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Italian in Transit: Attempting a definition based on the distribution and functions of generalized present infinitives

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This paper describes a continuum of Italian-based multilingual practices we label 'Italian in Transit'. Italian in Transit competencies are acquired by multilingual migrants and refugees in Italy and are occasionally reactivated after moving to other countries. Our dataset consists of twenty interviews with street vendors in Berlin (Germany) who speak basic up to post-basic Italian learner varieties. Generalized present infinitives (INF.PRS) constitute a shared fossilized feature in fifteen interviews. Sociolinguistically, their overall frequency may be related to Italian in Transit learning modalities in Italy. However, generalized INF.PRS show morphological, semantic, and pragmatic peculiarities in our corpus compared to other Italian learner and contact varieties. First, INF.PRS tend to be generalized for past (*vs* future or present) tenses and to have a perfective-perfect (*vs* imperfective or perfective-aoristic) value. Along with the fact that the Italian in Transit verb system is more complex than the bipartite one featured in numerous Italian contact varieties, this distribution is explainable by INF.PRS' higher morphological transparency compared to verbs generalized in past constructions. Second, INF.PRS are usually generalized with durative verb phrases and in irrealis propositions, thereby often conveying background information. Consequently, Italian in Transit speakers innovatively exploit INF.PRS' alternation with other moods/tenses to evaluate and structure the information flow, especially in narratives.

KEYWORDS: Italian-speaking communities abroad, language contact, Italian learner varieties, acquisition of the verb system, present infinitive.

1. Introduction

This paper aims to provide a preliminary description of a continuum of multilingual practices based on the Italian language, for which we propose the label 'Italian in Transit' (henceforth IiT). IiT competencies are acquired by multilingual migrants and refugees along their migration or escape routes in Italy and are occasionally reactivated by them after moving to new places of residence abroad. Specifically, our dataset, the GörliPark corpus, consists of twenty interviews (total duration: approximately 200 minutes) conducted in Italian with speakers who come from Sub-Saharan West Africa and work as street vendors

in an inner-city park in Berlin (Germany). An analysis of the collected interviews shows that IiT presents some innovative features that emerge and, simultaneously, allow us to better understand some linguistic and sociolinguistic consequences of contemporary 'superdiversity' (e.g. Blommaert 2013). The latter refers to the increasing internal diversification and fragmentation of individual and community language repertoires due to unprecedentedly complex mobility itineraries and the fluidity of language learning scenarios and uses in present-day societies.

There are both sociolinguistic and linguistic reasons to introduce a new denomination for the collected Italian-based multilingual practices.

First, due to Italy's geographic position, IiT may not be a marginal phenomenon: in parallel ethnographic research conducted in Marseille (France), for instance, we observed that Italian skills were quite widespread among people who passed through the peninsula, independently of their own or their family members' citizenships (cf. Hünlich *et al.* 2018: 26-28 for data in line with this assumption). Nevertheless, IiT cannot be subsumed under the label 'Italian of the emigration' (*italiano dell'emigrazione*), which traditionally designates Italian varieties spoken by Italian migrants and heritage speakers in their destination countries (Bernini 2010; Di Salvo & Moreno 2017). Specifically, owing to the fact that both develop in situations of extreme language contact and rely on oral, less standardized input (Kupisch & Polinsky 2022), IiT shows some similarities with Italian heritage varieties. However, as opposed to migrants born in Italy and Italian heritage speakers, IiT users did not acquire Italian in childhood at home, but learned it as a second (or further) language as (young) adults after subsequent migration into the peninsula. As a consequence, Italian competencies are not acquired at the same onset age, and this code does not have the same domains of use and/or personal, emotional, and cultural ties across the two speakers' groups (cf., also, Aalberse *et al.* 2019).

Second, IiT practices are primarily acquired and used in Italy, that is, mainly in interactions with speakers of Italian as a first language (henceforth L1) and in sociolinguistic contexts where the target code is a majority language. Therefore, IiT cannot be properly equated with contact varieties of Italian, exclusively developed in highly multilingual settings abroad, such as the Mediterranean Lingua Franca or *Fremdarbeiteritalienisch* 'foreign workers' Italian' (Berruto 2001 for an overview).

Finally, although further comparisons may be fruitful, IiT cannot even be completely paired with Italian learner varieties usually spoken by foreign citizens in Italy (Giacalone Ramat 2003 for an overview) or by first- or second-generation onward migrants, originally from third

countries (e.g. Bangladesh or Nigeria) and newly naturalized as Italians, whose repertoire was recently analyzed in the UK by Goglia (2021a; 2021b). As a matter of fact, IiT's learning settings and modalities – along with IiT speakers' biographical experiences – have been and continue to be extremely precarious. Thus, for instance, many participants in this research have exclusively acquired spoken skills in the languages of their destination countries in a limited number of often asymmetrical language domains, rather than being encouraged to develop literacy in language classes or at school.

