慧芳》）。"

"(b) 帅玉书从辽阳女子高中毕业后爱上了从日本留学回来的高大英俊博学多才的虞公子，心甘情愿地当上了贤妻良母（1994 年报刊精选）。"

In a and b, "高大(tall strong*)" is a general understanding of the external figure, "丰满(plump)" and "英俊(handsome)" are understanding of partial parts, and "博学多才(knowledgeable and multi-talented)" is an understanding of the internal qualities of a person. "This kind of model is also in line with the process of cognition from the whole to the local and from the exterior to the interior.

(3) The sequence of adjectives of the integral relation model is not arbitrary; it contains people's cognitive factors and cultural factors.

For example, in "黑白电视机(black white TV set*)", when comparing "black" and "white", "black" is the most conspicuous and prominent, and such order is consistent with people's sensory feelings; in "大小区别(big small difference*)", we usually perceive the big one first, and then the small one; in "男女情缘(male female love*)", Chinese culture has always emphasized male supremacy, and men were and still slightly are in a more respected position than women, so when referring to "male"

and "female", "male" is usually mentioned first.

2. Logical order constraints on the adjectival sequences.

Strictly speaking, logic also belongs to the realm of cognition. When several adjectives modify the central noun, the logical relations among these adjectives also influence its sequences.

(1) The sufficient conditional relation among the adjectives restricts the adjectival sequences, which means the property of the preceding adjective is a sufficient condition for the existence of the subsequent adjective property. For example, the words “假大空话 (false, with lies, not significant words*)” means these words are first false, so they are lies, so not significant.

(2) The necessary conditional relation among the adjectives restricts the adjectival sequences, which means the property of the preceding adjective is the necessary condition for the existence of the subsequent adjective property later. For example, “为了把中国建设成为独立自由、繁荣富强的资产阶级民主共和国，是辛亥革命的目标（《人民日报》1994年）。”Among the adjectives of "独立(independent)" "自由(free)" "繁荣(prosperous)" and "富强(rich strong*)", the "独立(independent)" is the prerequisite for the "自由(free)," and only on the basis of achieving independence can get freedom realized, and then the country can dominate itself and become "prosperous and strong.

3. Psychological and cultural factors limit the adjectival sequences.

Chinese people have always held the psychological and traditional culture of seeking good fortune and avoiding harm. Thus, the adjectives expressing positive meanings or reflecting people's wishes are usually placed before adjectives with neutral or negative meanings. For example: “新旧教材(new old textbooks*)”, “好坏产品(good bad products)”...

4. The need for communication constraints the adjectival sequences.

The adjectival sequences are not only governed by cognitive and cultural-psychological factors, but also by syllabic rhythm, subjective expression, and other factors that affect the sequences.

(1) Syllabic rhythm and structural homogeneity affect the adjectival sequences. Adjectives with similar syllables and consistent structure tend to be arranged next to each other, and disyllabic adjectives tend to be placed before multisyllabic adjectives so that they are more neatly proportioned in form and more harmoniously pleasing in syllable.

For example: “A. 这一巨大变化既有积极、进步的一面，又有消极、落后的一面

(1993 年人民日报)。” In sentence A, the "积极(positive)" in the first clause echoes the "消极(negative)" in the second clause, and the "进步的(progressive)" in the first clause echoes the "落后(backward)" in the second clause. In this way the sentence will be harmonious and smooth when to be read.

(2) Subjective expression affects the adjectival sequences. Its sequences has no inherent rule and depend entirely on the subjective expression of the user.

For example, “早在五十多年前毛泽东就尖锐地指出过，形式主义是一种“幼稚的、低级的、庸俗的、不用脑筋”的东西（1994 年人民日报 \ 第 2 季度）。”

In the above example”幼稚的(naive), 低级的(low level), 庸俗的(vulgar), 不用脑筋(Brainless)的东西(thing)”, the adjectives can be placed in different orders and it is impossible to see what is wrong with them.

In conclusion, when people speak, the adjectival sequences are sometimes proceeding according to the above rules, but sometimes they are highly subjective and arbitrary. The rules listed above are therefore rules based on experience and habit, and require further research by linguists from a linguistic point of view.

4.Reasons for the selection of these papers.

Because of the small and specific aspect of research in the present dissertation, an aspect that has not been studied before, especially coronal acquisition for Chinese students, it was not possible to find much valid literature to support the theory, as coronals do not exist in Chinese.

But this part of literature review covers all the areas of research in this thesis, including "cross-linguistic influences", "second language acquisition", "third language acquisition", "coronals" and "adjectival order", and will therefore be a useful contribution to the originality of the present dissertation.

III. Theoretical Framework.

1. Introduction

The present study focuses on investigating the influence of Chinese learners' acquisition of English on their learning of Italian, specifically in relation to the syntactic perspective of noun phrases (DP). It aims to explore the process of acquiring Italian articles and Italian adjectival sequences. The research question is: Do Chinese learners encounter difficulties due to the grammatical structures they have acquired in English while learning Italian? Furthermore, it aims to identify specific challenges and errors that Chinese learners face when acquiring Italian articles and Italian adjectival sequences.

A good theoretical framework is crucial in solving this issue. By establishing a strong theoretical foundation, we can conduct a thorough analysis of the language acquisition process among Chinese learners in acquiring Italian articles and Italian adjectival sequences, as well as unveil the specific aspects influenced by their acquisition of English. Adopting a syntactic DP perspective enables us to better comprehend the structure and function of articles and adjectival sequences in Italian, and compare them with their counterparts in English, identifying similarities and differences.

The purpose of this section is to construct a good theoretical framework to facilitate an in-depth examination of the challenges faced by Chinese learners in acquiring Italian articles and Italian adjectival sequences. We will select applicable theories and concepts and elucidate their role in addressing our research questions. By establishing a clear theoretical framework, we can offer insights into the acquisition of articles and adjectival sequences in Italian by Chinese learners, and provide valuable guidance for teaching and learning.

The significance of the theoretical framework lies not only in aiding our current research questions but also in providing a solid basis for future studies. By delving into specific issues related to Italian language acquisition by Chinese learners, we can contribute to the theoretical development of the field of language acquisition and offer fresh perspectives on cross-language acquisition research. In the subsequent parts of this chapter, we will elaborate on the selected theoretical framework and explain its relevance to our research questions, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of our study.

In order to create a comprehensive framework of guidance, we will integrate the following theories:

1. Universal Grammar - Chomsky

2. DP Hypothesis - Generative Grammar - Chomsky
3. Hierarchy of adjectives in Italian- Cinque
4. Behaviorist Theory - B.F. Skinner
5. Linear Progression Model (LPM)
6. Cross-Linguistic Influence Theory

2. The linguistic theories involved and adopted in this study

1) Universal Grammar.

Chomsky argued that the human brain contains a limited set of constraints for organizing language. This implies in turn that all languages have a common structural basis: the set of rules known as "universal grammar".

Definition of Universal Grammar:

Universal Grammar (UG) is a theory in modern linguistics that posits the existence of an innate biological component in the language faculty. According to UG, there are inherent constraints that place limits on the possible grammatical structures found in human languages. During the process of language acquisition, children are exposed to linguistic stimuli and subsequently internalize specific syntactic rules that adhere to UG.

More particularly, fluent speakers of a language are capable of differentiating between acceptable and inappropriate linguistic phrases. Given that expressions that break these limits are not clearly offered as such in the input, the essential concern is how speakers learn about them. According to Noam Chomsky, this "poverty of stimulus" contradicts Skinner's behaviorist theory of language acquisition. The foundation of Chomsky's case is the absence of negative evidence, which refers to data showing that a certain statement falls into a category of grammatically incorrect sentences in a particular language.

For instance, in English, the pronoun "what" cannot be joined to the predicate of a relative clause as in the phrase:

“What did John buy a present which is beautiful ”

This expression is not understandable to language learners and is seen to be grammatically incorrect. Such expressions are not used by native speakers of the language, who also regard them as inappropriate. The existence of the lack of stimuli can be explained by Universal Grammar, which asserts that some constraints are shared by all human languages. As a result, language learners are never tempted to draw erroneous conclusions.

Role of UG in LA for Chinese students.

Thus, for Chinese students, even if their native language is only Chinese and their second foreign language is English (although the degree of acquisition of the second foreign language may vary for each individual), they are still able to use the intrinsic linguistic mechanisms to learn a third foreign language, which is the Italian acquisition discussed in this literature. In particular, in the case of Chinese, where the grammatical concept of the coronary does not exist and the order of adjectives differs from that of English and Italian, however, according to Chomsky's UG theory, a set of intrinsic grammatical structures applicable to all languages always helps them to learn that grammatical content with a certain degree of language exposure and under the "poverty of stimulus" parameter, they are also able to discriminate and judge which sentences or expressions are incorrect and unacceptable at higher levels of acquisition. Thus, this built-in linguistic mechanism is very beneficial for Chinese students, and the recognition and use of them these theoretical parameters also provide a theoretical basis for the possibilities of Chinese students when acquiring Italian.

2) DP hypothesis.

Since it is extremely debatable whether the DP theory is applied to Chinese because the noun structure differs significantly from that of English and Italian, only the DP structure in English and Italian will be discussed here.

DP Theory in English Acquisition and Italian Acquisition.

Noam Chomsky's DP (Determiner Phrase) theory offers a framework for examining the syntax and structure of noun phrases in natural language. According to the DP theory, a noun phrase in the context of learning English is made up of a determiner (D), a head noun (N), and any necessary complements or modifiers. The theory also highlights the uniqueness principle, which states that every noun phrase needs a determiner for grammatical purposes. Similar to English, the DP theory can be applied to analyze the structure and syntax of noun phrases in Italian. The Italian DP consists of a determiner (D) and a head noun (N), along with modifiers and complements. However, it is important to note that Italian exhibits some distinct features and variations compared to English, particularly in terms of determiner types and their agreement with nouns. (Its determiners have a feminine and masculine distinction, and there are more correspondences and correspondence rules for each lexical gender)

Role of DP Theory in English Acquisition and Italian Acquisition.

DP theory has played a crucial role in the analysis and understanding of English acquisition by non-native speakers. It offers a formal framework to examine the acquisition patterns and developmental stages of determiners, noun phrases, and their syntactic properties in the process of second language acquisition. By applying

DP theory, researchers can investigate how Chinese learners acquire and interpret English determiners and noun phrases, which is a prerequisite and fundamental condition for analyzing the acquisition of Italian DP by Chinese students under the influence of English acquisition. And DP theory in Italian provides a theoretical framework to investigate the acquisition of Italian determiners and noun phrases by Chinese learners who are also influenced by their acquisition of English. By utilizing the DP perspective, researchers can examine the transfer effects of English on the acquisition of Italian articles and explore how Chinese learners navigate the syntactic and morphological challenges in Italian noun phrase formation.

Syntactic Transfer Effects.

Based on the theoretical framework of DP theory, this study aims to investigate how Chinese learners' acquisition of English influences their acquisition of Italian articles. By examining potential transfer effects, such as overgeneralization or interference, we can gain insights into the interplay between the two languages and the specific difficulties faced by Chinese learners in acquiring Italian syntax and determiner systems.

3) hierarchy of adjectives in Italian

Introduction.

Regarding phrase structure, Cinque introduces the concept of "The Hierarchy of Adjectives." He proposes that adjectives in Italian can be classified based on a hierarchy that reflects their functional projection within the syntactic structure.

The hierarchy of adjectives, from highest to lowest, is as follows:

Possessive > Cardinal > Ordinal > Quality > Dimension > Shape > Color > Origin > Object denoting N.

Possessive (possessive adjectives): Adjectives used to describe a characteristic or property possessed by someone or something.

Cardinal (Cardinal adjectives): Cardinal adjectives indicate the quantity or number of objects.

Ordinal (Ordinal adjectives): Ordinal adjectives describe the position or order of objects in a series.

Quality (Quality adjectives): Quality adjectives describe the inherent qualities or characteristics of an object.

Dimension (dimension adjectives): Used to describe the size of a noun, such as

large, small, etc.

Shape (shape adjectives): Used to describe the shape of a noun, such as round, square, etc.

Color (color adjectives): Used to describe the color of a noun, such as red, blue, etc.

Origin (origin adjectives): Used to describe the origin of a noun, such as country, region, etc.

Object denoting N (noun denoting an object): Adjectives are used to describe characteristics associated with an object, such as its materials and purposes.

Application of the Hierarchy of adjectives in the present study.

The Guglielmo Cinque-proposed hierarchy of adjectives in Italian provides helpful theoretical direction for comprehending the acquisition of adjectival sequences by Chinese students, who are also influenced by their acquisition of English. We can gain a deeper understanding of how Chinese students acquire and organize adjectival sequences in the context of their English language background and make a contribution to the field of second language acquisition by incorporating the theoretical framework offered by Cinque's hierarchy of adjectives in Italian.

4) Behaviorism Theory

Introduction of Behaviorism Theory.

The Behaviorism Theory, first proposed by psychologist B.F. Skinner in the 20th century, asserts that behavior develops and is reinforced through a process of "stimulus-response-reinforcement". In linguistics, for those who acquire language, this theory holds that young children consolidate and reinforce what they have learned by responding to linguistic cues in their surroundings and by receiving positive reinforcement. The conditioned reflex is the name of this procedure. And Operant Conditioning is a hypothesis of conditioned reflexes proposed by Skinner, which suggests that behavior is influenced by its consequences, and by reinforcing desired behaviors and punishing undesirable ones, individuals can learn and modify their behaviors accordingly

Although this theory was originally designed to study language acquisition in infants, it can also be used to study language learning in adults. In order to research second language acquisition in foreign language learning for adults, the theory might be applied. Through exposure to language stimuli and social interactions, adults learn new languages in designated language-learning contexts. For instance, in the classroom, the teacher's remarks, positive comments, and exercise grades can

stimulate student participation and enhance their language skills.

Application of Behaviorism Theory in the present dissertation.

The role of operant conditioning:

According to Behaviorism Theory, learning happens as a result of the conditioned relationship between stimulus and responses. When learning a language, learners build the foundation of language acquisition by making a connection between meaning and the stimuli they encounter (such as speech or words). In the present study, by inputs and responses of Italian articles and Italian adjectival sequences during the exercise or the teaching activity of teachers, and by comparing these aspects to English, study participants who are learning them create new language rules and associations. Therefore, the comprehensiveness and scientificity of the language stimuli have a significant impact on the learners' language acquisition, which will also be explored in this study through experiments and questionnaires, as these two aspects of stimuli play an important role in the following two phases - "response" and "reinforcement".

Positive and Negative Reinforcement:

The Behaviorism Theory's reinforcement processes have significant effects on how people acquire languages. In order to improve the frequency of appropriate linguistic conduct, positive reinforcement refers to rewarding that activity. In order to reduce the frequency of inappropriate linguistic conduct, negative reinforcement refers to punishment or negative feedback. The learning of Italian articles and adjectival sequences by Chinese students will be facilitated in the present study via feedback and reward systems between teachers and students.

Language imitation:

According to behaviorism theory, learning a language involves imitating the linguistic habits of others. By observing and imitating the language use of others, language learners progressively acquire the structure and usage of a language. Chinese students in this study may have acquired Italian articles and adjectival sequences by imitating corresponding English structures. What if their linguistic structures are different? In Chinese, there is no article structure, while English has a simpler article structure compared to Italian, which has gender distinctions and a greater number of articles. So how does this language imitation operate and how do learners acquire? On that, the present study will concentrate.

Emphasis on practice and repetition:

According to behaviorism theory, repetition can help consolidate and reinforce learning. It takes a lot of practice and repetition for language learners to acquire automatic expressions. In this study, Chinese students required to improve their command of Italian articles and adjectival expressions through a lot of repetition and practice.

