

Errors in Italian as Second Language

A Taxonomy Proposal

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Abstract This essay deals with a series of strategies that second or foreign language learners adopt in an effort to avoid making predictable errors. One of the most significant and least studied aspects in the academic field is the type of strategies that are put in place to make changes in the planning of the discourse, when the elements are not available to cope with the event, the communication need or when a speaker wants to change subject from a little-known conversational or textual sector. We intend to examine the concept of competence with respect to performance, the role and type of errors, ending up eliciting a taxonomy of interventions by learners, aimed at avoiding errors in oral and written production.

Keywords Task-based language learning. Mediation. Cooperative learning. Learner autonomy. Scaffolding.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Mastery of a Language. – 3 Communicative Competence. – 4 Strategies for Avoiding Errors. – 5 Hyper-Correctism. – 6 The Pragmatic Dimension.



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1 Introduction

According to Bialystok's studies, the definition of competence regarding an interlanguage must present standards through which it is possible to describe the distinct abilities of the speakers, depending on different contexts (Bialystok 1998). Such standards are necessary to describe the competence levels of the interlanguage and to frame them within defined and versatile classifications (Ambroso 1992); this indexing enables the competence level, to be assessed without losing the elasticity of the dynamics study related to the language. The contextual dimension makes the identification of a competence level quite a complex task, because it requires an adaptation with respect to the oscillations of a parameter: at the level of linguistic acts, for example, the request for an indication is context-dependent, and susceptible on a sociolinguistic and pragmatic level. The form, the mere linguistic-grammatical rule, is applied to the communicative context and is adjusted according to the needs of the speakers and the interaction environment. Regarding mastery with respect to a linguistic level, learners of a second or foreign language can vary their competence according to the target level and the communicative context.

The variability of interlanguage competence is caused by the fact that learners have different degrees of awareness of the structural elements of the target language and either know or are unaware of the conventions (Nitti 2018). The development of interlanguages is characterised by errors of interference with respect to the mother tongue or other foreign languages, and by hyper-generalisations or crystallisations of wrong forms and inferences. Another discriminating element for the nature of interlanguages is the existence of possible weaknesses in the linguistic repertoire of learners when certain communication needs must be addressed.

The variability of interlanguages and their adaptability to different communicative situations should be a challenge not only for learners, but also for teachers and researchers, because language teaching and acquisitional linguistics aim, among their many goals, to facilitate language teaching and learning paths.

Cattana and Nesci make it clear that, although the error in general represents "a deviation from the normal functioning of a language, the concept of error takes on particular connotations, which depend partly on the complexity of the 'language' phenomenon, partly on the concrete linguistic realisations and partly on the preparation of those who evaluate" (Cattana, Nesci 1999, 37).

The errors at the conceptual level are conceived in a way that differs from the Italian scholastic tradition: they are not static ele-

Giulio Facchetti wrote paragraphs 1, 2, 6; Paolo Nitti paragraphs 3, 4, 5.

ments, but rather they represent the pieces that compose interlanguages and are variable with respect to the evaluations of those who commit them and those who judge them.

2 The Mastery of a Language

The mastery of a language is defined in different ways according to the academic currents of reference: essentially, it can be described either through a formalist or a functionalist approach (Ambroso 1992). The formalist approach interprets the language as a code and its mastery, therefore, represents the universal competence of a typical native speaker, the highest level of linguistic potential of a speaker. Functionalists, on the other hand, interpret language as a result of social interactions within communicative contexts; mastery is related to situations and communication processes and varies depending on the environment (Ellis 2008).

In the early 2000s, Myles proposed a hybrid interpretation, combining both approaches: the sum of formal knowledge and communicative applications – including sociolinguistic variations – proved to be significant for establishing the linguistic mastery of a speaker (Myles 2008).

Myles' proposal is interesting in terms of educational assessment and language teaching, because it allows us to construct a grid of indicators and provides a chance to assess and evaluate different levels of mastery. The Mylesian model has been strongly criticised by some Anglo-Saxon scholars, due to the absence of elements of a psycho-affective nature, connected with the previous matrix regarding prior learning experiences, with the encyclopaedia of speakers, with culture and with individual characterisation and different cognitive profiles of learners (Myles 2008). A further model for the description of the different levels of interlinguistic competence and mastery was provided by Ellis in 1994 and updated in 2008: mastery is interpreted as a tendential process that combines linguistic choices with situational contexts, based on the speaker's social, psycho-affective and individual disposition (Ellis 2008). The definition identified by Ellis seems to be significant, because it also takes into consideration the didactic, psycho-affective, subjective and contextual dynamics with respect to communicative and linguistic-acquisitional events (Nitti 2019).