The above-mentioned sociolinguistic features are strictly interrelated with IiT's peculiar traits at the linguistic level. Thus, for instance, IiT practices are characterized on the one hand by insertions of alloglot material from numerous language varieties (e.g. German, English, French, Spanish, Italo-Romance dialects) that testify to their speakers' superdiverse language repertoires. On the other hand, although their internal variability is high, they feature shared re- or adfunctionalization phenomena (Smith 2011 for the concept). This means that they develop(ed) or add(ed) new meanings to, in our case, fossilized forms. The latter can subsequently be reused to carry out novel functions, thereby sometimes compensating semantic-pragmatic oppositions missing or disappearing in Italian as a target language.These innovative features include, among others, (i) the frequent use of *troppo* 'too much' in place of *molto* 'much' (e.g. *io parlare poco no(t) troppo [[italiano]]* 'I speak a little no(t) too much (= much) Italian'); (ii) the variable realization of sentence negation by means of target-like *non* 'not', holophrastic negator *no* 'no' and, more rarely, unanalyzed, semi-fixed constructions, like *no(n) mai* 'no(t) never' or *(non) più* '(not) more' (e.g. *ancora non mai parla bene tedesca* 'still (I) do not (n)ever (= don't) speak well German'); (iii) the overextension of existential-locative *c'è* 'there is' to indicate possession relationships (e.g. *tu non c'è anche un sentesimo per mangiare* 'you there is not also a cent to eat' (= 'you don't even have a cent to eat')); (iv) the generalization of some verb forms (see below) and the subsequent overuse of personal subject pronouns, but also stressed and unstressed personal object pronouns and possessive pronouns (e.g. *me/mio parli* 'me/my speak.IND.PRS.2SG' (= 'I speak')) for the sake of agreement disambiguation (subject pronouns can be omitted in Italian as a pro-drop language); (v) the variable generalization (*vs* omission) of prepositions, like *a* 'to', *di/de/da* 'of/from', or *per* 'for' to mark, for instance, a complement realized as a constituent or clause (e.g. *l'ho visto a italiani* '(I) have seen them to Italians' (= 'I saw Italians'), *mi piace per parlare lingue italiani* 'I like for to speak Italian languages' (= 'I like to speak the Italian language')).[1]

This paper focuses on one selected linguistic feature of IiT, that is, the generalization of present infinitives (henceforth INF.PRS) in linguistic contexts where Standard Italian would require other moods/tenses. Generalized INF.PRS constitute a shared fossilized feature in fifteen of the twenty interviews (moreover, INF.PRS are generalized by several street vendors in not recorded conversations). Their overall frequency in our corpus is not justified by their distribution in Standard Italian (Bertinetto 2003) and is scarcely represented in other learner varieties acquired in both formal and informal settings on the peninsula (Berretta 1990; Banfi & Bernini 2003). Rather, similarly to Italian contact varieties, generalized INF.PRS constitute a stigmatized and stigmatizing trait, possibly determined by the fact that the participants mostly acquired their Italian skills in an unsupervised way, especially at their workplaces, where they were addressed in simplified varieties of Italian foreigner talk (Berruto 1993). However, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of their use contexts highlights that generalized INF.PRS have also acquired innovative functions in IiT compared to multilingual practices investigated in previous research, at least after its reactivation in the speakers' new places of residence.

This paper is structured as follows. After briefly presenting our dataset (§2), we summarize the results of previous studies on the verb system in Italian learner and contact varieties, thereby focusing especially on the factors that may lead to a generalization of INF.PRS (§3). Thereafter, we compare the frequency and overall distribution of generalized INF.PRS (§4), as well as discuss their properties as opposed to other verb forms, particularly past participles and compound past indicatives (henceforth PTCP.PST and IND.CMPD.PST), as they appeared in three selected interviews (§5). Concluding remarks are provided in §6.

2. The GörliPark corpus

The twenty interviewees of the GörliPark corpus are all male and mostly come from Sub-Saharan West Africa. The majority of them learned Italian because they lived – from nine months up to ten years – in Italy. However, two speakers acquired Italian skills after moving to Berlin from Spain.

The participants' language repertoires are very complex or 'superdiverse' (see Table 1 below for three examples). As for their language use in Berlin, the interviewees report mainly speaking Mandinka – a language belonging to the Mande language group spoken by about 1.5 million people in The Gambia, Senegal, and Guinea Bissau (Creissels

forthcoming) – as an in-group code, at least in the park. Moreover, they occasionally reactivate IiT practices for different communicative purposes, such as for selling their products to Italian-speaking passers-by or referencing shared biographical-migratory experiences.