In order to gather data on how Chinese students acquire articles and adjectival sequences in Italian, as well as to examine the interactions between learners' responses, stimuli, and rewards, this study will employ an empirical research methodology. The anticipated outcomes will demonstrate how Chinese students acquire Italian articles and adjectival sequences through the mechanisms of conditioning, positive and negative reinforcement, linguistic imitation, practice, and repetition in accordance with Behaviorism Theory, which is influenced by English acquisition.

5) LPM (Linear Progression Model) in linguistics.

Introduction of LPM:

The LPM model was created to lead students through a linear sequence of learning the grammatical and semantic structures of the target language. Based on theories of cognitive development in cognitive psychology, particularly Jean Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development, the LPM makes the assumption that students learn the structure and function of the target language through a progressive learning path that progresses from simple to complex, fundamental to advanced.

Principles of LPM:

Progressivity: LPM places significant emphasis on the gradual acquisition of language knowledge by learners, which occurs through progressive steps. Learners move from a basic level of language skills to more advanced proficiency, gradually mastering complex language structures and abilities.

Sequential: LPM follows a logical sequence that guides learners through a carefully designed progression. It starts with simple language elements and systematically introduces more intricate language constructions as learners advance. This sequential approach ensures that learners build upon previously acquired knowledge, fostering a solid foundation for further language development.

Systematic: LPM integrates linguistic information into a logical framework. It gives students a well-organized framework that makes it easier for them to absorb new knowledge and encourages the creation of connections between various language parts. The durability and general coherence of language acquisition are improved by this methodical structuring.

By adhering to these principles, LPM aims to optimize language learning by promoting a gradual and logical progression, as well as providing learners with a systematic framework that supports the acquisition of language skills and knowledge.

Application of LPM in this study:

In this study, LPM can provide a guide to understanding the language acquisition process of Chinese learners as they learn the Italian coronal and adjectival order under the influence of English. Based on the principles of the LPM, a step-by-step learning path for Chinese learners is identified and a scientifically valid learning path and method is generalised to help them gradually acquire the grammar of the Italian coronal and adjectival order from a basic level. By applying the LPM learning path, learners can gradually master the grammatical rules of noun and adjective order in Italian, reducing the cognitive load of learning and enhancing their language acquisition.

6) Cross-language Influence theory

Introduction of Cross-language influence theory.

Cross-linguistic influence refers to the impact of a learner's first language on the acquisition and use of the target language when learning or using a second language. And it is also applicable to the third language acquisition. The aim of this theoretical framework is to explore the influence of English on learners' acquisition of articles and adjectival sequences in Italian and to analyse the potential mechanisms of cross-linguistic influence on learners' language acquisition processes.

Principles of Cross-language influence.

Interlanguage Theory (IT): when a person learns a second language, they also acquire an intermediate language called interlanguage, which integrates vocabulary and grammar from the learner's native tongue or the other languages acquired before. By looking at how learners assimilate or transfer the form of articles and adjectival sequences from English when learning Italian, we can investigate cross-linguistic influences in the context of this present study.

Language Contact Theory (LCT): This principle is concerned with how various languages interact and come into contact with one another. In this study, we take into account how the learner's native language, English, and the target language, Italian, come into contact and interact.

Bilingual Processing Models: This principle focuses on how bilingual people process information in both languages. But in the present study, the study objects are Chinese monolingual students, so this principles is not taken into account.

The application of the theory in the present dissertation.

This study will investigate the impacts of cross-linguistic influences on Chinese students' learning of Italian articles and adjectival sequences, guided by this hypothesis.

Specific research objectives consist of:

to determine if learners influenced by Chinese grammatical structures without articles will be influenced by the transfer of English articles when learning Italian.

to find out if learners are bothered or influenced when mixing Italian adjectives by the form of adjectival sequences in Chinese and English.

to examine how learners approach the Italian and English adjectival sequences, as well as how linguistic shifts and interactions take place.

IV. Research Methodologies and Assumptions.

1. The role of all theories above taken together as a guide.

The study will be guided by all the theories mentioned above. Universal Grammar will serve as the basic theoretical support for this study, which assumes that all human beings have a built-in grammar that can support us in learning every language in the world, and this is the theoretical basis for this dissertation to research the acquisition of the Italian articles and its adjectival sequences by Chinese students under the influence of English acquisition. And based on DP theory and Cinque's Hierarchy of adjectives in Italian theory, the present study will focus on these two aspects of LA of Chinese students. And Behaviorism Theory by B.F. Skinner will be one of the theoretical guides to investigate the "stimuli-response-reinforcement" developmental model of Chinese students in these two areas. Through both Linear Progression Model (LPM) and Cross-Linguistic Influence Theory, we will discover how the acquisition of the Italian articles and Italian adjectival order by Chinese students is in a linear progression and understand the acquisition pattern under the influence of English acquisition, and how the native language and the second language of these learners (English) affect the acquisition of the third language, Italian, during this acquisition period.

2. Research Methodologies.

In this study, we will use a mixed research approach that combines the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. We can better understand the effects of Chinese students' English acquisition on their learning of Italian articles and adjectival sequences and evaluate how well the previously mentioned theoretical framework can direct this process by using this approach, which will provide more thorough and multidimensional data.

The following research methods are planned for implementation:

Questionnaire: A questionnaire will be designed and distributed to the Chinese students participating in the study. This questionnaire will allow us to gain insight into the students' perceptions and difficulties in acquiring Italian articles and Italian adjectival sequences. Qualitative data, including students' understanding, frequency of usage, confusion, and types of errors related to articles and adjectival words, will be collected through this questionnaire.

Language tests: A series of language tests will be administered to assess the students' proficiency in acquiring Italian articles and adjectival sequences. These tests include written tasks, such as fill-in-the-blank questions and multiple choice

questions. By analyzing quantitative data, such as correctness rates, error types, and changes in acquisition levels, we can evaluate the students' competence in this area.

Corpus analysis: Data will be collected from the Italian corpus, and a thorough linguistic analysis will be conducted. By examining the actual articles and adjectival sequences used by the students in the corpus, we can identify patterns, instances of misuse, and difficulties encountered during the acquisition process. This quantitative analysis will contribute to a deeper understanding of the characteristics and challenges Chinese students face when acquiring Italian articles and adjectival sequences.

By combining these research methods, we aim to collect rich and diverse data, which will be analyzed comprehensively. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data will facilitate a comprehensive understanding of how Chinese students' acquisition of English influences their acquisition of Italian articles and adjectival sequences. Furthermore, it will enable us to assess the effectiveness of the theoretical framework mentioned earlier in explaining this process. The findings from this study will contribute to accurate conclusions and provide scientific recommendations and guidelines for future teaching practices and curriculum design.

3. Pre-assumptions of the study.

We assume that the present study's findings will shed light on the following:

Validity of the theoretical framework:

By synthesizing the guiding frameworks of Universal Grammar, DP Hypothesis, Behaviorism Theory, LPM, and Cross-linguistic Influence Theory, we will be able to assess the validity of these theories in explaining Chinese students' acquisition of the Italian articles and adjectival sequences. We can explore whether these theories can explain students' patterns, error types, and acquisition progress in these aspects, and whether they can provide guidance and predict learners' acquisition paths.

Potential strengths and difficulties of Chinese students' Italian acquisition:

By examining how Chinese students' acquisition of the Italian articles and adjectival sequences is affected by their acquisition of English, we can reveal potential strengths and difficulties in this acquisition process. For example, Chinese students may tend to apply directly the English usage or rules of articles and adjectives to Italian, which may lead to some specific errors, or they maybe leave out the articles or apply them every time even not necessary with the influence of their L1. At the same time, they may also benefit from pre-existing language acquisition experiences, such as the ability to understand and apply those

grammatical rules about articles and sequences of adjectives.

Specific patterns and types of errors in the acquisition of Italian articles and adjectival sequences:

Through language tests, questionnaires and corpus analysis, we will be able to identify specific patterns and types of errors in the acquisition by students. These patterns and error types may be related to factors such as linguistic habits, semantic and grammatical differences that Chinese students have developed in their English acquisition. For example, we may find that students experience confusion in using indefinite or definite articles and in the omission of definite articles, or that there are specific patterns of errors in adjective position and agreement.

By revealing these expected results, we will be able to more fully understand the impact of Chinese students' English acquisition on the acquisition of Italian articles and adjectival sequences, to explore in depth the applicability of the theoretical framework, and to provide targeted suggestions and guidance for educational practice. These insights will help promote better student outcomes in Italian acquisition and provide more effective methods and strategies for cross-language teaching and acquisition.

4. Potential issues with the study and their solutions.

There are potential issues that may arise during the process of the study. And here are some possible problems along with their corresponding solutions:

Sample selection bias: There might be a problem of sample selection bias, which could result in non-representative findings. To address this, random selection should be employed to ensure a diverse sample, encompassing students from various backgrounds and educational levels.

Validity of test instruments: The language tests applied may have validity concerns, potentially compromising their ability to accurately assess Chinese students' acquisition of Italian articles and adjectival sequences. To mitigate this, thorough validation and revision of the test instruments should be conducted to ensure their reliability and validity. Pretesting and trial runs can help evaluate the instruments' reliability, while statistical analysis will aid in interpreting the results.

Applicability of theoretical frameworks: While integrating multiple theoretical frameworks to guide the study, certain frameworks may prove inadequate in certain situations. Flexibility is key, necessitating the adoption of multiple theoretical perspectives and a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the results. Should difficulties arise in explaining particular phenomena, further investigation, revision, or the integration of different theoretical perspectives may

be warranted.

Data collection and analysis methods: Technical and methodological challenges may arise during data collection and analysis. For instance, corpus analysis might involve processing substantial amounts of text data and selecting appropriate analytical techniques. To overcome these challenges, we should possess the necessary technical. Additionally, ensuring standardized and reliable procedures for data collection and analysis is crucial for enabling valid comparisons and inferences.

Time and resource constraints: we may encounter limitations in terms of time and resources, impeding a more comprehensive investigation. Careful planning of research timelines and resource allocation is necessary to obtain meaningful and valid data within the available constraints. Considerations of practical feasibility should guide the experimental design and data collection process, while maintaining a balance between research objectives and the available resources.

By addressing these potential issues and implementing the suggested solutions, the study's reliability and validity will be enhanced, enabling the generation of accurate and reliable conclusions.

V. Contrast among Chinese, Italian and English in articles and adjectival sequences.

1. Comparison of Chinese, Italian, and English articles.

Definition of the article:

An article is any member of a class of dedicated words that are used with noun phrases to mark the identifiability of the referents of the noun phrases. The category of articles constitutes a part of speech.

1) Does Chinese have definite and indefinite articles?

Articles are function words in Indo-European and Afro-Asian languages that are located before or after a noun or noun phrase and mainly qualify the noun in a sentence. Modern Chinese has classifiers, but not articles. This is because Chinese noun phrases differ from those in Italian or English. Chinese nouns do not distinguish between indefinite forms. Instead, quantity and specificity are expressed through the use of classifiers, numerals, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and other determiners.

2) How to express articles in Chinese when referring to translation?

For instance, in Italian, the phrase "*un libro*" (equivalent to "*a book*" in English) would be translated as "*一本书 [one(numeral) + 本(classifier) + book(noun)]*" in Chinese. However, the syntactic structure is completely different. In Chinese, the classifier "本" is connected with the numeral "一 (one)" and the noun "书 (book)" instead in English [*a(indefinite article) + book (noun)]* and in Italian [*un (masculine singular indefinite article) + libro (noun)*].

When examining the use of the definite article, "*il libro*" in Italian (equivalent to "*the book*" in English) would be translated as "*这本书*" in Chinese. The syntactic structure of this Chinese phrase follows the patterns of "demonstrative element + classifier + noun." However, not every structure with a definite article follows this pattern. For example, the Italian phrase "*l'amore è una cosa precisa*" (meaning "*love is a precious thing*" in English) would be translated as "*爱是一件珍贵的东西*" in Chinese. There is no determiner element before the noun "爱" (love), similar to the English phrase. This occurs because, in this aspect, Chinese is similar to English. "Love" can be used as an uncountable or abstract noun in English, denoting an abstract concept. When referring to an abstract concept rather than a specific love of someone, there is no need to add the definite article "the" to qualify it. In Italian, however, the definite article must be added before nouns in most cases. This is because the meaning of

nouns in Italian is usually closely related to the definite article, making it a crucial grammatical element. Thus, the phrase "amore è una cosa precisa" is not grammatically correct.

In summary, Chinese does not have the concept of definite and indefinite articles. The number and specificity of nouns are expressed through other determiners, which are used based on context and intention.

3) introduction of classifier

A classifier is a word or affix that accompanies nouns and can be considered to "classify" a noun depending on the type of its referent. It is also sometimes called a measure word or counter word. Classifiers play an important role in certain languages, especially East Asian languages, including Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese. Classifiers are absent or marginal in European languages. An example of a possible classifier in English is "piece" in phrases like "three pieces of paper".

In languages that have classifiers, they are often used when the noun is being counted, that is, when it appears with a numeral. In such languages, a phrase such as "three people" is often required to be expressed as "three X (of) people", where X is a classifier appropriate to the noun for "people". Classifiers sometimes have other functions too; in Chinese, they are commonly used when a noun is preceded by a demonstrative (word meaning "this" or "that"). Chinese classifiers are also commonly called measure words, although some writers make a distinction between the two terms.

There are similarities between classifier systems and noun classes, although there are significant differences. Languages with classifiers may have hundreds of classifiers. Languages with noun classes (or in particular, genders) tend to have a smaller number of classifiers. Noun classes are not always dependent on the nouns' meaning but they have a variety of grammatical consequences.

In Chinese, the selection of appropriate classifiers for nouns is a grammatical aspect that can be somewhat arbitrary, although it often corresponds to relatively well-defined classifications based on physical characteristics. The combination of a classifier with a noun often involves an imaginative level of association. For instance, the term "张(Zhang)" was originally used to denote "an open bow," then extended to measure "an object that can be opened," further expanding to encompass "an object that can be spread out," and eventually acquiring a meaning of "something flat," such as "一张纸 (a 张 paper)" which means "a piece of paper". In contexts where it is permissible, nouns can be omitted, and only counters and classifiers are used. It is worth noting that not all Chinese classifiers are derived from nouns. For instance, "把" is a verb meaning "to grasp," and it can also function as a quantifier to measure "an object that has a handle to grasp."

In addition to counting, Chinese classifiers sometimes convey the meaning of adjectives or physical quantities, making them not merely redundant. For example, expressions like "一只鞋 (*una scarpa* - a shoe), 一双鞋 (*un paio di scarpe* - a pair of shoes)" "一瓶水 (*una bottiglia d'acqua* - a bottle of water), 一杯水 (*un bicchiere d'acqua* - a glass of water), 一滴水 (*una goccia d'acqua* - a drop of water)" "一张纸 (*un pezzo di carta* - a piece of paper), 一叠纸 (*una pila di carta* - a stack of paper)" "五米布 (*cinque metri di stoffa* - five meters of cloth), 十斤面 (similarly to "cinque chili di pasta" in Italian or "ten pounds of noodles" in English or)" can show that classifiers are not often used in English and Italian, but a small number of special nouns do occur with classifiers.

But apart from these examples, all nouns in Chinese must be "quantified" or "measured", such as "一个人 (**una* 个 *persona*- **a* 个 *person*)", "一顶帽子 (**una* 顶 *cappello* - **a* 顶 *hat*", "一支笔 (**una* 支 *penna* - **a* 支 *pen*", etc., which are not represented by classifiers in Italian and English. In this respect, Chinese noun phrases are very different from Italian and English. In terms of typological difficulty, since the Italian and English DPs (especially the "coronal + noun" system) are interchangeable with the Chinese "numeral + classifier + noun" system, which seems to be more complex than the former, the acquisition from complexity to simplicity seems to be easier, but for Chinese students however, there are still many problems in the acquisition of Italian articles, especially if they have acquired the English article system first, so the study of this acquisition difficulty will be useful for Chinese learners.

