

## **A feeling, a desire or something else? The case-study of Idioms with "*voglia*" and how learners of Italian as FL and SL acquire them.**

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### **Abstract**

In foreign and second language teaching, helping learners to become socio-pragmatically competent means supporting them in developing awareness of sociocultural variables (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and knowledge about the taboos, mutual rights, obligations, and conventional courses of action that apply in the community of the target language (Roever, 2006). Idioms, from this prospective, are useful communication tools that reflect the interaction of the system of language with the emotion system, a system that deals with the assignment of values, positive and negative, including emotions, attitudes, and opinions to some entity, event, or situation (Foolen, 1997).

However, for a foreign or second language learner, dealing with formulaic constructions whose interpretations are unpredictable from individual lexical meanings under the effects of regular compositional rules is not an easy task, especially when it comes to consistently distant cultural and linguistic references (Kecskés, 2014).

Consequently, the development of an appropriate socio-pragmatic competence represents one of the main purposes in language instruction. The more recent communicative competence models, indeed, highlight its central role: as in that of Celce-Murcia (2007), taken as one of the main references in the present study, discourse competence is closely related with formulaic and sociocultural competence, as they constitute the broader strategic competence, which is the core of the communicative competence.

In this presentation, particular Italian formulaic constructions with *voglia* will be analysed in terms of cultural significance to facilitate learners in developing socio-pragmatic awareness. The noun *voglia*, depending on the in-context use, without changing the meaning of “in need of something or someone”, is somehow tied to a specific sensory sphere: an intimate desire or feeling that is not supposed to be immediately satisfied. However, even if an idiomatic expression can be claimed to be conceptually transparent when there is a metaphorical motivation for the meaning it involves, lexicalization, grammaticalization or other phenomena based on sociocultural variables might lead to a sort of opacity that learners find hard to decode. This is the case of Italian expressions as “avoglia”, “hai voglia”, supposedly derived from the formulaic construction “avere voglia di...”, that can assume different meanings (even opposed) depending on the context.

In order to analyse how non-native speakers perceive the constructions with *voglia* in terms of diastatic usage and perlocutionary impact, the present study will be structured into two main phases. The first is an accurate selection of significant authentic material to be employed in the design of a questionnaire administered to different informers mainly grouped on proficiency level base. The second phase consists in the analysis and interpretation of the data with the purpose of framing the study insights in a socio-pragmatic consideration, that can be also used, among the other possible implementations, as a teaching tool to develop a higher awareness in cross-cultural learning environments.

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