The interviewees' Italian competencies are highly variable, both inter- and intraspeaker. However, a diagnostic analysis based on the position and form of sentence negation has shown that all participants – except for one who used no negative utterances in our short conversation – place the negator *non* 'not', at least once, before a conjugated verb. Therefore, following Bernini (2005), we may assume that they have overcome a pre-basic stage and speak basic up to post-basic Italian learner varieties.

As for the generalized INF.PRS, their distribution does not depend on their location in the conversation (e.g. at the interview's beginning or end) or the conversation topic (e.g. when traumatic experiences are dealt with). Furthermore, infinitives may be formed, at least, in three ways in Mandinka, i.e. (i) by using the synchronically unproductive 'bare form' of the verb (fr. *infinitif nu*), (ii) by the very productive suffix *-lá*, or (iii) through the preverbal marker *ka* (Creissels & Sambou 2013: 125-132). Thus, there is no unique verb form in Mandinka that corresponds to the Italian INF.PRS and may therefore motivate a negative transfer. This holds even if Mandinka infinitives display a few linguistic properties that could trigger their refunctionalization in IiT. Thus, for instance, infinitives in *ka* may mark non-initial sentence(s) in clause-chaining constructions: these must be interpreted as either final subordinates or additively coordinated with the preceding one(s) (Creissels *forthcoming*: 35). Analogous (series of) generalized INF.PRS also occur in the GörliPark corpus, where, however, they show innovative functions at both utterance and textual levels (see §5).

In this paper, we focus on the frequency and distribution of generalized INF.PRS in three interviews of the GörliPark corpus. As Table 1 shows, these participants were selected because they represent a wide range of internal variation in our corpus.

Speaker	Country of birth	Language repertoire (endonyms)	months in Italy	Italian region(s) of residence	months in Germany	Other European countries of residence	Interview length
G01	The Gambia	German, Italian, Spanish, Mandinka, Fula, Serakhulle, Jola, Wolof, English	36	Apulia, Lombardy	24	Spain (9 months)	16:00
G11	Senegal	Italian, English, Mandinka, French, Wolof, Fula, Jola, Serakhulle	28	Piedmont	20	Switzerland (8 months)	06:00
G16	Guinea	Italian, English, German, Fula, Mandinka, Wolof, Bambara	60	Lazio, Sicily, Sardinia, Campania	3	–	43:00

Table 1. Metadata of the three selected participants.

Specifically, the three interviewees differ in terms of (i) the duration of their stay in Italy and Germany. Therefore, their Italian skills have fossilized at different stages and/or are differently activated during their interviews (see §4 for further details). Moreover, (ii) they come from different countries and their (experienced) language repertoires are variously composed: G01 and G11 call Mandinka their 'own' language, while G16 defines Fula as his 'mother tongue' and primarily identifies himself with this language during our conversation (even if, like the other two interviewees, he mainly communicates in Mandinka and, sometimes, Wolof with other street vendors in the park).[2] Accordingly, the participants' interlanguages may show transfer phenomena from partially different L1s. (iii) The interviewees have lived in different Italian regions and, thus, entered into contact with diverse (Northern *vs* Southern) Italian regional varieties where the overall distribution of some moods/tenses – in particular, IND.CMPD.PST *vs* simple/remote past indicatives (IND.REM.PST) – varies (Bertinetto & Squartini 1996).

3. The verb system and the generalization of present infinitives

3.1. Italian learner varieties

At a basic stage, learners of Italian as a second language (henceforth L2 learners) – who acquire this code in formal and/or informal settings in Italy – tend to generalize the third- or second-person singular of the present indicative (henceforth IND.PRS) as a 'base' verb form, that is, as a polyfunctional, morphologically unanalyzed item with a mainly lexical meaning: see, e.g., *mangia-*∅ that corresponds to *mangi-a* '(she/he) eat-s' (Banfi & Bernini 2003: 93; Toth 2020).[3]

Later, at a post-basic stage, Italian L2 learners initially develop a bipartite verb system based on the main opposition between unmarked IND.PRS (*mangia-*∅ 'eat') and PTCP.PST (*mangia-to* 'ate'): the former are used to refer to present, future, and past/imperfect(ive) situations, while the latter tend to report past/perfect(ive) and, more rarely, future/perfect(ive) situations (cf., also, Operstein 2018: 319-321). New moods/tenses are then acquired gradually following a specific acquisition order, i.e., IND.PRS (and INF.PRS) > (auxiliary) PTCP.PST > imperfect indicative (IND.IMPF) > future indicative > conditional > conjunctive (Banfi & Bernini 2003: 90).

INF.PRS – in particular, unanalyzed proto-infinitives, like *mangiare-*∅ instead of *mangi-are* 'to eat' – may appear relatively early in Italian basic learner varieties. Nevertheless, they are rarely generalized under ordinary learning conditions. One reason is probably morphological: compared to the third-person singular of the IND.PRS (which constitutes the minimum common denominator of several Italian verb forms), INF.PRS are morphologically more complex, at least from an unsupervised L2 learners' perspective, since they are derived by adding to the base verb form, provided by the IND.PRS, the termination *-re* (Berretta 1990: 52).