4) The contrast between English and Italian articles:¹

as there is no article in Chinese grammar, here we introduce all the articles in English and Italian.

Definite articles:

Definite articles are usually placed before the noun to indicate a specific thing or person.

		Italian	English
masculine definite	masculine singular	<p>"il"</p> <p>(it will become "l" when it's used before singular masculine nouns beginning with vowels)</p> <p>"lo"</p>	

¹ The data comes from the link:
https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/articolo_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27Italiano%29/, and
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_\(grammar\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_(grammar))

articles		(used before singular masculine nouns beginning with s+consonant, z, gn, ps, x) masculine definite articles	“the”
	masculine plural	“i” (masculine plural form of ‘il’) “gli” (masculine plural form of ‘lo’)	
feminine definite articles	Feminine singular	“la” (it will be “ l ” when it’s used before singular feminine nouns beginning with vowels)	
	Feminine plural	“le”	

Indefinite articles:

The indefinite article is usually placed before the noun to indicate an uncertain thing or person.

Italian			English
masculine indefinite articles	masculine singular	“un” “uno” (used before singular masculine nouns beginning with s+consonant, z, gn, ps, x)	Some, a (it become “an” when it’s used before a noun beginning with vowels)
	masculine plural	“alcuni”	
feminine indefinite articles	Feminine singular	“una” (it will become “ un’ ” when it’s used before singular feminine nouns beginning with vowels.	
	Feminine plural	“alcune”	

Partitive articles:

A partitive article is a type of article, sometimes viewed as a type of indefinite article, used with a mass noun such as water, to indicate a non-specific quantity of it.

Italian			English
masculine partitive articles	masculine singular	“del” “dell” (used before singular masculine nouns beginning with vowels)	“some” although it is

		“dello” (used before singular masculine nouns beginning with s+consonant, z, gn, ps, x)	classified as a determiner, it is the nearest equivalent one.
	masculine plural	“dei” “degli” (used before plural masculine nouns beginning with s+consonant, z, gn, ps, x)	
feminine partitive articles	Feminine singular	“della” “dell” (used before singular feminine nouns beginning with vowels.)	
	Feminine plural	“delle”	

Negative articles:

A negative article specifies none of its noun, and can thus be regarded as neither definite nor indefinite. On the other hand, some consider such a word to be a simple determiner rather than an article.

Italian		English
masculine negative articles	“nessuno” (used before singular masculine nouns beginning with s+consonant, z, gn, ps, x) “nessun” (used before singular masculine nouns not beginning with s+consonant, z, gn, ps, x)	“no”
feminine negative articles	“nessuna” (used before singular feminine nouns not beginning with vowels.) “nessun” (used before singular feminine nouns beginning with vowels.)	

(This form of articles is still somewhat controversial among linguists, so this study will focus on the first three forms, i.e. definite articles, indefinite articles and partitive articles.)

Articulated prepositions of articles.

Italian								English
	il	i	lo	l'	gli	la	le	/
a	al	ai	allo	all'	agli	alla	alle	
da	dal	dai	dallo	dall'	dagli	dalla	dalle	
su	sul	sui	sullo	sull'	sugli	sulla	sulle	
di	del	dei	dello	dell'	degli	della	delle	
in	nel	nei	nello	nell'	negli	nella	nelle	

(The articulated prepositions in Italian, which are a combination of prepositions and articles, are also a great challenge for Chinese learners, on the one hand because some of their forms are the same as part of the preposition, such as *dei*, *delle*, etc., which can be both partitive articles and articulated prepositions, and on the other hand because of its double complexity, which involves the use of prepositions that are very different from the preposition system in Chinese, and the combination of prepositions and contractions into one word, which can be even more difficult for Chinese students.)

Overall, we can see that in the Italian article system, there are many articles that have a difference between masculine and feminine forms, and also between singular and plural forms, and they also have different forms for different nouns even if the nouns belong to the same gender and have the same singular and plural forms, so the Italian article system is much more complex than English. While there are some differences in the form and usage of articles between Italian and English, they both indicate a specific or uncertain thing or person or non-specific quantity of nouns. But since there are so many different definite and indefinite articles in Italian that refer to the masculine/feminine change and the singular/plural forms, it brings great learning difficulties to Chinese students who do not understand articles as in Chinese there doesn't exist article.

2. Some special uses of the Italian articles.

What we have seen above is the general usage of the Italian articles, however, in some other special cases, the definite article in Italian also has some special usage and points to note.

1) Personal names:

For the first names of people, the article is generally not used: *Livia è partita* (*Livia is gone*); *Matteo ha chiamato qualcuno* (*Matteo has called someone*).

But there are however some exceptions:

when the name is specified, i.e. when it is preceded by a qualifying adjective or when it is followed by a relative clause or a specification: *l'astuto Ulisse* (*the cunning Ulisse; è questa la Giulia che amo! (*is this the Giulia I love!); If the name is specified by another noun (or nominal expression), which is placed after the name, the article may or may not be used: *Questo è Luca, figlio di mia sorella* (This is Luca, son of my sister) or *Questo è il Luca, figlio di mia sorella* (*This is the Luca, son of my sister). Feminine names are preceded by an article when they are used in “Linguaggio familiare”, especially in the northern or central linguistic areas: *hai visto la Carla?* (*have you seen the Carla?); what is less widespread or less accepted is the article in front of male names: *salutami il Paolo* (*greet for me the Paolo); this use is typical in Northern regional Italian.

2) Surnames:

If the surname:

is feminine: the article can be used to make explicit the gender of the person being talked about: *ho visto un film con la Loren* (*I saw a film with the Loren); however, today in written Italian the use of the article with female surnames is less and less frequent because indicating only one gender over another is considered discriminatory. In the newspapers we therefore read more and more often: *il nuovo film di Cortellesi* (the new film of Cortellesi) but not *il nuovo film della Cortellesi* (the new film of the Cortellesi*).

is masculine: usually the article is not used; But articles can be found with the surnames of contemporary people who are not illustrious, but known only to the interlocutors, as in bureaucratic language, for example in journalistic reporting: *il Bassi si è avvalso della facoltà di non rispondere* (*The Bassi made use of the right not to answer).

The article is also used with the plural of surnames, to indicate all members of the family (both right in Italian and English): *i Malatesta furono una celebre famiglia riminese* (the Malatestas were a famous family from Rimini), and with the surnames, nicknames and pseudonyms of famous people: *il Caravaggio, il Petrarca, il Macchiavelli*.

NB: the article should never be used in front of the sequence “name + surname”: *il Tasso* but not *il Torquato Tasso*. Any proper name of a person receives the article if accompanied by a noun, an adjective, or another definition: *Mattarella ha pronunciato un discorso alla nazione* (Mattarella made a speech to the nation); *il Presidente Mattarella ha pronunciato un discorso alla nazione* (*The President Mattarella has delivered an address to the nation).

3) Geographical nouns:

Those proper nouns which are not preceded by an article:

city:

Roma è la capitale d'Italia (Rome is the capital of Italy), amo Bologna (I love Bologna). But among the Italian cities the following are exceptions: *L'Aquila, La Spezia*; among foreign ones: *L'Aia, L'Avana, Il Cairo, La Mecca, Il Pireo, La Valletta* However, the article is used with the names of cities accompanied by an adjective or in some specific way: *ho visitato la Perugia etrusca (*I visited the Etruscan Perugia)*;

small Italian islands:

Capri, Ischia, Ponza, Lipari, Vulcano, with some exceptions: *il Giglio, l'Elba, La Maddalena*. In general, regardless of their size, the article is omitted in front of names of foreign islands: *Cuba, Majorca, Saint Helena*.

Those proper nouns which are preceded by an article:

mountains, rivers, lakes: *le Alpi, gli Appennini, il Po, il Tevere, il Garda* (the Alps, the Apennines, the Po, the Tiber, the Garda); And these rules also apply to English. But here we have to clarify that: when it refers to a specific mountain, definite article s not need, like "*Monte bianco(Mont Blanc)*" And when it's added the noun "*lago(lake)*" in front of the proper name, like "*Lago Maggiore (Lake Maggiore)*", it's not necessary to use article.

large islands:

*la Sicilia e la Sardegna (*the Sicily and *the Sardinia)*; Here Italian and English are different. But when it comes to insular groups indicated by a plural: *le Tremiti, le Egadi, le Azzorre, le Canarie (the Tremiti, the Egadi, the Azores, the Canaries)*, it's the same to use definite articles before the names of archipelagos that are collective or plural both in Italian and English.

regions:

*la Calabria, il Veneto, il Molise (*the Calabria, *the Veneto, *the Molise)*;

states and continents:

*la Spagna, l'Italia, la Tunisia, la Norvegia (*The Spain,the Italy, the Tunisia,the Norway) but Israele, Cuba, Haiti, Cipro, Malta,(Israele, Cuba, Haiti, Cipro, Malta)*

NB: with the names of states and regions preceded by the prepositions "in" (in the complements of place) and di (in the complement of specification) the article is omitted, i.e. the simple preposition is used and not the articulated one: *vivo in Umbria, vado in Brasile, la regina d'Inghilterra (I live in Umbria, I go to Brazil, the*

Queen of England).

4) Conclusion:

From the rules mentioned above, we observe that the usage of the definite article varies in different cases. Sometimes it is omitted, while in other cases it is added. In cases such as personal names and geographical names, the corresponding Chinese expression typically consists of a single "central noun" without any determiners or classifiers. For example, "l'Italia" becomes simply "意大利 (Italia - Italy)" in Chinese on every occasion, similar to English. In situations where both Italian and English require the use of the definite article, such as when indicating all members of a family, the article is used. For instance, "*l Malatesta*" would be "*The Malatestas*" in English. However, in Chinese, it would be expressed as "*Malatesta one family" In this case, Chinese bypasses the grammatical concept of a "classifier" by altering the syntax to convey the same meaning.

Considering these aspects, it can be observed that Chinese tends to simplify the acquisition of the "classifier" system by excluding determiners and only presenting the central word. As a result, Chinese learners may face greater challenges when acquiring the Italian definite article due to the influence of Chinese language structure.

Therefore, with regard to the acquisition of articles, this study will also focus on the omission of the definite article.

3. Omission of the article

In the early stages of Chinese students' acquisition of articles, the most common rule teachers convey is "No article before a proper noun", but the concept of a proper noun is actually unknown to most students.

As we know a proper noun is a noun that identifies a single entity and is used to refer to that entity (Africa, Jupiter, Sarah, Microsoft) as distinguished from a common noun, which is a noun that refers to a class of entities (continent, planet, person, corporation) and may be used when referring to instances of a specific class (a continent, another planet, these persons, our corporation)

But there is much more to the rules of omission of the article than this one. Since Chinese students learning Italian usually acquire English first and then Italian, the following will introduce the rules and some examples of omission of the English article first.

1) Omission of the article in English.

Before abstract/uncountable nouns:

There is no need to employ an article when the sentence contains an abstract term or a noun that cannot be counted.

1. *He is still full of wisdom in his older years.*

(Wisdom is an abstract noun here, so if someone wants to express general wisdom, instead of some specific wisdom, he doesn't need to use the definite article)

2. *She does not add sugar to her coffee.*

(Sugar is an uncountable noun. So it will not be the/a sugar, but if the context is added like "I gave her some sugar, and she didn't add the sugar into her coffee", and in this case, the usage of definite articles makes sense, but generally, we don't use definite articles in such contexts)

Before plural countable nouns:

Most of the time, we won't place an article before a plural noun. However, we would only use "the" and never "a/an" if these nouns were being used in a certain way. However, the articles will be dropped when discussing frequent plural countable nouns. The following are a few instances.

1. *Women like going shopping.*

("Women" is a plural and countable noun, so the article is omitted. In this case, it indicates a general group of females, so it does not require any article before "women". However, if it refers to specific members of a group, it could be "some women" or "the women".)

2. *Smartphones are useful devices, but they can also be harmful sometimes.*

(In this case, the omission of the article is similar to the example above, as it does not specifically refer to some particular computers, but rather to "computers" in general.)

Before proper nouns:

The article before proper nouns is omitted which indicate the names (proper nouns) of individuals, locations, nations, objects, etc. In such circumstances, the articles will be omitted.

1. *Italy is a beautiful country.*

(It won't be "the Italy" or "an Italy" in any case because "Italy" is a proper

noun and should be used without any article in any context.)

2. Chinese is difficult.

(In the case of "Chinese" as a language, it is a proper noun and does not require an article. However, when "Chinese" refers to nationality or ethnicity, the usage is different. We would say "I am Chinese" instead of "I am a Chinese" because, in English, we generally do not use an article before proper nouns that indicate nationality.)

However, in specific contexts, such as when someone is talking about a particular Chinese person and you identify yourself as that person, you can say "I am the Chinese." This usage can make sense in certain situations.

It can be confusing when "Chinese," "Italian," and similar terms are used as adjectives. In these cases, an article can be used before them. For example, "He is a Chinese student" or "She is an Italian singer." Although "Chinese" and "Italian" have the same form as when they are proper nouns, they function as adjectives modifying the central nouns "student" and "singer".)

Before nouns used in the broadest sense:

When common nouns are used in a very broad sense then we can omit the article before them. Some examples of this are as follows.

1. Men are social animals.

(Here, "Men" is a common noun but it's used in the commonest sense, so there is no need to add any article before it.)

2. Gold always serves as a form of money in our society.

(Although gold is a common term, its usage in the sentence justifies omitting the article.)

3. Summer is a hot season.

(Not a specific summer of a specific year.)

4. Dinner is an important meal.

(Just to clarify this opinion: which meal is important? Dinner!)

And this point can be difficult too, as Chinese students cannot understand what the usage of commonest sense is, since there is no such a rule in the Chinese grammar. So Chinese students should know that when common nouns are used in their

broadest sense, the article can be omitted. This means that when we talk about the overall concept of something or a concept, we can leave out the article. This usage is to emphasize the universal or general sense.

When a noun is used in a propositional noun:

The typical form is "preposition + noun," in which case there is no need to put any article in front of the noun, when a noun and a preposition are joined as a gerund to convey a scenario in a particular place, a particular method, etc.

1. *He went to college.*
2. *He went to work by subway.*

(Because they are identical to the usage of "broadest sense" in both instances, the two nouns are preceded by a preposition without an article; hence, "preposition + noun" only exists as a gerund, denoting this way, or is in a place, going to a location, etc. However, this is not always the case. For example, the phrase "*He will go to a college*" can also mean that a student will graduate from high school, enroll in college, and then select one of a number of colleges from which to pursue their studies. In addition to the indefinite article, we can also use the definite article, as in "He went to the college where his dad has studied," which denotes that he attended the precise college where his father previously attended classes. In a similar manner to the second sentence, "He went to work by subway" can also be changed to "He went to work by the subway which functioned badly," which is used to refer to the subway which functioned poorly.)

His grandmother is still in hospital.

(Here we should notice that it can be also expressed "*His grandmother is still in the hospital*", Here, the differences between the usage of the definite article reflect linguistic variant differences between British and American English rather than the "broadest sense" of the words. Both phrases mean his grandmother is currently receiving medical attention.

Without the article "the," it is typical to state "*His grandmother is in hospital*" in British English. When a person uses this phrase, it is assumed that the listener is aware of the individual's condition or the reason for their hospitalization, which is why they are there. It is assumed that there is no requirement in this context to name a specific hospital.

However, the article "the" is more frequently used in American English, as in the sentence "*His grandmother is in the hospital*." This phrase may emphasize a

particular hospital or expressly state that the patient is there for a medical condition.

It's crucial to remember that these differences are not always rigorous because language usage might vary geographically and amongst people. Both forms of the sentence can actually be used interchangeably in some situations, and the precise meaning can be deduced from the context.)

When a common noun is written in pairs:

When a common noun occurs in pairs, we usually omit the article in it. This usually happens in specific phrases or fixed collocations in which two nouns are related to each other or form a whole concept.