As the concept of competence includes and exceeds those of knowledge and skills, therefore mastery involves the lexical, grammatical level and characteristics of idiolects.

3 Communicative Competence

Historically, before the diffusion of the communicative approach, the competence of a language was reduced to the mere knowledge of its structural rules, but starting from the Eighties, within the Western language teaching landscape, the concept of communicative competence was introduced as an intersection of numerous sub-competences: linguistic competence - knowledge of the system of rules of the language; sociolinguistic competence; ability of the speaker to use and understand the diatopic, diastratic, diaphasic, diamesic and diachronic varieties of the language; pragmatic competence - ability to understand and enact the communicative purposes of messages; interactional competence - ability to manage communication rituals and the role of silence; cultural competence - ability to recognise the cultural references of the language in question (Nitti 2019; 2017). Communicative competence - conceptually theorised and introduced by Hymes in the Seventies - represents an attempt to reconcile linguistic uses with actual communicative situations, thus contributing to freeing the concept of competence from abstractness and generality. Besides phonology, morphology, syntax, morphosyntax and semantics, a range of application contexts is considered and needs to be taken into account with respect to the definition of interlanguages (Hymes 1971).

Secondary and foreign language learners demonstrate different rates of competence depending on the level of interlanguages and psycho-affective dynamics within - and often outside - learning spaces.

This variability is well known by language teachers who, thanks to the analysis of errors, can successfully establish a taxonomy of the interlinguistic reference levels with respect to the learners' performances; a pre-basic interlanguage is qualitatively different from a basic or post-basic one and needs different inputs and teaching strategies.

4 Strategies for Avoiding Errors

One of the most interesting but least studied aspects in the academic field are the types of strategies that are employed to make changes in the planning of the discourse, which occurs when the elements are not available to cope with the event or the communication need, or when one wants to change subject from a little-known conversational or textual sector. Anyone who has studied, spoken, read or translated a foreign language has been confronted with some operational choices to obviate any information gap of their own interlanguage level, to change subject, topic or alter communicative-interactional elements (Richards 1974).

According to Ellis, the performance of second-language or foreign speakers does not only depend on their level of interlanguages, but also on their cognitive, social and psycho-affective dispositions (Ellis 2008). The socio-educational model proposed by Gardner helps to clarify the level of the performance according to the speaker's cultural environment, to individual differences with respect to the cognitive profile, to the communicative context - for the scholar differentiated into formal or informal - and to the results of language learning (Gardner 1985). Essentially, the indicators described by Gardner would explain the result of the performance according to the degree of interrelation between the elements of the linguistic-cognitive and social systems. Myles argues that recourse is made to supplementary strategies not only when the level of inter-language is not adequate to the discourse, but also in cases when some social factors could lead to a negative attitude with respect to the target language, to a lack of progress in learning (once the initial silence is broken), to a psychological and social distancing between the learner and the culture of the reference language and to a lack of integrative and instrumental motivations as far as regards the willingness to learn (Myles 2008).

Cognitivist scholars dealing with language learning interpret acquisition as an active process of developing certain abilities; it is meant to be the result of a complex interaction between the linguistic environment surrounding the learner and the internal mechanisms of the individual. The logic is very similar to the constructivist dynamics that consider acquisition as a continuous negotiation of elements, a substitution that tends towards the innovative restructuring of known constituents, starting from their prior knowledge. The strategies used to renegotiate communication, when the level of interlanguage is not sufficient or when there are no psycho-affective and social dispositions regarding the success of the communication, are strongly conditioned by the communicative context of reference (Hamid 2007).

According to Anderson, each speaker adopts patterns of linguistic production defined at the level of operational phases; the scholar's approach favours the pragmatics of communication and some semiotic aspects (Anderson 1985). The model of linguistic production proposed by Anderson can be applied to performance in a second and foreign language and is based on three distinct phases: the construction or planning of the message (characterised by knowledge, personal encyclopaedia and mental maps), transcoding (communicative competence is applied to the transformation of the mental message into a formal message) and execution (corresponding to the physical process of producing the oral or written text). The Anderson model can also be extended to the phases of revision and reorganisation of a written text and lends itself well to outlining reformulation strate-

gies within communicative exchanges with inexperienced speakers. The error, according to this approach, is meant to represent a rupture of the organisational sequences of planning, a gap within an operational phase or a correctly controlled and judged element.