By contrast, the role of transfer from L1s in determining INF.PRS' generalizations in Italian learner varieties is controversial. Specifically, L1 influences may play a role for speakers of isolating languages with little or no inflectional morphology, like Mandarin Chinese, but usually only if other sociolinguistic factors co-occur (Berretta 1990: 73-74 and §3.2 for further details). Along with Mandinka, the participants in the GörliPark corpus, however, mainly speak codes with a relatively rich verbal morphology, such as the Atlantic Niger-Congo languages, e.g. Fula and Wolof (Good 2018), or Indo-European and Semitic languages.

Therefore, there is no strong evidence that their L1s could have an impact on INF.PRS' generalization in their interviews.

Eventually, INF.PRS show an inhomogeneous distribution in Standard Italian (Bertinetto 2003). Consequently, their generalization in Italian learner varieties usually depends on (i) the proposition's modality, (ii) the tense, aspect, and action of the involved verb phrase, and (iii) discourse grounding, i.e. the degree of informational importance that the host utterance plays in the ongoing discourse (Berretta 1990; Banfi & Bernini 2003: 108-111). In the following sections, we briefly illustrate these factors through examples taken from the GörliPark corpus (see, however, §4 and §5 for a more detailed analysis). The terminology employed to describe the Italian verb system is mostly taken from Bertinetto (2001; 2003). Following Comrie (1976/1998: 13), we use the label 'situation' as an umbrella term for states, events, and processes. The transcription conventions of the examples from the GörliPark corpus are at the end of the paper.

3.1.1. Modality

In written and spoken Italian, both INF.PRS and compound past infinitives (INF.CMPD.PST) tend to occur in irrealis propositions, that is, in propositions that are not asserted, since they are:

(i) presupposed, like subordinate infinitive clauses (*penso di uscire* 'I think about going out');
(ii) uncertain, like in the constructions 'modals + INF.PRS/INF.CMPD.PST';
(iii) unrealized, like negative imperatives or jussives (*non urlare* 'do not scream'), dubitatives or exclamatives (*che fare*?/! 'what to do?/!'), and optatives (*a farlo prima!* 'to do it before!') (TRECCANI 2012; Giordano & Voghera 2012: 7).

Given this distribution, according to Berretta (1990), Italian L2 learners – and this also happens quite often in the GörliPark corpus – tend to generalize INF.PRS in propositions marked as irrealis. These include clauses where modal verbs are omitted, such as *dove mettere questo?* 'where put.INF.PRS (= should I put) this?' (*ibidem*: 67), as well as negative (see (1)), counterfactual, and/or dependent clauses (see (2)).

(1) INT: *sapevi il francese prima di venire?*
'Did you know/could you speak French before coming?'
G01: *no* *no(n)* *mai* parlar *francese*
no no(t) never speak.INF.PRS French
'No, I don't speak/haven't (ever) spoken French'

(2) G16: *se loro* dare *a te possibilità (–) cambia un po'*
if they give.INF.PRS to you chance change.IND.PRS.3SG a little bit
'If they give you a chance, it changes a little bit'

3.1.2. Tense, aspect, and action

In Standard Italian, INF.PRS usually refer to present/simultaneous or future/successive (as opposed to past/previous) situations with respect to a non-deictic anchoring point provided, for example, by a main verb or a temporal adverb (Bertinetto 2003: 11). Moreover, concerning their aspectual properties, Italian INF.PRS tend to report situations visualized by speakers in their internal structures or focalized as a single whole regardless of their present effects (imperfective and perfective-aoristic value, respectively). Therefore, INF.PRS show a complementary distribution with INF.CMPD.PST that, by contrast, usually report past/previous situations, presented as a complete whole but still relevant at a given, discursively significant, reference moment (perfective-perfect meaning). Compare, e.g., *Maria disse di partire (?già)* vs *di essere (già) partita* 'Maria said to leave .INF.PRS (?already) *vs* to (already) have left .INF.CMPD.PST' (*ibidem*; TRECCANI 2012).[4]

Eventually, Italian INF.PRS usually occur with non-stative verb phrases. As a matter of fact, stative verbs refer to inalienable qualities of the subject (Bertinetto 2001: 29-31) and therefore do not occur with imperatives, deontic modals, and/or progressive periphrases as INF.PRS tend to do.