1. *I always have bread and butter for breakfast.*

(This phrase refers to two common foods that are usually eaten together. In this case, the coronary is omitted because we are concerned with bread and butter as a combination or pair.)

2. *The husband and wife were allowed to take part in the play.*

(In this phrase, we can observe that "the" functions as a definite article preceding "husband and wife." If we intend to refer to a specific couple, we should use a single definite article before the entire noun phrase "husband and wife" instead of expressing it as "the husband and the wife." The latter construction is syntactically different and implies separate individuals rather than a singular unit.)

Conclusion.

The above examples show that in English, except for "proper nouns", the rest of the rules and situations are flexible, depending on the context in which the noun phrase is used and the meaning the speaker wants to express, so these rules will change in different contexts, and conversely, whether or not to add the article will reflect the speaker's specific ideas and opinions.

2) Omission of the article in Italian.

In particular, we will deal with nouns, all those cases where nouns do not need the article. In Italian, however, there are also many verbal and adverbial locutions and as many more or less fixed expressions in which the article is NOT used, and the corresponding rules can be roughly divided into the following categories.

Complexities in the use of the article with proper nouns:

In Italian, whether or not to add an article before a proper noun is not as simple as it is in English.

Before explaining the rules for the use of Italian proper nouns, we need to have a general idea of what categories of proper nouns there are in Italian.

Person name :

First names (nome): e.g. Marco (Marco), Sofia (Sofia)

Surnames (cognome): e.g. Rossi, Bianchi

Place name (Nomi di luogo):

Country (nazione): e.g. Italia (Italy), Francia (France)

Continent (continente): e.g. Europa (Europe), Africa (Africa)

Cities (città): e.g. Firenze (Florence), Venezia (Venice)

Mountains (catena montuosa): e.g. Alpi (Alps), Appennini (Alpine Mountains)

Rivers (fiume): e.g. Arno (Arno River), Po (Po River)

Ocean (mare): for example Mediterraneo (Mediterranean), Atlantico (Atlantic)

Company and organization names (Nomi di azienda e organizzazione):

Company (azienda): e.g. Ferrari (Ferrari), Benetton (Benetton)

Universities (università): e.g. Università di Bologna, Università di Roma La Sapienza (University of Rome La Spezia)

Organizations (organizzazione): e.g. Unione Europea (European Union), Greenpeace

Names of works and creations (Nomi di opere e creazioni):

Books (libro): e.g. La Divina Commedia (Divine Comedy), I Promessi Sposi (The Betrothed)

films (film): e.g. La Dolce Vita (Sweet Life), Cinema Paradiso (Cinema Paradiso)

paintings (opera d'arte): e.g. La Gioconda (Mona Lisa), L'Ultima Cena (The Last Supper)

Musical compositions (composizione musicale): e.g. La Traviata (The Lady of the Camellias), La Bohème (The Bohemian)

Names of times and events (Nomi di epoche e avvenimenti):

Period (epoca): e.g. Rinascimento (Renaissance), Medioevo (Middle Ages)

Events (avvenimento): e.g. Prima Guerra Mondiale (World War I), Rivoluzione Francese (French Revolution)

Names and surnames generally do not require an article: (but there are exceptions)

First, the article is generally not used in front of people's first and last names and also cities' names.

1. Mario è andato via. ("Mario" is a name)
2. Rossi è un famoso calciatore italiano. ("Rossi" is a surname)
3. Firenze è una delle più belle città in Italia. ("Firenze" is a city name)

Exceptions of person name (or surname)

Even in Standard Italian, normally it follows the rules above, it is important to know that in some areas of northern Italy it is very common to use the article in front of the proper name, especially feminine ones (but not only)

1. Hai presente la Giulia? Ecco, ieri sera è uscita col Ludo e hanno incontrato la Fede, la ex del Ludo. Non ti dico il dramma. Pensa se avessero incontrato il Marco, l'ex di lei!

From the above examples, we can see that in the dialectal variant, it is customary in northern languages to add the definite article before the name to refer to a person.

Exceptions of cities' name

Generally, city names do not need to be preceded by a definite article, but there are exceptions, that is, sometimes they are preceded by a definite article, and at that time their overall meaning becomes different. That is, when they are accompanied by the article, they usually indicate the soccer team of that particular city.

- 1.– *Ieri sera la Roma ha vinto lo scudetto e abbiamo festeggiato tutta la notte.*
– *Hai visto la partita del Napoli? Che spettacolo!*

Names of continents, countries and regions require an article: (In the absence of a preposition)

In the absence of prepositional interference, that is, when names of continents, countries and regions are subjects or objects of a sentence, they generally require an article.

1. – La Francia è una bella nazione. ("La Francia" is the subject.)
- 2.– Amo la Sardegna! ("la Sardegna" is the object)

3.– L'Asia è il continente più grande del mondo. ("L'Asia" is the subject)

However, the article is not used with names of continents, countries and regions when these are preceded by the preposition "in" (in such case, they become gerunds and are no longer subjects or objects).

4.– Valentino si è trasferito in Italia, in Veneto.

With names of countries introduced by the preposition "in" there are, such as, "*nel Regno Unito, nei Paesi Bassi, negli Stati Uniti, nell'Unione Sovietica, ecc.*," in these cases, it requires an article because they have a noun (i.e., Regno, Paesi, Stati, Unione) accompanied by an adjective (Unito, Bassi, Uniti, Sovietica). This also applies to the names of cities, regions and continents. For example, we say, "*nella bella Italia*", "*nella meravigliosa Roma*", "*nella fredda Lombardia*", "*nella torrida Africa*" and so on.

But we should note that when referring to "la Repubblica di XX", the usage may vary. Generally, the preferred form is "Nella Repubblica di XX (for example: Nella Repubblica Italiana)" or "In Italia" without the definite article.

Omission of articles involving relative nouns:

the article is not used with singular relative nouns when accompanied by a possessive adjective.

1. – *Quando vedo mia zia le chiedo se ha ancora il regalo **per tua mamma**: mio zio dice sempre che è talmente sbadata che non sa neanche dove ha la testa!*
2. – *Nostro padre ha iniziato a lavorare in azienda da suo cugino quando aveva 15 anni.*

In this case, there are also exceptions, of course. It is not uncommon to hear expressions like "la mia mamma" (my mom) and "il mio papà" (my dad), but these are marked and emphatic uses. They are affectionate nicknames, often with the explicit intention of sounding "childlike" usually in a playful manner. For example, a mother might say to her 3-year-old child, "vieni qui a dare un bacio alla tua mamma! (Come here and give a kiss to your mum!)"

Furthermore, it should be noted that the possessive adjective "loro" (their) is an exception and takes the article. For example, "il loro zio" (their uncle), "la loro madre" (their mother), "il loro fratello" (their brother).

In the plural form, however, the rule is no longer valid, and the article is always used. For example, "i miei genitori" (my parents), "i loro nipoti" (their grandchildren), "le vostre sorelle" (your sisters).

<articles for "mamma", "papà" Or not ?>²

In the entry for "mamma" in the Vocabulary of the Italian language by Treccani, it states: "The article is always required when preceded by a possessive adjective (*la mia mamma, la tua mamma, etc.*), while the use or omission of the article after a preposition depends on regional preferences: *chiedi alla mamma; vai da mamma o dalla mamma; esco con mamma o con la mamma*. It is always without the article when it has an indefinite value, in expressions such as *amore di mamma, cuore di mamma*, and similar ones."

Stating that the same applies to "papà" (dad), it can be said that nowadays the rule requiring the article before the word "mamma" preceded by a possessive adjective is often disregarded, except in Tuscany (where "babbo" is used instead of "papà," which is slowly spreading there as well). Therefore, grammars and, for some time now, usage dictionaries consider forms like "*mia mamma*" and "*mio papà*" fully acceptable. This is how the grammar book "Italiano" by Luca Serianni comments, in the section edited by Giuseppe Patota: "Most likely, the model of father and mother, in which the absence of the article is common in contemporary Italian (*mio padre, mia madre*), has influenced this."

About forty years ago (in 1961), Eugenio Treves, the author of "...Si dice?..." (Do we say?), a volume that collected and commented on language and grammar doubts and errors (as stated in the subtitle of the book), expressed himself firmly and restrictively: "babbo and mamma, accompanied by a possessive adjective, require the article: *il mio babbo, la tua mamma*. They also require it when preceded by a preposition: *Andrai col babbo; Ti è stato donato dalla mamma.*")

Omission of articles with time expressions:(seasons, days of the week, months, etc.)

the article is not used is in time complements with the names of months and days of the week.

1. – *Ad aprile andrò in vacanza in Giappone per vedere i ciliegi fioriti.*
2. – *Luglio è il mese peggiore per prenotare un volo: i prezzi sono altissimi!*
3. – *Mercoledì ho un appuntamento dal dentista.*
4. – *Ho deciso che fino a domenica non mangerò più biscotti: ne ho fatto indigestione!*

if, however, we want to indicate a particular day or month (and then later go on to specify it, to indicate "just that one"), then we will need the article:

5. – *Il gennaio 1956 fu il mese più freddo della storia. il gennaio di quell'anno.*

² Extracted from Treccani,
https://www.treccani.it/magazine/lingua_italiana/domande_e_risposte/grammatica/grammatica_051.html

6. – Il lunedì di Pasqua di solito si festeggia con una grigliata. (quello specifico lunedì.)

We will also use the article in front of the names of the days of the week when we want to indicate "every..." so something that happens every week on that day.

7. – Il martedì e il venerdì ho il corso di francese. (I have French lessons every Tuesday and Friday.)

Omission of articles when prepositions are involved:

Complement of material

the article is not used is with the complement of material, that is, indicating the material out of which something is made.

1. Quindi avremo un tavolo di legno, un quaderno di carta riciclata, degli stivali di gomma, un muro di mattoni, un bicchiere di vetro e così via.

Complements of place:

This applies to certain complements of place, especially when introduced by the preposition "in". Therefore, we would say: "*in camera, in cucina, in salotto, in giardino, in centro, in campagna, in città, in periferia, in hotel*". The exception is when they have the adjective with them, so we will say: "*nella mia cucina, nel luminoso salotto, nel giardino fiorito, nel centro storico, nella grande città.*" But since possessive adjectives are never a simple item, we should know that if these possessive adjectives follow the noun instead of preceding it, the article should not be used: so, we will not say "*nella mia camera*" But "*in camera mia*", not "*nella tua casa*" but "*in casa tua*".

However, the situation becomes different when preposition "a" is involved: "*al parco, al ristorante, al supermercato.*"

Complement of manner or modality:

In this case, it is important to note that when referring to abstract concepts, the complement of manner or modality introduced by the prepositions "con" and "senza" will influence the usage of articles. For example: "*senza senso, con passione, con forza, con pazienza, senza scrupoli, senza rancore*"

When the preposition "con" is used with concrete objects, it is generally accompanied by the article. For example: "*con le mani, con i piedi, con la testa, col*

coltello."

However, when the preposition "senza" is used, the article is almost never used, even when referring to concrete objects. For example: "*senza mani, senza testa, senza giacca, senza scarpe, senza guanti, senza patente.*"

However, if it is provided with an additional information to specify the name, the article reappears. For example: "*senza la mano destra, senza la giacca di cotone, senza le scarpe da ginnastica.*"

4. Comparison of Chinese, Italian, and English adjectival sequences.

1) Adjectives in Chinese.

Adjectives are a type of word class that are primarily used to describe or modify nouns or pronouns, to express the nature, state, characteristics, or properties of people or things. These characteristics are consistent with Italian and English, but some categories of adjectives in Chinese can also be used as predicates, which is a feature that Italian and English adjectives do not have.

It is necessary to first understand how the order of Chinese adjectives differs from that of Italian and English, as well as how Chinese adjectives differ greatly from those in those languages in terms of form and grammatical function, in order to study Chinese students' acquisition of Italian adjectival sequences under the influence of English adjectival sequences: Chinese adjectives can be categorized into two groups based on their adjectival functions: common adjectives and non-verbal adjectives. The former can be utilized as a predicate, a predicative or an attributive, whereas the latter cannot be used as a predicate, and the latter can be divided into "simple non-verbal adjectives (as the name suggests, a simple single adjective, such as "主要的 (*main*)")" and "compound non-verbal adjectives (generally consisting of "verb + (object) + lexeme - 的", such as "会跳舞的 (**can dance 的*)" which can be used in a DP such as "会跳舞的女孩 (**can dance 的 - girl*)" or "吃人的动物 (**eat men 的 - animal*)")"

Common adjectives:

It can be used as a predicate, mostly modified by "不 (not)" and "很 (very)". And they express the shape, nature, and state of things, etc. For example, "大 (big), 高 (tall), 认真 (serious), 生动 (vivid), 漂亮 (beautiful), 聪明 (smart), 可爱 (cute), 冷 (cold), 初级 (primary), 高级 (advanced), 简单 (simple), 复杂 (complex)". All these adjectives can appear as predicates in Chinese.

1. 这个女生很漂亮 (**This girl very beautiful*)

2. 这个问题不简单 (**This question not easy*)

The above examples show that in Chinese, such type of adjectives can be used directly as predicates without the need to add the verbs “be (English)” or “essere (Italian)” before the adjective to make the whole part a predicate, as in English or Italian.

However, the situation becomes different when these adjectives are followed by the lexeme “的 (of, di)”

We still use the two adjectives “漂亮 (beautiful)” and “简单 (easy)” again as examples: when they become “漂亮的 (beautiful 的*)” and “简单的 (easy 的)”, they can no longer appear directly as predicates.

3. *这个女生漂亮的 (*This girl beautiful 的)

It should be said “这个女生是漂亮的 (This girl is beautiful 的)”

4. *这个问题不简单的 (*This question not easy 的)

It should be said “这个问题是不简单的 (*This question is not easy 的)”

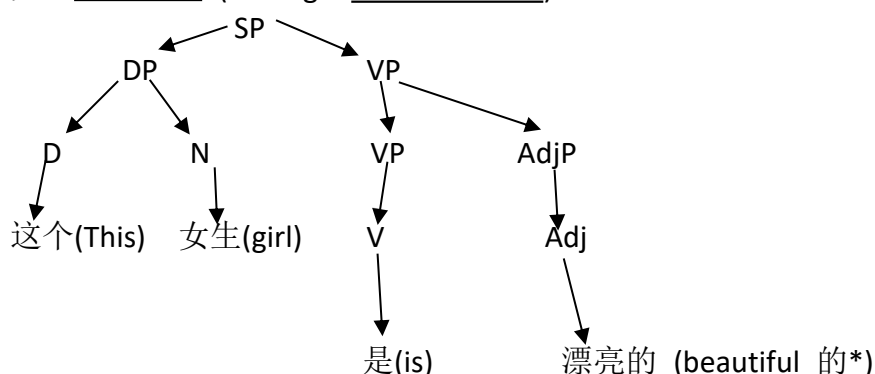
The above examples 3 and 4 are ungrammatical in Chinese, and the corresponding modifications can be seen in the following explanation of them, but there is a problem worth noting, when the degree adverbs “不 (not)” and “非常(very)” appear in the above examples 3 and 4, they become grammatical again. For example:

5. 这个女生很漂亮的 (*This girl very beautiful 的)

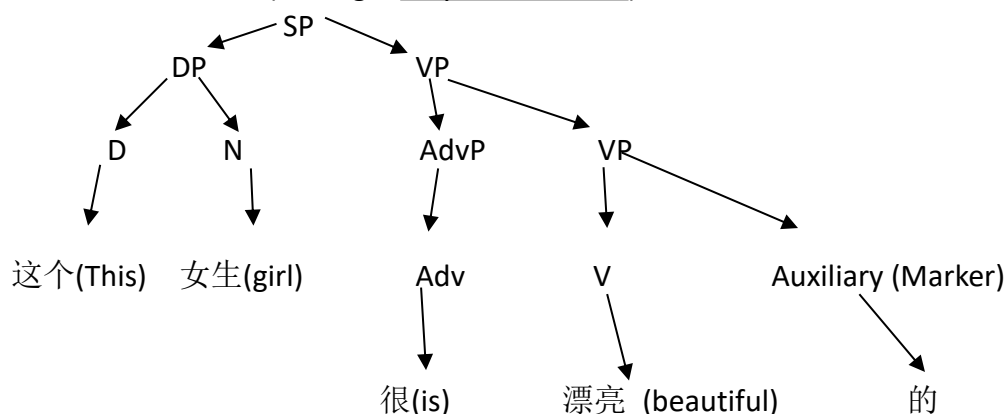
6. 这个问题很不简单的 (*This question very not easy (very difficult) 的)

These two sentences seem to be different from right examples 3 and 4 only by one “degree adverb”, but in fact they are very different in syntactic structure. For example the syntactic difference between “这个女生是漂亮的 (*This girl is beautiful 的)” and “这个女生很漂亮的 (*This girl very beautiful 的)”

这个女生是漂亮的 (*This girl is beautiful 的)



这个女生很漂亮的 (*This girl very beautiful 的)



Therefore, we can see the difference in syntactic structure between the first "漂亮的 (*beautiful 的)" and the second "漂亮的 (*beautiful 的)", the first being an adjective as a whole, similar to "beautiful" in English, while the second is "漂亮 + 的 (verb use of "beautiful" + 的 (pragmatic auxiliary))" as a form of "predicate + pragmatic auxiliary".