The study of errors represents a precious component for the purpose of examining the speaker' level of interlanguage attainment at a given time. An error is generally considered to be a deviation from a standard codified by a linguistic community; as far as the common idea of language error is concerned, native speakers themselves would be divided between providing an intuitive definition of the concept of error and the identification of the errors themselves, especially in the case of formulations of neo-standard variety. According to Touchie, "there are mainly two major sources of errors in second language learning. The first source is interference from the native language while the second source can be attributed to intralingual and developmental factors" (Touchie 1986, 77). The concept of error is linked to very different criteria of judgment, among which correctness, appropriateness, comprehensibility and subjectivity emerge (Nitti 2018). What normative grammar textbooks prescribe often deviates from the linguistic structures that native speakers use in ordinary communication. In fact, native speakers often consider non-orthodox structures acceptable according to their own grammatical awareness. Regarding the criterion of correctness, we may start from the axiom that if language is a code - or a set of elements and rules functional to the combination of structures that convey the meaning - every violation of such a system of norms should be evaluated as linguistically unacceptable. The limit of the criterion based on correctness lies precisely in its definition. Descriptive grammars seem to be very scrupulous in their description of morphology and syntax, but as far as regards other sectors such as phonology and vocabulary, or in-depth analysis of the morphology and syntax themselves, there is no detailed normative apparatus. The norm, on the other hand, can also have statistical value, imposing itself as a consolidated use by a community.

The transformations of language can lead to the establishment of new rules, precisely because the boundary between norm and use is very weak. Errors are among the most significant causes of language change, and future linguistic tendencies destined to assert themselves in the course of language history may reside in them. In fact, when an error is generalised over time, it becomes the norm. If we intend grammar not as an archive of rules to be mastered in order to produce correct statements, but as a dynamic process of indexing the language, we need to take into account the situational aspects of communication, because language conveys meanings, behaviours and cultures.

Therefore, producing effective communicative acts means juggling between the suitable varieties of the language with respect to the sit-

uation, the interlocutors and the communicative goals. The criterion of appropriateness thus refers to language as a socio-cultural tool: what is not shared by the group of speakers is not appropriate. The teaching of a second language, by definition, should call on teachers with the skills to develop a mastery of the language in their students that allows them to be an active part of the native speakers' community. Linguistic appropriateness refers to the pragmatics, to the functions of the language, to the ability to pursue one's own goals through the language, but also to socio-interactional abilities, with the purpose of preventing speakers from constructing ambiguous messages or not being able to manage certain communicative aspects. The statements should, according to the criterion of appropriateness, be suitable to the context to which they refer.

Linguistic competence – in this sense – must be subordinated to communicative competence.

The criterion of appropriateness refers to the use of language and precisely in this it finds its limit of extension: it is worth asking what is meant by use and to which community of speakers it is referred to (geographical, historical, professional, social). Another limitation of this criterion lies in the difficulty of identifying all the communicative needs of the students and foreseeing every communicative situation they could find themselves in. The criterion of comprehensibility refers to the error conceived as an obstacle to communication. In this sense, if the interlocutors are able to understand the messages conveyed by the language, there is no margin of error; in fact, errors hardly ever hinder correct communication. For historical-pedagogical reasons, the criterion of comprehensibility has been taken from the communicative approach. The most significant limit of the comprehensibility criterion concerns the success of the communication, without considering the possible social sanctions that can derive from a clear message conveyed in a flawed form (Richards 1974). For instance, a holophrase is justified from the point of view of comprehensibility, but it does not find as much justification with respect to the communicative needs of the speakers within the context, unless it is the result of precise subjective choices. Errors, over time, risk becoming crystallised, since they are associated with a good communicative outcome and this makes the learner enter into a sort of linguistic stagnation, which might prevent any further learning or acquisition (Nitti 2019). Another limitation concerning understanding lies in the fact that if a speaker addresses the second language to someone with the same mother tongue and uses an unacceptable structure, one could come to understand a distorted production of L2 (Cattana, Nesci 1999, 42). The criterion of subjectivity refers to the social and individual component of the evaluation of an error; what is wrong and unacceptable on the formal level for one individual may not be the same for another. The dimension of diastratic variation on the syntax level is useful

for framing the criterion of subjectivity: if the hypothetical period of possibility in Italian is governed by the imperfect subjunctive for the protasis and conditional present for the apodosis, the use of the double imperfect indicative is equally justified within less formal communicative contexts – the two communities of speakers will judge the wrong or correct production, depending on the context within which the communication takes place (Cattana, Nesci 2004).