Accordingly, in Italian learner varieties, INF.PRS also mainly occur with (i) non-stative, in particular, (ii) durative verb phrases, i.e. verb phrases which refer to situations prolonged over time and are usually compatible with the temporal adverbial 'for X time': see, for instance, *io subito faccio ordine nostra casa e poi cucire otto ore* 'I immediately make. IND.PRS.1SG order (in) our house and then sew.INF.PRS (= I am sewing) eight hours' (Berretta 1990: 71). Moreover, they tend to occur with (iii) atelic verbs, i.e., which report activities conducted without a specific goal and cannot co-occur with expressions, like 'in X time' (cf. Bertinetto 2001: 26-37 for these and other syntactic tests, also used in this paper, to identify a verb phrase's actional class along these three main continua). Furthermore, INF.PRS are usually generalized by Italian L2 learners to refer to future/aoristic or, less frequently, present/imperfective as opposed to past/perfective situations (Berretta 1990; Banfi 1990).

A few analogous examples are also found in the GörliPark corpus. See (3), where the INF.PRS would be rendered with a present/simultaneous progressive periphrasis in Standard Italian:

(3) G01: <Spanish> *ahora* *sempre* fare *lavorando* *(–)* *solo::*
now always do.INF.PRS work.GER.PRS alone
'Now I always work/am always working alone'

However, even if durative action may trigger their generalization, INF.PRS are more frequently employed for past/perfective situations in our corpus as opposed to what happens in both Italian learner and contact varieties (see §4 for more details).

3.1.3. Discourse grounding

In Italian (as well as in other languages), background information – that is, additional material that does not directly answer the question 'what happened?', but rather "support[s], amplif[ies], or comment[s]" on, especially in narrative sequences (Hopper 1979: 215) – tends to be delivered by irrealis propositions and/or imperfective and/or durative verb phrases referring to simultaneous situations.

Furthermore, alternations among moods/tenses, such as between an imperfective IND.IMPF and a perfective IND.REM.PST or IND.CMPD.PST, may be used – along with temporal adverbials, like *one day* or *suddenly* – to mark the discourse relevance of a specific foreground situation against (a series of) background event(s) in Italian oral narratives (Centineo 1991: 67). By contrast, switches between IND.REM.PST and IND.CMPD.PST tend to have, at least in this text type, evaluative and/or text-structuring functions (*ibidem*).

In connection with their semantic properties, generalized INF.PRS frequently convey background information in Italian learner varieties (Berretta 1990: 71). Similar use contexts also occur in the GörliPark corpus:

(4) G16: *ho* *visto* *te* *(–)* guardare *così (–)*
have.AUX.IND.PRS.1SG see.PTCP.PST you look_at.INF.PRS so
'I saw (lit. have seen) you, I looked at you so'
G16: *ho* *detto* *lui* *non* *è:* *Germania*
have.AUX.IND.PRS.1SG say.PTCP.PST he not be.IND.PRS.3SG Germany
'I said (lit. have said), (s)he is not (from) Germany'

In (4), the switch from an IND.CMPD.PST *ho visto*, literal translation '(I) have seen', to an INF.PRS *guardare* 'to look at' and back again to an IND.CMPD.PST *ho detto* '(I) have said' marks a semantic shift between an action presented as prolonged over time embedded in two punctual events. Simultaneously, this tense/mood alternation highlights a contrast between two foreground and one background situation. This holds even if, as an IiT peculiarity, the INF.PRS in (4) appear in a realis propo-

sition to refer to a past/previous event with a perfective interpretation (see §5).

3.2. Italian contact varieties

Unlike Italian learner varieties and similarly to IiT, INF.PRS are often generalized in Italian contact varieties developed in highly multilingual settings outside the peninsula for exolingual communication, that is, among people who do not share the same L1s.

Among these, there are the 'Mediterranean Lingua Franca' (e.g. Operstein 2018), which is a heterogeneous continuum of contact varieties based on Italian and Ibero-Romance vernaculars – with Turkish, Greek, and Arabic influences, among others – that was stabilized as an auxiliary language in the Maghreb approximately between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as the Italian of Ethiopia (Habte-Maryam 1976), Eritrea (Montesanto 2014), and, to a lesser degree, Somalia (Banti 1990). These varieties usually show a bipartite verb system, where INF.PRS constitute the unmarked verb form for imperfective/non-past situations as opposed to PTCP.PST employed in perfective/past contexts: compare, in the Mediterranean Lingua Franca, *mi capir oun poco per ti* 'me understand.INF.PRS a little for you' (= 'I understand you a little') *vs mi mirato in casa de ti* 'me see.PTCP.PST at home of you' (= 'I saw (him/her) at your home') (Anonymous 1830: 96).

Furthermore, INF.PRS are often generalized for both present/simultaneous and past/previous situations in *Fremdarbeiteritalienisch* 'foreign workers Italian', i.e. a continuum of contact varieties used in German-speaking Switzerland in the 1970s-1980s by migrant workers coming from Romance language- and non-Romance language-speaking countries (Berruto 1991; 2001). They also frequently occur in *Italiano dei Lanzi* ('Landsknechts' Italian'), a sixteenth-century caricatured variety of Italian influenced by German (Berruto 2012).