Overlapping adjectives:

A large proportion of these predicative adjectives can be repeated and overlapped to form an overlapping adjective.

1. Overlapping of monosyllabic adjectives

Form: "AA 的"

- eg., 大大的 (*big big 的)

(This form is double overlapping and it can be used as predicative (他的眼睛大大的 (*His eyes big big 的)) and attributive (*他有一双大大的眼睛 (He has a pair of big big 的 eyes))

2. Overlapping of bisyllabic adjectives.

There are five general types of bisyllabic overlapping adjectives which have an emphasizing effect.

a. Form: AABB 的

- 快快乐乐的

(This is overlapped from 快乐 (AB) (Happy), and it can not be expressed in English because 快乐 (AB) can not be subdivided as 快 and 乐 which are lexical elements and no longer related to the original word after separation. And this form of adjectives can be predicate and attributive, such as "他每天快快乐乐的" (*He everyday happy happy 的). Here "快快乐乐的" means "is happy", or "他是个快快乐乐的人" (*He is a happy happy 的 person) which even sounds weird but grammatically right in Chinese but people don't say so generally.)

b. Form: ABAB 的

- 冰凉冰凉的

(This type of overlapping adjective is not common. The word "冰凉冰凉的 (*cold cold 的)" is achieved by the overlap of "冰凉 (AB) (cold)", which emphasizes "very cold", and it can be as a predicate or an attributive. (Predicate: 他的手冰凉冰凉的 (*His hands cold cold 的); attributive: 他冰凉冰凉的手让我很担心 (*His cold cold 的 hand makes me very worried))

c. Form: ABAC 的

- 不干不净的

(These words are usually formed with two negative markers "不(not)" and a simple adjective that has been split up. For example, "不干不净的 (not clean, very dirty)" is composed of two "不(not)" + "干净 (clean)", which can be used as a predicate or an attributive: predicate: 这道菜不干不净的 (*this dish not clean 的); attributive: 我不想吃这道不干不净的菜 (*I don't want to eat this not clean 的 dish)

d. Form: A 里 AB 的

- 古里古怪的

(This is overlapping from 古怪 (weird). It, like the above reasons, cannot be expressed in English, and it can be predicate and attributive, too. (predicate: “他古里古怪的 (*He weired weired 的)”)

e. Form: ABB 的

- 香喷喷的

(There are many words of this type, but to be precise, they are not realized by the overlap of a simple adjective, for example, "香喷喷的 (*very fragrant-grant³ 的)" is not realized by the overlap of the word "香喷", because the latter is not a word in Chinese, which means that "香喷喷的 (*very fragrant-grant 的)" is an independent lexeme, not a compound lexeme, and it can also appear in sentences as a predicate and a determiner: predicate - 这道菜香喷喷的 (*this dish fragrant-grant 的); attributive - 这道香喷喷的菜是我做的 (*this fragrant-grant 的 dish is made by me.)

From the aforementioned examples of overlapping adjectives in Chinese, we observe that, even though many of them are constructed by overlapping a simple adjective, they are considered as a simple unit. When these adjectives function as modifiers before a noun, participating in a series of adjectives modifying the same noun, they are perceived as a single entity influencing the order of Chinese adjectives. There is no need to split them into two separate adjectives and arrange them in a different order. Understanding this aspect is crucial for comprehending the structure of Chinese adjectival sequences.

³ This form is made because in Chinese 香喷喷 is created by repeating the second syllable of 香喷

Non-verbal adjectives:

Non-verbal adjectives, or non-predicative adjectives, differ from common adjectives mentioned before. They cannot be used as predicates and cannot be modified by "不 (not)" or "很 (very)".

Examples: 正 (Positive, principal), 副 (Vice), 男 (male, referring to human-being), 女 (female, referring to human-being), 雌 (female, referring to animals), 雄 (male, referring to animals), 红 or 红色 (red), 蓝 or 蓝色 (blue), 多项 (Multiple), 慢性 (Chronic).

A very important adjectival lexeme in Chinese is "的".

Although not all adjectives are in the form of "XX 的", those in the form of "XX 的" in Chinese must be adjectives (except when "的" is used as a pragmatic auxiliary/marker), so adjectives of the type "XX 的" under non-verbal adjectives (non-predicative adjectives) can be roughly divided into two categories, one is simple non-verbal adjectives and the other one is compound non-verbal adjectives.

a. simple non-verbal adjectives:

As the name implies, it means that this adjective is a simple adjective, which consists of "a simple adjectival lexeme + 的".

1. - 这是一位博学的老师 (*This is a knowledgeable 的 teacher)
2. - 我有一只可爱的宠物 (*I have a lovely 的 pet)

These two examples and the previous part (Common adjectives) show that these adjectives are formed as "common adjectives + 的", which means that when a common adjective that can be used as a predicate is followed by the adjectival lexeme "的", it no longer has the function of a predicate.

b. compound non-verbal adjectives.

The basic form of compound non-verbal adjectives is "modal verb + verb + object + 的", in which only the verb is a necessary element and all others are non-essential, i.e. in different compound adjectives, the constituent elements will be different, but will include at least "verb" and "的", some examples are as follows:

1. 这是一种会吃人的动物 (This is a kind of *will eat people 的 animal)
(In this adjective, "会吃人的 (*will eat people)" is formed by "会 (can: modal verb)" + "吃 (eat: verb)" + "人 (people: object)" + "的")
2. 他就是那个打人的男人 (He is just that *hit person 的 man)
(In this adjective, "打人的 (*hit someone 的)" is formed by "打 (hit: verb)" + "人 (person: object)" + "的")
3. 房间里是一个跳舞的美女 (In room, (there) is a *dance 的 美女)

(In this adjective, “跳舞的 (*dance 的)” is formed by “跳舞 (dance: verb)” + “的”)

This type of compound adjective is a unique class of adjective species in Chinese, and its peculiarity lies in the tendency of Italian and English to turn these compound adjectives into a dependent relative clause when they are involved, e.g:

4. 他就是那个打人的男人 (He is just that man who has hit someone)

However, some Chinese linguists have made attempts to convert these compound adjectives into relative clauses, resembling the structure in European languages. This is because there is a certain similarity between the structure of relative clauses and this kind of adjectives in Chinese. For example:

5. “这是我认识的那个人 (*This is I know 的 person, right translation: This is the person I know).”

In this sentence, we can observe a structure similar to that of compound adjectives, where the form is "Subject + verb + 的" However, with closer inspection, we can see that there is no object in this structure because the object is "人 (person)" which is akin to the relative pronoun "who/that" in English.

Nevertheless, this hypothesis has not gained widespread acceptance due to syntactic challenges involved in converting these compound adjectives into relative clauses.

2) Some basics about qualifying adjectives in Chinese, Italian and English

	Chinese	Italian	English
position	Prenominal position	Pre- and postnominal position	Prenominal position
A reduction of the form and meaning changes	/	<i>Un <u>gran</u> uomo</i> (a man who is great) <i>Un uomo <u>grande</u></i> (a man who is big/tall...)	/
Inflection of adj. corresponding to the noun	/	There is inflection when modifying singular and plural nouns <i>casa <u>grande</u></i> --- <i>case <u>grandi</u></i>	/

More specific explanation about position of qualifying adjectives.

In Italian:

The Adjectives-demonstrative, possessive, indefinite, interrogative and numerals-come before the noun: *il mio vestito*. But In Italian Standard the postnominal position is a focus position, *il vestito mio non il tu*.

Adjectives of colors and nationalities always follow the noun, though, along with possessive adjectives, may follow the name for emphasis: *Il mio vestito, il mio vestito rosso*.

When the adjective is preceded by molto (very), troppo (too) or other modifying adverb, it always follows the noun. Example: È una persona molto interessante.

In Chinese and English:

qualifying adjectives are always prenominal position: No matter it's "il mio vestito" or "il vestito mio", in Chinese and English, it should be "我的衣服/My clothes"

3) A brief restatement of the hierarchy of adjectives in Italian, English and Chinese.

According to Cinque 1994's adjectival hierarchy hypothesis, the order of adjectives in Italian and English is as follows:

In Italian: Possessive> Cardinal numerals> Ordinal numerals> Quality> Dimension> Shape> Color> Nationality> Object denoting N.

In English: Determiner> Observation/Opinion> Size> Shape> Age> Color> Origin> Material> Type> Purpose.

It's vital to note that there is a distinction in the location of the Italian adjectives described before, despite the fact that the order of adjectives in Italian and English is relatively comparable and does not differ much. The adjectival sequences in Italian indicated solely apply to the ordering inside those adjectives themselves, independent of the noun they modify. They can be placed either before or after the noun. This suggests that some adjectives may appear before the noun and others may come after. A simpler structure is used in English, where the adjective is typically placed before the noun. Also, in Italian, it is possible that the adjective is no longer a simple "word", but may be in the form of "prep. + n". Thus, the acquisition of adjectival sequences of Italian for Chinese students would be much more difficult.

1. Indossava un bellissimo abito di seta rossa, lungo e fluente.
(English: She wore a beautiful, long, flowing, red silk dress.)
2. Ha comprato un grande tavolo da pranzo antico in legno.
(English: He bought a big, old, wooden, antique dining table.)

3. Il libro è un **romanzo storico intrigante, informativo e ben scritto.**
(English: The book is an intriguing, informative, well-written, historical novel.)

Therefore, it is crucial for Chinese students to understand the distinct adjectival sequences in Italian and English. Equally important is to comprehend when Italian adjectives are positioned before the noun and when they come after it, as well as the appropriate preposition when an adjective is formed by "preposition + noun," and so on. This knowledge will enable students to effectively navigate the complexities of adjective placement in Italian and enhance their overall language proficiency.

Adjectival relation in Chinese:

1. 递加关系 (additive relation): When there is no direct relationship between multiple adjectival determiners, this type is called additive relation.
2. 并列关系 (parallel relation): When each adjective can independently modify the noun, this type is called parallel relation.
3. 一体关系 (integral relation): When each adjective cannot modify the central word independently, but must be taken as an integral part, this type is called integral relation.

Since the order of Chinese adjectives is not particularly strict, it is often very subjective, but its order actually has a lot to do with the Chinese cognition, which can be summarized as follows:

1. The natural process by which people come to know things is the process of gradually grasping the essence of things from shallow to deep, from surface to inside, from far to near, from big to small. Hence, the adjectival sequences follow this sequence, too.
2. Objective adjectives (Related to the object itself) in the additive relation model are close to the central noun in conceptual sense, while subjective adjectives (Related to the subject's own feelings) are far from the central noun.
3. The outermost layer of adjectives mostly indicates the time, the distance of location, the size, thickness and width of volume, while those closer to the noun indicate details, texture, essence and other aspects.
4. Culture influences the order of adjectives, Chinese people always expect good things and reject negative things, while traditional culture values men more than women, so in this case the order of adjectives will put "adjectives that show good things" in front of "adjectives that show the bad side", and

"something about male" before "something about female".

5. The sufficient conditional relation among the adjectives restricts the adjectival sequences, which means the property of the preceding adjective is a sufficient condition for the existence of the subsequent adjective property. For example “他是个努力学习的 好孩子 (*he is a hard- working good boy) - Because he is hard- working, he is good. (“Hard- working” is the sufficient condition for “good”)”

6. Syllabic rhythm and structural homogeneity influence the arrangement of adjectival sequences. Adjectives with similar syllables and consistent structure tend to be grouped together, while disyllabic adjectives are often placed before multisyllabic ones to maintain a balanced and harmonious syllabic pattern.

The above adjectival sequences are influenced by logical perception and cultural factors, so it is divided into different logical situations and cultural contexts, which cannot all be discussed together at the same time and therefore cannot generate a complete adjective hierarchy similar to that in Italian and English.

4. Conclusion

A comprehensive understanding of the distinctions in the article systems among the three languages, including the alternative grammatical forms in Chinese that serve a similar function, along with the similarities and differences in adjectives and their hierarchical order, plays a crucial role in studying the acquisition of the Italian article system and adjectival hierarchical order by Chinese students influenced by English. Hence, this study follows a logical progression from L1 to L2 and then to L3, focusing on these two syntactic aspects of language acquisition.

VI. Data Collection and Analysis.

1. Introduction

This chapter concentrates on the experiment, i.e. it includes data collection and analysis. The aim is to investigate how Chinese students acquire Italian articles and adjectival sequences under the influence of English acquisition through a corpus analysis consisting of questionnaires, doing test questions, and other parts. It consists of the following parts: Introduction of the experimental sample (i.e. Chinese Italian teachers and Chinese Italian learners who participated in the questionnaire and the test), introduction to methods of data collection and analysis, collection of the experimental data, analysis of the corpus of results, discussion of the data results, generalization of the analysis of the comparison of the two language acquisition processes of Chinese students, summary and outlook and corresponding pedagogical and acquisition suggestions.

2. Introduction of the experimental sample.

Firstly, we designed a questionnaire for Chinese teachers at universities who teach Italian. The questionnaire primarily focuses on the usage of Italian articles and adjectival sequences, encompassing their feedback and comments.

This questionnaire survey involved the selection of 10 teachers from prominent foreign language colleges and universities in China as the subjects. While this sample size may not comprehensively represent the perspectives of all foreign language teachers, it holds significance due to the broad spectrum of foreign language institutions covered. These include 8 foreign language universities, thus lending a degree of representativeness to the relatively small sample due to the random selection method.

The ages of the participants ranged from 30 to 60 years old, with teaching experience spanning from as little as 2 years to as extensive as 42 years. As a result, the questionnaire survey offered insights not only into the acquisition status of articles and adjective sequences among students studying Italian in Chinese foreign language universities, but also into the perspectives and experiences of educators of varying ages and tenures in teaching these linguistic aspects. This encompassed insights into the challenges and priorities when instructing these two components of the language.

participant ID	age(years)	teaching experience(years)
甲	37	15
乙	32	7

丙	45	22
丁	36	15
戊	65	42
己	51	24
庚	40	15
辛	47	20
壬	30	2
癸	53	30

In the second part, we selected 30 Chinese native speakers who have been learning Italian as their third language. Prior to commencing the research, we categorized them into three groups based on their English language proficiency: low, medium, and high levels of English (Specific classification criteria will be reflected in the following). It's worth noting that Chinese students first learn English (L2) and then Italian (L3). Consequently, the experimental control group could only be constituted of learners with a low level of English proficiency as the baseline reference. Selecting students who have not directly studied English and only learned Italian, as per the scope of this thesis, isn't possible. This is because this research tacitly assumes that the acquisition of English has an influence on the acquisition of Italian (or called language transfer). Therefore, it's unnecessary to use Chinese students with no prior experience in English acquisition as the baseline reference group.