Considering the criteria for identifying and analysing errors, it is possible to claim that a good language teacher should have a flexible attitude (Chan 2007) that takes into account all the parameters and characteristics of contexts and learners (Corder 1967). If, for example, a lesson is dedicated to a communication-oriented activity, the most significant criterion should be that of comprehensibility; however, if the lesson deals with the application of rules or form, the criterion to be adopted should be that of correctness.

The mistake¹ is therefore a precious clue to identifying the evolution of the learners' interlanguages and evaluate the effectiveness of learning.

It is possible to describe the characteristic errors of the different language learning phases by using the model proposed by Corder (1981):

Table 1 Corder's model

Presystematic errors	The learner is unaware of having committed the mistake, they may not be able to identify or even correct it. There is a randomness related to the presence of correct forms combined with inappropriate forms, probably attributable to the memory and frequency of recurrence of the linguistic structure
Systematic errors	The learner discovers the rule and, in an attempt to put it into practice, presents uncertainty, recognises the error, provides an explanation of the mechanisms that led them to commit it, but does not know how to correct it
Postsystematic errors	The application of the rule is not extended to all contexts, the learner is able to detect the error, correct it and explain what mechanisms have induced them to commit it

Each language learning phase could present any typologies of errors: this scheme is a systematisation and the types of errors that overlap within lapses can also be hidden. In addition to the typology proposed by Corder, errors can also be classified according to precise linguistic categories (Nitti 2017):

¹ In this case we are not discussing lapses.

Table 2 Linguistic categories

Error	Example
Phonological errors	[*bor'tare] instead of [por'tare]
Orthographic errors	<*pagi> instead of <paghi>
Morphological errors	{la problema} instead of {il problema}
Syntactic errors	*Sono felice di stare in Italia <u>anche</u> [...] instead of Sono anche felice di stare in Italia [...]
Lexical errors	Il mio *mobile è spento instead of il mio telefono è spento
Stylistic errors	*I muri del castello instead of le mura del castello

As shown in the table, also in this case the errors are interconnected. For example, in stylistic errors, which have to do with the coherence and cohesion of the text, we can observe elements of deviation from the morphosyntax.

The causes of the error can be attributed to the interference with the L1 of the learners or with the other known languages: this hypothesis was popular in the 1960s and takes the name of contrastive theory. It seems that the interference with L1 develops mainly at the phonological level, but there are certainly cases of errors compared to other levels of language analysis; there are two main error categories: one on an analogue basis (a structure is traced from L1 and transported to L2) and one on a differential basis (a correspondence between L1 and L2 is not found and, consequently, a correct structure cannot be formed). The importance of neo-behaviourist contrastive theory was later diminished by Burt, Dulay and Krashen (1982), who determined an error threshold, deriving from the known languages, ranging from 5% to 20% of the total errors made by learners. Scholars have shown that interference is decisive, but not so much in terms of describing the phenomenology of errors with respect to the evolution of interlanguage. Another cause of errors can be traced back to the cognitive strategies that intervene during learning, in particular to the organisation mechanisms of the new linguistic system.

5 Hyper-Correctism

Each language has rules that apply only to limited or contextual statistics; the deviant procedure which instead extends the norms with respect to their limit or context is called hyper-correctism or hyper-generalisation (the most common example for the Italian language is the overextension of the suffixes of the past participle for irregular verbs: *offrito instead of offerto. The procedure diametrically opposed to hyper-generalisation is simplification: in this case there is a

tendency to impoverish the linguistic system, reducing its complexity of rules (**la tem*a instead of *il tem*a); also the holophrases or the morphological reduction of temporality, causality and finality seem to constitute cases of simplification (**Ieri tu va a scuola, poi lavora?*, instead of *ieri sei andato a scuola e poi a lavorare/al lavoro?*). Other procedures that derive from hyper-generalisation and simplification are the regularisation of the linguistic system and the mixture of structures, where there is a tendency to give importance to a proposition that should be unfolded in more subordinates or coordinates (**fratello questura* instead of *mio fratello ieri è andato in questura*). Another element connected with the error could be attributed to the cognitive mechanisms and relates to little-tested or hasty compensation strategies, or rather the procedures speakers (native and non-native) make use of, in case of emergency, in an effort to convey the meaning, but which are unfinished as far as communication dynamics are concerned; one could loan the missing word from their own mother tongue or from another foreign language or, rather, the speaker can reformulate or create it *ex novo*.