The generalization of INF.PRS (or pseudo-infinitives) in these contact varieties does not depend on transfer, since it also occurs with speakers whose L1s do not have this mood/tense, such as Arabic in the Mediterranean Lingua Franca (Schuchardt 1909) or Tosk Albanian in *Fremdarbeiteritalienisch* (Berruto 1991: 361). Moreover, although the target/lexifier language may impact which mood/tense (e.g. imperative *vs* INF.PRS) is selected as a source for other verb forms (Versteegh 2014), INF.PRS' generalizations are assumed not to be only determined by L2 structural traits, inasmuch as they appear with unsupervised learners and multilingual speakers who are targeting L2s where INF.PRS are not particularly often used (Lipski 2001 for an overview). Rather,

their generalization can be more likely explained by the fact that these learners/speakers received an artificially manipulated input in the target language: as a matter of fact, INF.PRS are often (deliberately) generalized by L1 speakers in extremely simplified varieties of 'foreigner talk', i.e. L2 learners' directed speech, as a way of marking 'talking down' (cf., already, Schuchardt 1909, Lipski 2001, and Berruto 1993 specifically on Italian).[5]

This was possibly also the case in IiT: numerous interviewees in the GörliPark corpus, who lived during most of their time in Italy in segregated reception centers for refugees and migrants, acquired Italian in a reduced number of mainly asymmetrical language domains, specifically by working in agriculture, at building sites, in warehouses, and/or as street vendors (cf. Del Percio 2018; De Fina *et al.* 2020 for ethnographic studies on communicative practices in Italian migration infrastructures and Perrino 2019 for circulating ideologies about newcomers in the peninsula). In these working environments, Italian L1 speakers may additionally generalize INF.PRS to carry out context-specific, instrumental communicative goals, like in negative commands and generic instructions (Berruto 1991).

4. Frequency and overall distribution

4.1. Intra- and interspeaker variation

Table 2 provides an overview of the moods/tenses used by G01 during his interview. Eight verbs are excluded from the count, since they are not classifiable: see, for instance, *tu fume* 'you smoke' derived through a non-standard termination *-e*.

MOOD/TENSE	L2-LIKE (98 OCC.)	GENERALIZED (63 OCC.)	TOTAL (161 OCC.)
IND.PRS	70 (66%)	36 (34%)	106
INF.PRS	6 (25%)	18 (75%)	24
IND.CMPD.PST	13 (93%)	1 (7%)	14
PTCP.PST	8 (57%)	6 (43%)	14
GER.PRS	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3

Table 2. Mood, tense, and use of the verbs employed by G01 in his interview (16 min.).

Table 2 shows that the verb system of G01 is mainly tripartite. The INF.PRS is the most frequently generalized mood/tense, as well as the second most generalized form out of all generalizations (18 occ. out of 63, i.e. 29%). As for their overall distribution, INF.PRS tend to be generalized for past/previous situations (11 occ., 61%), such as in *io stare Svizzera* 'I stay.INF.PRS (in) Switzerland' (see §4.2 for more details).

Apart from the present gerund (GER.PRS),[6] the second most generalized mood/tense is the PTCP.PST. All generalized PTCP.PST report past/previous events and are explainable by the auxiliary's omission, as in *quando arrivato de Spagna* 'when (I) arrive.PTCP.PST in Spain'.

Finally, IND.PRS – which are the most frequently used verbs in terms of absolute frequency – are generalized by G01 more rarely and mainly for another person of the same mood/tense, as in *io parla italiano* 'I speak.IND.PRS.3SG Italian'.

Thus, G01 seems to have mainly acquired the temporal and aspectual properties of IND.PRS *vs* the two past tenses (PTCP.PST and IND.CMPD.PST). By contrast, his verb system primarily differs from that of previously investigated Italian learner varieties due to the relative frequency and distribution of generalized INF.PRS.

A comparison across participants shows a high interspeaker variation, but also some similarities.

Specifically, during our six-minute-long conversation, G11 – who speaks a basic variety of Italian – shows a bipartite verb system, based on the opposition between IND.PRS (15 occ.) and INF.PRS (11 occ.). No other verb forms are employed by G11, at least in our short conversation. This verb system's configuration is unusual for Italian L2 speakers who usually initially alternate IND.PRS and PTCP.PST (§3.1). Moreover, G11 generalizes almost all INF.PRS (10 occ., 91%) – as opposed to a few IND.PRS (40%) – for both present/simultaneous (6 occ.) and past/previous situations (4 occ.).