English Low Level Group - G1

Participant ID	age(years)	studying experience of Italian (years)
1	23	4
2	24	4
3	23	4
4	25	4
5	24	4
6	25	4
7	23	4
8	25	4
9	24	4
10	26	4

All participants in this dataset are majoring in Italian, and the majority of its members are from significant foreign language universities in China. We only used fourth-year college graduates as experimental subjects in order to preserve controlled variables. Because this criterion is arbitrary, their English competence was chosen as the foundation for classification. The CET (Certificate of English Test) was used to obtain data on this group. CET 4 rather than CET 6 is used to determine the

English proficiency level within this group because English proficiency is a subjective variable. The level of this group, according to standardized conversion, is equivalent to B1 and lower on the European Framework Standard.

English Medium Level Group - G2

Participant ID	ages (years)	studying experience of Italian (years)
a	23	4
b	24	4
c	25	4
d	26	4
e	24	4
f	23	4
g	24	4
h	23	4
i	25	4
j	24	4

This dataset's participants are all Italian majors, with many of them coming from prestigious Chinese colleges with a strong international focus. In order to maintain the controlled variables, we exclusively used college graduates who had completed their fourth year as experimental participants. Their English proficiency was used as the standard for classification because this criterion is arbitrary. On this group, information was gathered using the CET (Certificate of English Test). English proficiency is a subjective variable, hence CET 6 is used to determine the level of English competence within this group. The European Framework Standard's B2 level corresponds to this group's level when converted consistently.

English High Level Group - G3

Participant ID	ages (years)	studying experience of Italian (years)
A	24	4
B	23	4
C	25	4
D	24	4
E	24	4
F	25	4
G	23	4
H	24	4

I	25	4
J	26	4

This group of data mainly comes from the data collected from major foreign language universities in China, and all of them are Italian majors, and in order to control the variables, we limit the experimental subjects to the graduates of the fourth year of college, and use their English proficiency as the benchmark as a criterion, because English proficiency is a more subjective variable, so this group of data collection are based on the TEM-8 (Test for English Majors-Band 8) exam as the standard, the group of high level of English proficiency is measured by passing the TEM-8, and the final score is excellent and above (80 points or more under the percentage system). And due to the standardized conversion, the level of this group is the C1-C2 level of English under the European Framework Standard.

3. Introduction to methods of data collection and analysis.

The methods of data collection and analysis differed between the two sample groups. For the initial group of university Italian teachers, data was primarily gathered through questionnaires, capturing their perspectives and insights on the acquisition of articles and adjectival sequences during the Italian teaching process. Additionally, the difficulties and challenges faced by their students in acquiring these two aspects during the learning process were also collected.

Concerning the second group (comprising data from the three student subgroups), data collection and organization involve Italian language test questions and corpus construction for analysis. The test comprised two parts: the first section focused on the "Acquisition of Italian Articles," consisting of 30 multiple-choice questions. The second section centered on the "Acquisition of Italian Adjectival Sequences," comprising 20 fill-in-the-blank sorting questions.

Statistical tools such as the "t-test," "ANOVA," and "correlation analysis" are applied to analyze this data, aiming to assess differences between groups and explore relationships between variables.

The t-test: This is employed to compare means across the three groups, to test if significant differences existed. It serves as a method to identify substantial distinctions in the stages of the learning process regarding learners' acquisition of Italian coronal and adjectival sequences.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): ANOVA is used to determine if notable differences existed between the means of the three groups. This facilitates understanding whether the acquisition of Italian articles and acquisition of adjectival sequences differed among language learners based on their English level.

Correlation Analysis: This analytical approach investigates the extent of the

relationship between two variables. In this study, correlation analysis aims to ascertain whether a correlation existed between the acquisition of Italian articles, adjectival sequences and the learners' English proficiency level.

Regarding corpus construction, given the limited scope of this thesis, there isn't an available relevant corpus to utilize. Therefore, this study created a corpus as follows:

1. Designing test: Develop a series of interconnected questions in accordance with the research, focusing on the acquisition of Italian articles and adjectival sequences. It's important to ensure that the difficulty and complexity of the questions remain within a reasonable range.
2. Data Collection from Students: Distribute the same set of questions among students belonging to varying English proficiency groups and instruct them to complete the assignments.
3. Data Organization: Gather students' answers and structure them into a standardized data format, facilitating subsequent analysis.
4. Corpus Analysis: Categorize the sequence of questions. Utilize statistical methods to gauge the variances in acquisition among groups with diverse English proficiency levels. To clearly illustrate the analytic results and highlight inter-group differences, visual aids like charts and tables will be used.
5. Result Interpretation: Explore probable causes for inter-group differences based on the results of each group's English proficiency score in the Results Analysis part. Find out if these differences are due to their English-language proficiency or if there are other influencing variables at operation. Relate Findings to Research Questions: Make sure the results of the analysis match the study question and hypothesis.
6. Discussion on Significance and Limitations: In the discussion of results part, explore the significance of the analysis findings and address potential limitations. Analyze whether the study's analysis is representative and whether external factors may have impacted the outcomes.

4. Collection of the experimental data.

The questionnaire presented to Chinese Italian teachers at universities gathers their opinions and reviews on students' acquisition of articles and adjectival sequences. It also attempts to record their perceptions of the difficulties and crucial factors of the students' learning process. The following table contains the overall results of the data collection.

No.	Judgmental questions	Yes	No	Not sure
1	Do you think Italian articles are a difficult subject?	甲丙庚辛壬癸	乙丁己	戊
2	Do you think Italian adjectival sequences are a difficult subject?	甲乙癸丙己	辛戌	庚壬丁
3	Do you think Italian articles are important?	甲乙丙丁戊己 庚辛壬	/	癸
4	Do you think Italian adjectival sequences are important?	甲己辛	丁戌癸壬	乙丙庚
5	Do you think students' acquisition of Italian articles is influenced by English acquisition?	甲丙丁戊己庚 辛壬癸	/	乙
6	Do you think students' acquisition of Italian adjectival sequences is influenced by English?	丙丁辛壬癸己	庚	甲乙戌
7	Do you think students' acquisition of English articles will help their acquisition of Italian?	丙戌庚辛	甲乙	丁己壬癸
8	Do you think students' acquisition of English adjectival sequences will help their acquisition of Italian?	丙丁己癸辛	庚	乙甲壬戌
9	Do you think students with a high level of English proficiency will also perform better in the Italian article acquisition?	丙丁癸	戌	甲乙己庚辛壬
10	Do you think students with a high level of English proficiency will also perform better in the Italian adjectival sequences?	丙己辛癸丁	庚	壬甲乙戌
11	Do you think you know well or are proficient in Italian articles?	甲乙丙丁戊己 庚辛壬癸	/	/
12	Do you think you know well or are proficient in Italian	辛戌	庚甲乙壬癸	丙丁己

	adjectival sequences?			
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Reviews and comments regarding the acquisition of Italian articles

participant ID	age(years)	Reviews/ Comments
甲	37	Italian articles are much more complex than English ones and can be much more difficult to learn.
乙	32	There are a lot of Italian articles, but with discipline I don't think it will be difficult.
丙	45	I think the acquisition of English is still helpful for students to acquire Italian articles, after all, they all have definite and indefinite articles, etc.
丁	36	Italian articles are not difficult to learn, and it is not difficult to do the test questions, but you need to be proficient or you need to look at the improvisation in the spoken language, after all, it takes a high level to express accurately in a short period of time.
戊	65	Distinguishing between the definite article and the indefinite article will be simpler for students, but the distinction within the definite article or the indefinite article will be much more complex.
己	51	I don't think there's anything difficult about the Italian articles.
庚	40	The acquisition of articles should be predicated on the study of nouns, as the forms of nouns like singular and plural and feminine and masculine, students must understand them first.
辛	47	The definite article is much more difficult than the indefinite article, especially when to use it and when not to use it, which can sometimes be difficult for students.
壬	30	Articles are really a difficult thing to learn because we don't have this grammatical structure in Chinese, so it can be much more difficult to learn, especially since Italian articles are much more complex than English ones.
癸	53	Italian articles may not be so important in speaking - they are, after all, function words, and whether you omit them or not, use them correctly or incorrectly doesn't affect other people's understanding - but as a point of grammar they still need to be learned.

Reviews and comments regarding the acquisition of Italian adjectival sequences.

participant ID	age(years)	Reviews/ Comments
甲	37	To be honest, I haven't paid much attention to adjective order, so I don't actually know much about it, but it should be an important linguistic theme.
乙	32	In Chinese we almost seldom talk about the adjectival sequences, or we all use it conventionally, so I guess few people pay attention to it.
丙	45	The orders of adjectives in Italian, or called Italian adjectival sequences, are pretty much the same as in English, I think, and this wasn't something we specialized in when we were studying, so I'm not actually sure.
丁	36	When we were first teaching we would just focus specifically on saying what is the difference between an adjective placed before a noun and after a noun, and what is the difference between something like "mio, tuo, etc". where these aggettivi possessivi are placed before and after a noun.
戊	65	For some simple sequences or common sequences are easy to memorize, for example no one says "il bello mio figlio" rather they all say "il mio bel figlio", this is because we know that words like "mio" which are aggettivi possessivi should have priority over words like "bello" which describes outward features. As for the full order of this adjectival sequence, although I know it perfectly well, I expect it will be ignored since it really isn't taught in everyday teaching either.
己	51	Chinese adjective order is also complex, and the more important adjectives that are closer to the essence of the thing are closer to the noun, which is different from Western languages, so it will be difficult for Chinese students to acquire Italian adjectival sequences, but English ones should be able to help them learn Italian.
庚	40	At this point, I don't have a positive view on "English acquisition helps Italian acquisition", it does, but how many Chinese students really learn English adjectival sequences well? Everyone relies on a feeling.
辛	47	In fact, there is no completely unified template or standard for English adjectival sequences in Western linguistics, just that the general order is those, and it may be similar for Italian, so I think that the acquisition

		of English adjective sequences is helpful for this aspect of Italian learning.
壬	30	Honest speaking, I can't say a complete order of the adjective hierarchy in Italian myself, a lot of the time my Italian expressions come purely from years of study and teaching habits, for example sorting out the order of "mia" and "costosa" when modifying "borsa" is simple, but when "nuova" and "lucida" come up maybe it all gets complicated, but I guess a lot depends on what qualities you think of first when modifying the noun, rather than that a string of adjectives you'll mentally order before you express them, hence the verbalization is instantaneous.
癸	53	All I know is that "aggettivi possessivi" have a high priority, and then those adjectives that are made up of "preposition + noun", such as di lana and other types of adjectives that indicate materials, etc., come after the noun, which means they have a lower priority. A lot of the rest I usually rely on habit and feeling, but in any case, I don't think it's really an important topic, although the study of English in this area should also help in the acquisition of Italian.

Data on students collected from test questions on the articles and the adjectival sequences. The following table shows the organized corpus, which records the test responses of three groups of students. The portion of the correct answer will be highlighted.

I. Scegliete l'opzione giusta.				
1. ____ gatto sta dormendo.	A. un	B. una	C. un'	D. uno
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 a b c d e f g h i j A B C D E F G H I J	/	/	/
2. ____ amico mio mi ha regalato un telefonino.	A. un'	B. una	C. un	D. uno
	1 5 6 8 9 a f	/	3 7 10 b c d e h i j A B C D E F G H	2 4 g

			IJ	
3. Mi può dare _____ mano?	A. una	B.un'	C.uno	D.un
	1 2 5 7 10 b c e g h A B C D E F H I J	/	/	3 4 6 8 9 a d f j i G
4. _____ studente sta ancora studiando.	A. una	B.uno	C.un	D.un'
	/	1 2 3 4 5 6 8 10 a b c e f g h i j A B C D E F G H I J	9 d	7
5. Lui è _____ psicologo.	A. un	B.uno	C.una	D.un'
	1 4 8 9 10 a f j i A D	2 3 5 6 7 b c d e g h B C E F G H I J	/	/
6. _____ professoressa sta spiegando la domanda.	A. un	B.una	C.un'	D.uno
	1 8	/	/	2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 a b c d e f g h i j A B C D E F G H I J
7. Amellia è _____ attrice italiana.	A. una	B.un'	C.uno	D.un
	2 3 6 i	1 4 5 7 8 9 10 a b c d e f g h A B C D E F G H I J	/	/
8. C'è _____ cinema al centro.	A. una	B.un	C.un'	D.uno
	10 f	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 a b c d e g h i j A B C D E F G H I J	/	/
9. È _____ professore molto bravo.	A. una	B.uno	C.un'	D.un
	/	4 5 8 9 d h	/	1 2 3 6 7 10 a b c e f g i j A B C D E F G H

				IJ
10. ____ libro che hai letto è buono.	A. il	B.lo	C.l'	D./
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 a b c d e f g h i j A B C D E F G H I J	/	/	/
11. ____ antropologia culturale è una disciplina che mi piace.	A. la	B.l'	C.lo	D.il
	1 5 8 f h E	2 3 4 6 7 9 10 a b c d e g i J A B C D F G H I J	/	/
12. ____ cane è un mammifero.	A. la	B./	C.il	D.B o C
	4 7		1 2 3 8 10 a c e f h i A E H I	5 6 9 b d g j B C D F G J
13. ____ sfruttatore deve essere punito.	A. la	B.lo	C.l'	D.il
	/	1 2 3 4 6 7 8 9 10 a b c d e f g h i j A B C D E F G H I J	/	5
14. ____ zaino che ti ho regalato è molto bello.	A. la	B.l'	C.il	D.lo
	/	/	4 8 b d	1 2 3 5 6 7 9 10 a c e f g h i j A B C D E F G H I J
15. ____ sottotitoli del film sono comuni in Cina.	A. i	B.le	C.gli	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 a b c d e f g h i j A B C D E F G H I J	/	/	

16. ____ sconosciuti di ieri erano cattivi.	A. gli	B.i	C.le	
	1 3 4 5 6 8 10 a c d e f g h i j A B C D E F G H I J	2 7 9 b	/	
17. ____ anziani sono persone deboli.	A. le	B.gli	C.i	
	3 6 7 9 a i	2 4 5 8 10 b c d e f g h j A B C D E F G H I J	1	
18. ____ anziane del mio borgo hanno perso i mariti in guerra.	A. Le	B.i	C.gli	
	1 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 a b c d e f g h i j A B C D E F G H I J	/	2	
19. ____ famiglie italiane sono diverse rispetto ad altri europei: danno grande importanza ai legami familiari.	A. i	B.le	C. gli	
	/	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 a b c d e f g h i j A B C D E F G H I J	/	
20. ____ gente qua è molto gentile.	A. lo	B.la	C.il	D.l'
	/	1 3 7 8 10 a b d e f g i j A B C E F G H I J	2 4 5 6 9 c h D	/

Comments:

The test results from this question set reveal a clear pattern: when dealing with regular nouns that follow a predictable pattern, such as using 'a' for feminine singular and 'o' for masculine singular, students rarely confuse the gender distinctions. For instance, if they determine that a masculine gender is needed, their answer might still be incorrect, but it would involve selecting an incorrect masculine form, like

'Zaino,' and using 'il' instead of 'la.'

However, the likelihood of errors increases when nouns are singular and end in 'e.' In such cases, students must rely on their experience and noun knowledge to discern whether the noun is feminine or masculine, singular or plural. Furthermore, when irregular nouns appear, like masculine nouns ending in 'a' or feminine nouns ending in 'o,' their error rates also rise.