A learning strategy that leads to making a number of mistakes is described by Selinker: students who generate a lot of input and tend to communicate more during the lesson will definitely make more mistakes than others (Gass, Selinker 1992). Unlike silent learners, some students from the early stages of interlanguage development feel the need to communicate, even though they lack the necessary elements for the use of discourse; errors in this learning profile are thus inevitable and constitute proofs and counter-proofs of language acquisition dynamics, characterizing, through environmental conditioning, the structural elements of interlanguage systems. The discourse on learning strategies is vast: in fact, when “the knowledge gap clashes with the need to communicate, the strategy that is put into practice can vary greatly from person to person and depends on how much he/she wants to expose himself/herself to the error, to risk, to admit that he/she does not know a certain aspect” (Cattana, Nesci 1999, 40). These errors are essentially connected with individual dynamics of a psycho-affective nature and can be related to the quality of teaching and the characterisation of teaching by teachers; some teachers purposely suggest that their students make mistakes, establishing a relational trust and lowering the affective filter, therefore minimizing the possibility of frustration resulting from an error.

The errors not caused by psycho-affective dispositions are to be understood as signals of the imperfection of the linguistic repertoires of the students’ interlanguages. According to Chomsky (1965) they can be divided into performance or competence errors. The Chomskian distinction makes it possible to distinguish errors from mistakes: an error is systematic and occurs every time the speaker uses a structure, characterizing it as an element of linguistic competence, while

a mistake is occasional and can be attributable to the communicative situation, to distraction and to factors inherent to the mere execution.

Anasiudu (1996) proposed a scheme of error-generating elements within interlanguages:

1. Hyper-generalisations;
2. Ignoring exception rules;
3. Partial application of rules;
4. False inferences on the language;
5. Idiolect or *foreigner talk* adopted by the teacher;
6. Language teaching based on incorrect procedures or premises.

It has been shown that, despite the high frequency of corrective feedback, students often fail to internalise the linguistic models suggested by teachers. Students are impervious to corrective feedback probably due to internal, psycho-affective, relational, language educational and linguistic-acquisitional dynamics (Cattana, Nesci 2004, 223).

An internal disposition resistant to error and the consequent treatment of it may result in the choice of silence or the attempt to immediately break free from the correction, because the error is conceived as a mistake and not as a proper characteristic of learning (Anson 2000). The psycho-affective and relational aspects concern the relationships between teachers and students and within the group of students; if the error is not tolerated by the teacher, the corrective feedback will be limited to the immediate suppression of the wrong form and to its substitution, procedures which are more or less in line with the development phases of interlanguages. As for language teaching aspects, hypercorrections made by teachers in line with a predominantly contrastive approach could lead learners to be hyperscrupulous and to adopt other communicative aspects that do not require such an exponential deployment of energies. Focusing teaching on the contrast of correlated linguistic elements or on complementary distribution with respect to an identical function, likewise increases the possibility that the learner will be confused and crystallise wrong mechanisms (in Spanish *por/para*, in English *for/since*, in Italian subjunctive present/indicative present); the creation of dichotomies sharing identical or similar roles could lead to either excessive security or widespread insecurity (Crompton 2005). Speakers of second and foreign languages often encounter difficulties with respect to the management of communication or the expression of their needs; this is attributable to their level of interlanguage and to gaps within their linguistic repertoire (Toukie 1986).