At the opposite end of the language acquisition continuum, there is G16 who speaks a post-basic variety of Italian. In his 43-minute-long interview, this participant shows a complex verb system that includes, among others, verbs conjugated in GER.PRS, IND.IMPF, and passive voices. However, G16 also generalizes 43% of the INF.PRS (49 out of 115 occ.) for both present/simultaneous and past/previous situations (27 *vs* 22 occ., respectively). By contrast, generalized IND.PRS *vs* PTCP.PST and IND.CMPD.PST show similar temporal properties as in the L2, being almost exclusively complementarily used for the present and the past, respectively.

4.2. Use contexts

Table 3 shows the verb phrase's action class and the proposition's modality of generalized INF.PRS in our corpus.

	Action		Modality		Total
	DURATIVE	NON-DURATIVE	IRREALIS	REALIS	
G01	15 (83%)	3 (17%)	13 (72%)	5 (28%)	18
G11	9 (90%)	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	7 (70%)	10
G16	35 (71%)	14 (29%)	24 (49%)	25 (51%)	49

Table 3. Verb's action class and proposition's modality of generalized INF.PRS.

Similar to learner varieties acquired in Italy (§3.1), generalized INF.PRS tend to appear with durative verb phrases in the examined interviews. Among these, there are durative verbs with an atelic interpretation, such as *guardare* 'to look at' (see (4) in §3.1.3) or *stare a strada* 'to stay on the street', as well as a predominantly telic meaning, like *venire Italy* 'to come (to) Italy' or *studiare francese/spagnolo/inglese* 'to study French/Spanish/English'. However, we also found generalized INF.PRS with non-durative telic verb phrases in our corpus: see, for instance, *dare a te possibilità* 'to give you (a) chance' in (2) in §3.1.1 As expected, INF.PRS are, on the contrary, not generalized with stative verbs in our dataset.

The generalization of INF.PRS also correlates with the irrealis modality in the interview with G01, but not with G16 and G11 (Table 3). Specifically, a breakdown of the use contexts shows that G01 very often generalizes INF.PRS in negative utterances, while G16 mainly uses them in conditionals' protasis or apodosis (see (1) and (2) in §3.1.1, respectively). By contrast, generalized INF.PRS explainable by a modal's omission are not found in the three analyzed interviews and are also very rare in the whole GörliPark corpus (3 occ. in total). This distribution differs from that in Italian learner varieties, where irrealis propositions – and, in particular, cases of modals' omissions – constitute the most frequent contexts of INF.PRS' generalization (Berretta 1990).

Finally, since the irrealis modality may independently trigger their generalization, we only examined temporal and aspectual properties of generalized INF.PRS in main realis clauses.[7]

	PAST/PREVIOUS	PRESENT/ SIMULTANEOUS	FUTURE/ SUCCESSIVE	TOTAL (MAIN REALIS CLAUSES)
G01	4 (80%) (100% perfective)	1 (20%)	0	5
G11	4 (67%) (100% perfective)	2 (33%)	0	6
G16	16 (73%) (81% perfective)	6 (27%)	0	22

Table 4. Temporal and aspectual properties of generalized INF.PRS in main realis clauses.

The data in Table 4 show that, as opposed to Italian learner and contact varieties, generalized INF.PRS in main realis clauses mainly refer to past/previous (*vs* present/simultaneous or future/successive) situations in our corpus. Furthermore, they tend to have, in past contexts, a perfective (*vs* imperfective) meaning.

(5) INT: *ma com'è che hai imparato l'italiano?*
'But how did you learn Italian?'
G01: *io* studiare *italia*
I study.INF.PRS Italy
'I studied it (in) Italy'

(6) INT: *hai vissuto in italia?*
'Did you live in Italy?'
G11: *si (pause) io* stare *italia da due anni e quattro mesi*
yes I stay.INF.PRS Italy for two years and four months
'Yes, I lived in Italy for two years and four months'

The INF.PRS *studiare* 'to study' and *stare* 'to stay' in (5) and (6), respectively, are generalized in realis propositions, refer to past/previous situations, and have a perfective interpretation. To explain why INF.PRS tend to be generalized instead of past tenses in our dataset, we compare their morphological, semantic, and pragmatic properties in the next sections.

5. Discussion

5.1. Morphological properties

Tokens and types of generalized INF.PRS and, if available, PTCP.PST and IND.CMPD.PST in our three interviews are listed in Table 5. The verbs in small caps are less predictable from an unsupervised L2

learner's perspective: we mean that they are not derived by adding *-re* and *-to*, respectively, to the third-person singular of the IND.PRS, which is assumed to be the base verb form in Italian learner varieties (§3.1).[8]