II. Scegliete l'opzione corretta sull'articolo (NB sono inclusi zero articoli e quegli articoli composti combinati con preposizioni)

21. Quale è corretto? ()

- A. Marta vive a Parigi. Lorenzo, invece, alla Città del Messico.
- B. Marta vive a Parigi. Lorenzo, invece, alla Città di Messico.
- C. Marta vive a Parigi. Lorenzo, invece, a Città del Messico.
- D. Marta vive a Parigi. Lorenzo, invece, a Città di Messico.

A: 1 2 4 7 9, a e i, A E F

B: 3 5, f j, B C G

C: 6 10, c h

D: 8, b d g, D H I J

22. Quale è sbagliato? ()

- A. La Cina è una bella nazione.
- B. Luigi vive nella Cina adesso.
- C. Si è trasferito negli Stati Uniti, in California.
- D. Voglio studiare nella bella Italia.

A: /

B: 3 4 6 8 10, a b c f h j, A B D E F G I J

C: /

D: 1 2 5 7 9, d e g i, C H

23. Quale è meno corretto? ()

- A. Nella Repubblica Italiana
- B. Nella Repubblica del Congo

C. Nella Repubblica Popolare Cinese

D. Nei Regni Uniti

A: 1 5 7, g h, A F H

B: 2 4 9 10, a e i, B D

C: 3, b c, C E I

D: 6 8, d f j, G J

24. Quale è sbagliato? ()

A. La Roma ha vinto questa partita.

B. Hai visto la partita del Napoli?

C. La Venezia è una città meravigliosa.

D. La Lombardia è economicamente potente in Italia.

A: 4 8 9 10, d c e g h i, G H

B: 1 5, a b, E

C: 2 3 6 7, f j, A B C D F I J

D: /

25. Quale è meno corretto? ()

A. È questa la Giulia che amiamo!

B. Questo è il Luca, figlio di mia sorella.

C. Questa è Lucia, figlia del mio fratellino.

D. La Giulia ha chiamato qualcuno.

A: 1 5 8 9, d g i, D

B: 2 3 6 10, a c, B I

C: /

D: 4 7, b e f h j, A C E F G H J

26. Quale è sbagliato? ()

A. Nostro padre è coraggioso.

B. la tua mamma ti ama veramente.

C. Ho un regalo per tua mamma.

D. Il suo fratellino è intelligente.

E. la loro zia è andata in Italia.

F. il mio cugino è molto bravo.

A: /

B: /

C: 1 3 7 8 10, c d e h i, A F

D: /

E: 2 6, a

F: 4 5 9, b f g j, B C D E G H I J

27. Quale è sbagliato? ()

A. Il luglio è il mese peggiore per prenotare un volo

B. Il gennaio del 1956 fu il mese più freddo della storia.

C. Nel maggio del 1895 fu organizzata una rivolta armata.

D. il martedì ho un corso di yoga.

E. il lunedì di Pasqua di solito si festeggia con una grigliata.

A: 3 4 6 9 10, b c e f g h i j, A B C D E F G H I J

B: /

C: 2 5 8, a d

D: 1 7

E: /

28. Quale è corretto? ()

A. a casa mia, c'è un tavolo di legno.

B. a casa tua, non c'è un tavolo del legno.

A: 1 5 6 10, a b e h i, A C D F G H I J

B: 2 3 4 7 8 9, c d f g j, B E

29. Quale è sbagliato? ()

A. Noi dormiamo in camera, non in cucina.

B. Nella montagna, fa più fresco che in città.

C. Vado sempre al parco per rilassarmi.

D. Lui abita in periferia.

E. La mamma dorme nella sua camera, tu invece in camera tua.

A: /

B: 5 8 10, d f h i, C D G H I J

C: 1 6, a, F

D: /

E: 2 3 4 7 9, b c e g j, A B E

30. Quale è sbagliato? ()

A. Dobbiamo lavorare con passione.

B. Gli italiani mangiano col coltello e forchetta.

C. Dovete studiare con forza!

D. Ma almeno devi stare con pazienza.

A: /

B: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10, a b c d e f g h i j, A B C D E F G H I J

C: /

D: /

E: /

Comments:

This part examines the omission of the definite article within the context of its interaction with prepositions. For instance, when referring to a country name in the singular form, like 'Cina,' it is expressed as 'La Cina.' However, when used with the preposition 'in,' it becomes 'In Cina,' rather than 'Nella Cina.' It's essential to note that various other cases require precise consideration depending on different contexts and situations.

Additionally, this paragraph addresses specific phrases formed by combining the definite article with a noun. For instance, 'La + city' can refer to the local soccer team. There are also linguistic variants phenomena, such as 'definite article + person,' (La Giulia) which is applicable in certain northern Italian contexts. Not possessing this knowledge could lead to mistakes.

III. **Fill in the underlined adjectives below in the correct and appropriate order**

1. La ____ ____ bambina ha cinque anni.

1. dolce 2. mia

2 - 1: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10, a b c d e f g h i j, A B C D E F G H I J

2. Il ____ ____ ____ amore era un uomo ____ ____.

1. grande 2.suo 3. secondo 4.di successo 5. d'affari

2 - 1 - 3 - 4 - 5 : 3 4 5, h i, J

2 - 1 - 3 - 5 - 4 : 1 9 10, a j, H

2 - 3 - 1 - 4 - 5 : 2 8, b f g, F

2 - 3 - 1 - 5 - 4 : 6 7, c d e, A B C D E G I

3. La ____ casetta è ____ e ____ .

1. sua 2. di colore giallo 3. vecchia 4.di forma quadrata

1 - 3 - 2 - 4 : 1 2 3 5 6 7 10, b c e j, B G

1 - 3 - 4 - 2 : 4 8 9, a d f g h i, A C D E F H I J

4. Ho visto un ____ film ____ al cinema.

1. americano 2. bellissimo

2 - 1 : 2 5 7 8 9 10, b d e g h i, A C D F G H I J

1 - 2 : 1 3 4 6, a c f j, B E

5. La ____ macchina è ____ e ____ .

1. nuova 2. di tre metri 3.di colore nero 4. sua

4 - 1 - 2 - 3 : 4 7 10, f i j, B D E G H I J

4 - 1 - 3 - 2 : 1 2 3 5 6 8 9, a b c d e g h, A C F

6. La ____ casa ____ è di proprietà della famiglia reale.

1. di campagna 2. bianca 3. grande

3 - 2 - 1 : 1 4 6 8 10, a b e h i, C D F G I J

2 - 3 - 1 : 2 3 5 7 9, c d f g j, A B E H

7. Ho comprato un ____ paio di scarpe ____ .

1. nuovo 2. italiane 3. di pelle

1 - 2 - 3 : 2 3 4 5 6 8 9 10, a b c d e f g h i j, A B C D E F G H I J

2 - 1 - 3 : 1 7

8. Il ____ cappotto ____ è appeso nell'armadio.

1. di lana 2. vecchio 3. grigia

2 - 1 - 3: 4 8 9 10, d e f g i, A B C D E F G H I J

2 - 3 - 1: 1 2 3 5 6 7, a b c h j

9. Ho comprato una ____ borsa ____ ____ per andare al mare.

1. nera 2. di tela 3. nuova

1 - 3 - 2: 1, b c,

1 - 2 - 3: 2 5, a h,

3 - 1 - 2: 3 6 7, e

3 - 2 - 1: 4 8 9 10, d f g i, A D E F G I

10. La ____ ____ insegnante ____ è molto brava.

1. vecchia 2. inglese 3. mia

3 - 1 - 2: 1 2 3 5 6 8, b c e g h, B C D E F I J

3 - 2 - 1: 4 7 9 10, a d f i j, A G H

11. Il ____ ____ calciatore ____ ha segnato un gol fantastico.

1. telentuoso 2. brasiliano 3. giovane

1 - 3 - 2: 3, g

1 - 2 - 3: 2 5, h, A B

2 - 1 - 3: 6, b, C

2 - 3 - 1: 1, a, F

3 - 1 - 2: 4 8, d f i j, B D E G H I

3 - 2 - 1: 7 9 10, c e, J

12. La ____ casa ____ ____ è alta.

1. di campagna 2. in legno 3. nuova

3 - 1 - 2: 2 6 8 9 10, b c e f g h, D E F I J

3 - 2 - 1: 1 3 4 5 7, a d i j, A B C G H

13. La ____ porta ____ ____ è stata riparata.

1. marrone 2. di legno 3. vecchia

3 - 1 - 2: 2 4 8 9, a b c j, D H J

1 - 3 - 2: 1 3 6, f g, A C

3 - 2 - 1: 5 7 10, d e h i, B E F G I

14. Ho letto un romanzo _____ molto _____ .

1. storico 2. interessante 3. francese

3 - 1 - 2: 2 4 8 9 10, a c d f i, A B D E G H I

1 - 3 - 2: 1 3 5 6 7, b e g h j, C F J

15. La _____ camicia _____ è molto elegante.

1. di seta 2. rossa 3. nuova 4. mia

4 - 2 - 3 - 1: 7 9 10, H

4 - 3 - 2 - 1: 4, h i j, B F

4 - 2 - 1 - 3: 3 5, f, I

4 - 1 - 2 - 3: 6, c

4 - 1 - 3 - 2: 2, a b

4 - 3 - 1 - 2: 1 8, d g e, A C D E G J

16. La _____ poltrona _____ è molto comoda.

1. di pelle 2. rossa 3. vecchia

3 - 2 - 1: 4 6 7, d h, G

2 - 3 - 1: 1 2 3 5 8, a c j, B F

3 - 1 - 2: 9 10, b e f g i, A C D E H I J

17. Ho visto una _____ statua _____ .

1. greca 2. di marmo 3. grande

1 - 3 - 2: 8 10, a c, G H

3 - 1 - 2: 2 3 5 7 9, g h i j, B C

3 - 2 - 1: 1 4 6, b d e f, A D E F I J

18. La _____ torta _____ e _____ è molto gustosa.

1. panna 2. di fragole 3. nuova

3 - 1 - 2: 1 2 10, a g, B D G

3 - 2 - 1: 5 7 9, d f h i, A C E F I J

1 - 3 - 2: 3 6 8, b e j, H

1 - 2 - 3: 4, c

19. La ____ lampada ____ ____ è molto pregiata.

1. antica 2. vecchia 3. di bronzo

1 - 2 - 3: 1 10, a

2 - 1 - 3: 2, c d g, D I

2 - 3 - 1: 4 7 8, b e f h i, A B E F G H J

1 - 3 - 2: 3 5 6 9, j, C

20. Il ____ ____ matrimonio è stato molto breve.

1. terzo 2. suo

2 - 1: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10, a b c d e f g h i j, A B C D E F G H I J

Comments:

In this section, we can analyze some of the students' responses, and it is intriguing to observe that even in the absence of explicit knowledge of specific adjective sequence rules, they exhibit an ability to intuitively grasp the arrangement of possessive adjectives. These adjectives are typically positioned before the noun, following a distinct hierarchy. This intuitive understanding, rooted in their prior language knowledge and sense, contrasts with their placement of 'modifying parts' like adjectives formed by combining 'preposition + noun,' which tend to be positioned at the end of the sequence.

While these intuitive rules might not align perfectly with grammatical conventions, they demonstrate the students' inclination to generalize and deduce a hierarchical order for adjectives based on the linguistic input they have absorbed during their Italian learning journey.

5. Analysis of the experimental data

Firstly, a collection of teachers' opinions on these two aspects was conducted. When it comes to whether articles and adjective sequences are difficult to acquire, roughly half of the teachers find them challenging. However, their reasons vary. Concerning articles, half of the teachers think the Italian article system complex due to its numerous variations. Conversely, for adjective sequences, almost all teachers consider them difficult. Despite this, only half of them label it as "difficult" due to the perceived lack of importance, resulting in infrequent teaching. The difference in

response arises from the belief that these concepts are less significant, leading to less exposure to adjectives, thereby lessening the perceived difficulty.

Regarding the influence of English acquisition on the Italian article system, 90% of the teachers concur that it has an impact. However, they remain uncertain whether this influence is positive or negative, demonstrating a divided perspective. A smaller percentage (50%) of teachers believe that the acquisition of English adjectival sequences affects the learning of Italian adjectival sequences, with even fewer advocating for a positive transfer.

In summary, teachers generally agree that the acquisition of English articles helps the learning of Italian articles. English articles introduce the fundamental concepts of definite and indefinite articles during L2 (English) acquisition before students acquire articles in L3 (Italian). Nevertheless, due to the intricacies of the Italian article system compared to English, this positive transfer has limitations. In contrast, regarding adjective sequences, teachers' views are more varied. This arises from the ambiguity surrounding this syntactic concept in the Chinese Italian teaching community, as well as differences in teachers' mother tongue (Chinese). While half of the teachers believe in the potential of positive transfer, The others are doubtful due to the adjectival sequences' complexity.

In conclusion, the opinions collected from teachers reveal several key points:

For articles:

- Teachers acknowledge that the L2 article system influences the acquisition of the L3 article system. However, the complexity of the L3 system, with its gender, number, and form variations, restricts the extent of positive transfer.
- Some teachers view mastering the basics of L3 noun grammar as the foundation for easier acquisition of L3 articles, implying a gradual learning process.
- The definite article is often considered more difficult than the indefinite one, particularly in cases of omission.

For adjectival sequences:

- Teachers often disregard this aspect due to its perceived insignificance in teaching and communication, emphasizing the goal of enabling students to communicate effectively in a foreign language.
- Roughly half of the teachers perceive a connection between L2 and L3 adjectival sequences. However, they are cautious due to students' general struggles with L2 adjective acquisition, which may hinder the potential transfer to L3.
- The teachers' viewpoints collectively reflect a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and interplay between English and Italian language acquisition.

The performance of 3 groups in 2 tests

Test of Italian articles.

English Low Level Group - G1			
Participant ID	Age(years)	Studying experience of Italian (years)	Final scores
1	23	4	16/30
2	24	4	16/30
3	23	4	20/30
4	25	4	18/30
5	24	4	19/30
6	25	4	22/30
7	23	4	19/30
8	25	4	16/30
9	24	4	14/30
10	26	4	23/30

English Medium Level Group - G2			
Participant ID	Age(years)	Studying experience of Italian (years)	Final scores
a	23	4	19/30
b	24	4	24/30
c	23	4	22/30
d	25	4	19/30
e	24	4	24/30
f	25	4	22/30
g	23	4	23/30
h	25	4	25/30
i	24	4	19/30
j	26	4	25/30

English High Level Group - G3			
Participant ID	Age(years)	Studying expeience of Italian (years)	Final scores
A	23	4	25/30
B	24	4	25/30
C	23	4	28/30
D	25	4	25/30
E	24	4	24/30
F	25	4	27/30
G	23	4	27/30
H	25	4	26/30
I	24	4	26/30
J	26	4	30/30

Then based on this data, the following graphs were obtained by analyzing the data using SPSS software. (SL3AT=Scores of L3 article test)

One way

Descriptives

SL3AT

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
G1	10	18.30	2.869	.907	16.25	20.35	14	23
G2	10	22.20	2.440	.772	20.45	23.95	19	25
G3	10	26.30	1.767	.559	25.04	27.56	24	30
Total	30	22.27	4.051	.740	20.75	23.78	14	30

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
SL3AT	Based on Mean	1.402	2	27	.264
	Based on Median	1.475	2	27	.247

Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.475	2	25.399	.248
Based on trimmed mean	1.436	2	27	.255

ANOVA

SL3AT

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	320.067	2	160.033	27.734	<.001
Within Groups	155.800	27	5.770		
Total	475.867	29			

ANOVA Effect Sizes^a

		Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
SL3AT	Eta-squared	.673	.407	.774
	Epsilon-squared	.648	.363	.758
	Omega-squared Fixed-effect	.641	.355	.751
	Omega-squared Random-effect	.471	.216	.602

a. Eta-squared and Epsilon-squared are estimated based on the fixed-effect model.