Beccaria conceives interlanguage as a "linguistic system in which L1 and L2 rules, generally due to interferences, coexist during the learning process of the latter" (Beccaria 2004, 410); in fact, the concept of interlanguage cannot be regarded as a mere agglomeration of interferences between languages and in relation to the reduction to

a set of rules of L1 and L2 (Chini 2005a); considering also the role of other languages known by speakers, the linguistic value of the system itself should be better evaluated. According to Selinker, interlanguage "must be described as a system and not as an isolated collection of errors" (Selinker in Pallotti 2006, 21); within the system the speakers can be aware (thanks to the other languages in their possession - it may whether L1 or L2 is not important - and to the grammar of the anticipation) of the elements that would be missing from the communicative context point of view. Selinker argues that a learner's L1 characterises the first scaffold of interlanguage, at the moment when the speaker establishes correspondence relations between the properties of L1 and L2 (Selinker 1972). The error, according to Krashen (in Chini 2005b, 119), could derive from a lack of activation of the language control device - monitor - and from an exposure to non-comprehensible and unscaled inputs with respect to the evolution of interlanguage; in reality, the error is a manifestation of interlanguage and can constitute a predictive element regarding the acquisition sequences and universal implications (Alexopoulos 2005). A learner who is able to anticipate these difficulties could avoid communication or change the content of the message, allowing the other elements of the system to intervene. This tendency is well known even when the speakers are inside the communicative event and are engaged in oral or written communication. The strategies put in place to deal with the lack of one's own repertoire, at the moment when one has an awareness of the communication needs, based on the context and on one's own failure, are different, which occurs when one develops the grammar of anticipation or the faculty to adopt interactional communication patterns (Littlewood 1984).

Some of the typical operations of these moments of uncertainty can be summarised as follows:

1. Avoiding communication - a speaker tries to eliminate the possibility of an error, missing occasions for linguistic production (typical of learners who refuse to write a text towards which they feel insecure regarding the question, or to talk about topics unknown in L1 or L2). Avoiding strategies are usually based on the negation of the communicative event, through the total or partial interruption of the interaction (Carroll 1980);
2. Use of the periphrasis - the use of circumlocutions and turns of phrases is typical of learners who do not withdraw from communication and who seek to substitute the words they do not have available (when a word is not known, the definition is used, in the hope that more competent speakers will subsequently provide the term or that the communication proceeds without interruptions and impediments);

3. Recourse to synonymy and hyperonymy – the strategy is also common for the elements present within mere passive competence or to find a solution to temporary memory gaps; a speaker uses replacement words, usually less specific, and more generic, so as not to break the communicative *continuum* and resorts to expressions close to the one identified as the target;
4. Creation of neologisms – speakers make use of lexicon production mechanisms, generally through suffixation mechanisms on a denominal, deadjectival or deverbal basis, or by means of semantic juxtaposition (ex. **pesapersona* for *bilancia*);
5. Shifting of attention or change of speech – when the speakers have to intervene, they modify the conversation by inserting distracting and deviant elements with respect to what they are not able to communicate;
6. Insertion of material from different languages – loanwords and calques are used to refer to terms that are not known in the reference language (ex. **a Milano molta rainy*). The use of loanwords is sometimes so widespread and entrenched that there could be a situation of code-mixing, of bilingual speech, but without the other interlocutors having the same disposition from the linguistic point of view and the practice being conventional. This strategy is probably the most obvious and easy to detect and has been examined to a significant extent by structuralist comparative studies which identify in the language transfer – commonly from the L1 – the compensation method *par excellence* (Selinker 1972). Generally it is possible to transfer from one language to another the single lexical units or the processes of textual construction, the word composition, the structuring of speech and period and, regarding writing, punctuation and stylistic elements (in English the repetition inside a text is less sanctioned than in Italian, as in Czech the comma is a must before some textual connectives);
7. Change in the content of the message – in this case the speakers alter messages based on the proximity of the semantic sphere (for example, instead of saying that we eat an orange, replace it with another fruit) or restructure the planning of the sentence based on better known elements. Compared to the solutions examined, the change in the content of a message is probably the least identifiable strategy, because only a speaker can know if what they say is different from their intentions, unless there are no constraints related to evidence with respect to the communication context.

6 The Pragmatic Dimension

The strategies listed above can be classified through a fairly intuitive dichotomy: the procedures essentially refer to the intersection of the linguistic and pragmatic planes.

The need to avoid errors is by definition pragmatic, but the pragmatic dimension of language emerges above all in terms of content changes and avoiding strategies, while the creation of neologisms and the use of loanwords fulfil a pragmatic function through linguistic procedures. It is particularly difficult to identify the adoption, in the course of a communicative exchange, of a compensating or avoiding strategy, with respect to the conscious choices of the speaker in terms of interaction. However, the awareness of the existence of these mechanisms can be useful for proposing language teaching interventions aimed at exploring other, still poorly-known, aspects of language acquisition. On the other hand, the awareness of error taxonomy can help a language teacher to predict learners' linguistic behaviours.

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