

*The role of grammar reflection in the primary school*  
*A didactic experiment on V2 with child L1 Italian/L2 German learners*

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I will discuss the role of grammar reflection for L2 learning at the primary school. I will provide a detailed description of a didactic experiment, which involved 104 L1 Italian/L2 German schoolchildren ranging in age from 6 to 10 years. The study focused on the learning of the syntactic properties of the finite verb in German main declarative clauses (the so called Verbzweitstellung, V2), which represented a parameter of variation between the learners L2 and their L1. The didactic experiment was articulated in three stages: observation, pedagogical intervention and posttest. The observational stage revealed that the traditional German classes focused on lexical retrieval and lacked in the stimulation of morphosyntactic competences (including V2). In contrast, in my lessons I encouraged the production of non-subject-initial sentences, which particularly revealed the Verbzweitstellung phenomenon. This study had two main objectives: (i) to test the immediate and long term effects of explicit grammar reflection on crucial parameters of variation between the L1 and the L2; (ii) to register the learners' reaction to this pedagogical approach in the primary school.