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: SL3AT

	(I) EL	(J) EL	Mean	Std.	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
			Difference (I-J)			Error	Lower Bound
LSD	G1	G2	-3.900*	1.074	.001	-6.10	-1.70
		G3	-8.000*	1.074	<.001	-10.20	-5.80
	G2	G1	3.900*	1.074	.001	1.70	6.10
		G3	-4.100*	1.074	<.001	-6.30	-1.90
	G3	G1	8.000*	1.074	<.001	5.80	10.20

		G2	4.100*	1.074	<.001	1.90	6.30
Bonferro ni	G1	G2	-3.900*	1.074	.003	-6.64	-1.16
		G3	-8.000*	1.074	<.001	-10.74	-5.26
	G2	G1	3.900*	1.074	.003	1.16	6.64
		G3	-4.100*	1.074	.002	-6.84	-1.36
	G3	G1	8.000*	1.074	<.001	5.26	10.74
		G2	4.100*	1.074	.002	1.36	6.84

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Homogeneous Subsets

		SL3AT				
		EL	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
				1	2	3
Student-Newman-Keuls ^a	G1		10	18.30		
	G2		10		22.20	
	G3		10			26.30
	Sig.			1.000	1.000	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 10.000.

From these data and tables, a table of results interpretation was created as follows:

	G1	G2	G3	F	P
SL3AT	18.30±2.87	22.20±2.44	26.30±1.77	27.73	<.001

- Result Interpretation:

- SL3AT was 18.30±2.87 in G1 group, 22.20±2.44 in G2 group and 26.30±1.77 in G3 group, One-Way ANOVA showed F=27.73, P<.001, and it was concluded that there was a statistically significant difference in SL3AT among the three groups.

-After that, "Post hoc LSD pairwise comparisons" were performed and statistically significant differences were found among G1, G2, and G3 (as all p's<.05).

Test of Italian adjectival sequences.

English Low Level Group - G1			
Participant ID	Age(years)	Studying experience of Italian (years)	Final scores
1	23	4	7/20

2	24	4	6/20
3	23	4	5/20
4	25	4	11/20
5	24	4	8/20
6	25	4	9/20
7	23	4	9/20
8	25	4	12/20
9	24	4	9/20
10	26	4	11/20

English Medium Level Group - G2			
Participant ID	Age(years)	Studying experience of Italian (years)	Final scores
a	23	4	5/20
b	24	4	11/20
c	23	4	6/20
d	25	4	13/20
e	24	4	15/20
f	25	4	13/20
g	23	4	12/20
h	25	4	12/20
i	24	4	14/20
j	26	4	6/20

English High Level Group - G3			
Participant ID	Age(years)	Studying experience of Italian (years)	Final scores
A	23	4	13/20

B	24	4	10/20
C	23	4	13/20
D	25	4	16/20
E	24	4	17/20
F	25	4	15/20
G	23	4	13/20
H	25	4	10/20
I	24	4	17/20
J	26	4	16/20

Then based on this data, the following graphs were obtained by analyzing the data using SPSS software. (SL3AST=Scores of L3 adjectival sequences test)

Descriptives

SL3AST

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
G1	10	8.70	2.263	.716	7.08	10.32	5	12
G2	10	10.70	3.653	1.155	8.09	13.31	5	15
G3	10	14.00	2.625	.830	12.12	15.88	10	17
Total	30	11.13	3.579	.653	9.80	12.47	5	17

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
SL3AST	Based on Mean	1.916	2	27	.167
	Based on Median	.705	2	27	.503
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.705	2	17.873	.508
	Based on trimmed mean	1.763	2	27	.191

ANOVA

SL3AST

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	143.267	2	71.633	8.475	.001
Within Groups	228.200	27	8.452		
Total	371.467	29			

ANOVA Effect Sizes^a

		Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
SL3AST	Eta-squared	.386	.082	.565
	Epsilon-squared	.340	.014	.532
	Omega-squared Fixed-effect	.333	.013	.524
	Omega-squared Random-effect	.199	.007	.355

a. Eta-squared and Epsilon-squared are estimated based on the fixed-effect model.

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: SL3AST

		(I) G1	(J) G1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LSD	G1	G2		-2.000	1.300	.136	-4.67	.67
		G3		-5.300*	1.300	<.001	-7.97	-2.63
	G2	G1		2.000	1.300	.136	-.67	4.67
		G3		-3.300*	1.300	.017	-5.97	-.63
	G3	G1		5.300*	1.300	<.001	2.63	7.97
		G2		3.300*	1.300	.017	.63	5.97
Bonferro ni	G1	G2		-2.000	1.300	.407	-5.32	1.32
		G3		-5.300*	1.300	.001	-8.62	-1.98
	G2	G1		2.000	1.300	.407	-1.32	5.32

	G3	-3.300	1.300	.052	-6.62	.02
G3	G1	5.300*	1.300	.001	1.98	8.62
	G2	3.300	1.300	.052	-.02	6.62

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

From these data and tables, a table of results interpretation was created as follows:

	G1	G2	G3	F	P
SL3AST	8.70±2.26	10.70±3.65	14.00±2.63	8.48	<.001

- Result Interpretation:

- SL3AST was 8.70±2.26 in G1 group, 10.70±3.65 in G2 group and 14.00±2.63 in G3 group, One-Way ANOVA showed F=8.48, p<.001, and it was concluded that there was a statistically significant difference in SL3AST among the three groups.

-After that, "Post hoc LSD pairwise comparisons" were performed and statistically significant differences were found between G1 and G3 (p<.05), G2 and G3 (p<.05) but not between G1 and G2 (p=.136>.05).

VII. Conclusions and reflections.

1. Conclusions

From all the above data and the corpus created by collecting the students' answers, we can draw the following analysis:

1. in terms of the system of articles, L2 has a positive transfer effect on L3, which means that students with a higher level of L2 acquisition will also perform better in the acquisition of articles in L3. However, there is also occasional negative transfer, particularly when encountering proper nouns. This is because proper nouns in Italian demand different article usage compared to English.

2. It can be seen from the errors made by the students that they generally do not get the singular and plural of the articles wrong after judging them based on the singular and feminine of the nouns (unless there is a problem with the nouns, for example, they are unable to distinguish between masculine nouns ending in "a", feminine nouns ending in "o", and some special nominal forms, such as nouns ending in "e"), but under this condition, their errors are generally restricted to errors under lexical properties of a certain nature. For example, when they saw the noun "psicologo", they firstly excluded all the feminine articles because they knew that they should choose a masculine article at this time. Among all the masculine articles, only the students who had mastered the rules knew that they should choose "uno", while some participants might choose "un", because even though words beginning with "ps" and "pr" have two consonants, only masculine singular nouns beginning with "ps" need to be pronounced with "uno". Therefore, this is in line with our initial hypothesis, which is the LPM (Linear Progression Model) and the Scalpel Model (because students first judge the feminine and masculine and the singular and plural before making a choice of articles, then they make choices based on what they have learned and know about making choices under the conditions of a particular word, such as whether to choose the feminine singular/plural or the masculine singular/plural, and this process is simultaneously a pattern from simple to complex).

3. from the comparison of the scores on the second part of the test on articles with the first part of the test, we can see that omission of an article is a more difficult acquisition process for the students than choosing the correct use of an article. This is also a reflection of the "from simple to difficult" acquisition pattern (LPM), because for the selection of articles, students only need to learn each rule, for example, firstly to judge the noun to be modified (including its singular and plural, feminine and masculine), and then to apply the rules they have learned according to these judgments, for example, whether it is a noun beginning with a vowel, whether it is a noun beginning with a consonant cluster, etc. As for the "omission of articles", students not only need to be familiar with each rule, but also need to be familiar with the context of each expression, and when it is

expressed. As for the omission of articles, students need to familiarize themselves not only with the rules of articles, but also with the context of each expression, when articles and prepositions appear together, and with certain expressions and collocations, which determine whether or not an article needs to be omitted. omitted, and this amounts to a higher overall linguistic literacy based on the mastery of articles.

4. In the acquisition of adjective sequences, L2 also has a positive transfer effect on L3, but this effect was not obvious between G1 and G2, while it was more obvious between G1 and G3, and G2 and G3 Which can be told by the data, For example, in Group G1, the average score on the adjective sequence test is only 8.7. In contrast, the average score of Group G2 is 10.7. This represents an increase of 2 points, which corresponds to a growth of 23% $[(10.7-8.7)/8.7=23\%]$. When we examine the transition from Group G2 to Group G3, we observe a larger increase in the score by 3.3 points, resulting in a growth of 31% $[(14-10.7)/10.7=31\%]$. This indicates that the percentage increase in correctness from G1 to G2 (23%) is smaller than the increase in correctness from G2 to G3 (31%).

This trend is also evident in the Multiple Comparisons table of SL3AST, where both the LSD and Bonferroni methods indicate that the p-value for the comparison between G1 and G2 is > 0.05 . While there is statistical significance when considering the groups G1, G2, and G3 as a whole, the correlation between G1 and G2 is not significant. This leads us to the conclusion that, at low and intermediate proficiency levels, there is a positive correlation between Italian descriptive sequences and the level of English. However, this correlation is not statistically significant. Moreover, this positive correlation and its significance become more pronounced as the students' English proficiency level increases.

In essence, this suggests that the mastery and proficiency of Italian adjective sequences are positively influenced by the level of English. Consequently, achieving mastery and proficiency in Italian adjective sequences, particularly, becomes more challenging. Moreover, this positive linguistic transfer becomes more prominent as students attain higher levels of proficiency in English.

5. It can also be seen from the incremental mean scores of G3 that the positive transfer of L2 to L3 needs to be more pronounced after the students have acquired a more proficient level of L2. This also means that this acquisition process is in line with The Cumulative Enhancement Model (CEM) and The Behaviorism Theory, because the students in G3 gradually strengthens and consolidates the L2 through repeated input and use, which leads to a higher level of acquisition of the L2, and thus a better performance of the adjective sequences in the L3 in the language transfer. This is not reflected in the G2 group because the L2 level of the G2 group is moderate, and the quantitative change of their repeated input and use is not enough to reach a significant qualitative change. This also implies that adjective sequences are more difficult for Chinese students to acquire, and that

students need to spend more time on repeated training and use before they can make significant improvements.

2. Possible problems and solutions for this thesis

1. While this study has strived to control variables related to the L2 proficiency level, it's worth noting that L2 encompasses a multitude of variables such as students' listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar skills. These factors vary among students, and consequently, the divergence in their overall L2 proficiency might not accurately reflect the differences in their proficiency levels when it comes to acquiring articles and adjectival sequences in L2. This could potentially introduce some degree of error. Ideally, gauging students' proficiency in article acquisition and adjectival sequence mastery in L2 as variant 1 (V1), while optimal, presents challenges in terms of judgment and implementation.

2. The sample size of students is merely 30, constituting a limited pool that brings about a degree of randomness. In the broader context, there are approximately 3,000 learners⁴ pursuing Italian majors across Chinese universities, excluding Chinese students who study Italian at off-campus training institutions for their plans to study in Italy. This reality underscores the potential for some degree of chance within the sample size. Nonetheless, obtaining a large amount of data within a short timeframe remains challenging due to the dispersed nature and relatively small number of such learners.

3. Further refinement is needed for the appropriateness of the test questions. While the questions were formulated through discussions between the researcher and the advisor, and even an attempt was made to encompass all aspects of articles and adjectival sequences, the scientific rigor of the test questions could potentially be elevated if possible. This enhancement would render the questions more logically coherent, thereby fortifying the scientific integrity of the results.

3. Suggestions for the acquisition of articles and the acquisition of adjective sequences.

For teachers:

1. Awareness of Differences: It's important to highlight the differences between English and Italian articles and adjectival sequences.

2. Focused Practice: Design exercises and activities specifically targeting the challenges posed by Italian articles and adjective sequences. Provide ample practice opportunities for students to apply the rules in context. Include exercises that require them to choose the appropriate articles and adjectives for different genders and

⁴ Data from China Higher Education Student Information Network <https://www.chsi.com.cn/>

numbers.

3. **Cross-Linguistic Comparison:** Leverage the similarities and differences between English and Italian to enhance learning. Compare how adjectives agree with nouns in both languages. This can help students identify patterns and transfer their English knowledge to Italian while remaining mindful of the differences.

4. **Contextual Learning:** Teach articles and adjectives in context. Provide examples of sentences or short texts where articles and adjectives are used correctly. Discuss the role of articles and adjectives in conveying meaning and nuance.

5. **Visual Aids:** Use visual aids such as charts, tables, and infographics to demonstrate the rules of Italian articles and adjectives. Visual representation can aid in memorization and understanding.

6. **Error Analysis:** Analyze common errors made by Chinese learners when acquiring Italian articles and adjectival sequences. Address these errors explicitly and provide explanations to clarify the correct usage.

7. **Feedback and Correction:** Provide timely and constructive feedback on students' written and spoken assignments. Correct any errors related to articles and adjectives and explain the reasons behind the corrections.

8. **Cultural Context:** Introduce the cultural aspect of language use. Discuss how articles and adjectives may carry cultural connotations in Italian and how they are used to convey familiarity, emphasis, or specificity.

9. **Authentic Materials:** Include authentic materials like Italian texts, articles, and advertisements. Exposing students to real-life language usage can improve their understanding of how articles and adjectives are used naturally.

10. **Progressive Complexity:** Begin with simpler examples and gradually increase the complexity of exercises. Start with basic articles and adjectives before moving on to more intricate forms and contexts.

11. **Regular Review:** Regularly review previously learned concepts to reinforce understanding and retention. Incorporate articles and adjectives into vocabulary quizzes and assignments to ensure continuous practice.

For Students:

Italian Articles Acquisition:

1. **Build on English Foundation:** As Chinese students are already familiar with English

articles, they can leverage this knowledge as a stepping stone, understanding the core differences between definite and indefinite articles.

2. **Mastery of Gender and Number:** Given that English lacks grammatical gender distinctions, singular and plural distinctions in articles like Italian, dedicate ample time to grasp the concept of gender and number in Italian nouns. Practice associating nouns with the appropriate articles in Italian.

3. **Contextual Practice:** Immerse in contextual practice where articles are used naturally within sentences. Reading Italian texts and listening to spoken Italian will help internalize the dynamic relationship between articles and nouns.

4. **Exposure to Variability:** Embrace the complexity of Italian articles by exposing to diverse sentence structures and contexts that demand different articles. Over time, this exposure will refine the ability to select the correct article.

Italian Adjectival Sequences Acquisition:

5. **Grasp Syntax and Agreement:** Develop a solid understanding of the syntax of Italian adjectival sequences. Pay close attention to how adjectives align with nouns in terms of gender and number. This knowledge is pivotal for constructing grammatically accurate sentences.

6. **Draw from L2 Experience:** Since English also involves adjective-noun agreements, capitalize on the experience with English adjectival sequences. While not identical, this familiarity can facilitate the comprehension of this concept.

7. **Gradual Practice:** Begin with simple sentences featuring one or two adjectives and gradually progress to more intricate structures. This incremental approach will enhance the comprehension of adjective-noun agreement patterns.

8. **Focus on Collocations:** Familiarize with common adjective-noun pairings. Developing a repertoire of frequently used phrases will not only expand the vocabulary but also enable oneself to construct adjectival sequences more naturally.

9. **Real-Life Application:** Engage in conversations, writing, and reading exercises that incorporate adjectival sequences. The practical application of these structures will solidify the understanding and retention.

10. **Solicit Feedback:** Regularly seek feedback from teachers, peers, or native speakers. Constructive input will pinpoint areas requiring improvement and guide the learning journey.

11. **Consistent Practice:** As with any language skill, consistent practice is pivotal.

Allocate time to regular exercises, writing assignments, and exposure to authentic Italian content.

In summary, the acquisition of a strong grasp of Italian articles and adjectival sequences necessitates a multifaceted approach involving the assimilation of grammatical rules, exposure to real-life contexts, gradual practice, and an openness to learning from both L2 and L3 experiences.

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