	G01 (16 MIN.)	G11 (6 MIN.)	G16 (45 MIN.)
GENERALIZED INF.PRS	(8) *studiare* 'to study'; (3) *parlare* 'to speak'; (2) *fare* 'to do', *sentire* 'to hear'; (1) *arrivare* 'to arrive', *cambiare* 'to change', *trovare* 'to find'.	(8) *stare* 'to stay'; (1) *aspettare* 'to wait', *tornare* 'to return'.	(10) VENIRE 'to come'; (7) *fare* 'to do'; (5) ANDARE 'to go', *stare* 'to stay'; (4) *guardare* 'to look at'; (2) *aiutare* 'to help', *arrabbiare* 'to get angry', *chiamare* 'to call', *dare* 'to give'; (1) CAPIRE 'to understand', *cercare* 'to look for', DIRE 'to say', *domandare* 'to ask', *entrare* 'to enter', *girare* 'to turn', *lasciare* 'to leave', *parlare* 'to speak', *pregare* 'to pray', *tornare* 'to come back'.
TYPES/TOKENS	7 out of 18	3 out of 10	19 out of 49
GENERALIZED PTCP.PST/ IND. CMPD.PST	(2) *arrivato* 'arrived'; (1) ANDATO 'gone', CAPITO 'understood', DETTO 'said', FINITO 'finished', VISTO 'seen'.	–	(16) ANDATO 'gone'; (12) VISTO 'seen'; (10) DETTO 'said'; (4) *fatto* 'done', FINITO 'finished'; (3) *lasciato* 'left', MORTO 'died'; (2) *passato* 'gone across' (1) *ammazzato* 'murdered', *cercato* 'looked for', CONESTO 'known', *dato* 'given', *entrato* 'entered', *girato* 'turned', *parlato* 'spoken', *sentito* 'heard', *sparato* 'shot', *trovato* 'found'.
TYPES/TOKENS	6 out of 7		18 out of 64

Table 5. Tokens and types of generalized INF.PRS and PTCP.PST/IND.CMPD.PST according to their frequency.

As Table 5 shows, the number of types of generalized INF.PRS varies across participants (G11 < G01 < G16). This variation is partially related to the conversation length and/or participant's fossilization stage. However, the type-token ratios of generalized INF.PRS do not differ between G01 and G16, i.e. 0.39 in both interviews. This means that the lexical diversity produced by this mood/tense – i.e. the numbers of unique lemmata (=types) normalized by the total occurrences (=tokens) – is comparable in these two interviews. In contrast, G11 tends to use the same

verb, i.e. *stare* 'to stay', during our conversation. This result illustrates that the generalization of the INF.PRS as a mood/tense may co-occur with semantic overextensions of specific lemmata in IiT (cf., e.g., Berruto 2001 on a similar generalization of *(e)star(e)* in Italian contact varieties).

Moreover, the majority of types of generalized INF.PRS (except for four, i.e. 14%) are predictably formed: see, e.g., *studia* > *studia-re* 'to study', *sta* > *sta-re* 'to stay' in Table 5. By contrast, the verbs generalized in past constructions (especially by G01) tend to be less morphologically transparent (11 types, i.e. 46%): see, e.g., *dice* > *detto* 'said', *vede* > *visto* 'seen'. This means that the latter cannot have been derived on the spot, but must have been memorized by the speakers (see the probable semi-analogical formation *conesto* < *conosce* instead of *conosciuto* 'known' in Table 5 as a counter-example).

Their higher morphological transparency – along with the fact that IND.PRS show in IiT similar temporal properties as in Standard Italian as opposed to what happens in the, mainly bipartite verb system of several Italian contact varieties exclusively developed abroad (§4.1) – may partially explain why INF.PRS compete particularly with PTCP.PST/IND.CMPD.PST in our corpus. The former can be generalized more easily to fill (temporary) gaps in the participants' vocabulary. This need especially holds for past constructions since IND.PRS are well mastered by our interviewees. As negative evidence, it can be noted that generalized PTCP.PST/IND.CMPD.PST contribute less to the vocabulary diversity than INF.PRS in the interview with G016, i.e. 0.28 *vs* 0.39, respectively. By contrast, the high types-tokens ratio of generalized past tenses (0.86) in the speech of G01 can be interpreted as a secondary effect of their overall low frequency.

5.2. Tense switch in the discourse

The morphological properties discussed in §5.1 alone cannot explain the verbs' distribution in our interviews. Rather, INF.PRS and PTCP.PST/IND.CMPD.PST also tend to have different semantic and pragmatic properties when they both refer to past situations. These differences become particularly evident when these two verb forms alternate in the same turn of talk, such as in (7) (see, also, (4) in §3.1.3):

(7) INT: *e ti ricordi il primo giorno a Berlino? [[…]] cosa hai fatto?*
'And do you remember your first day in Berlin? [[…]] what did you do?'

G16: *eh: ve-* venire *qua mh venerdì (–) VENerdì alle OTto (pause)*
eh come.INF.PRS here mh Friday Friday at eight
'I came here Friday at eight'

G16: *quello NOtte (–)* andato:: *(pause) discoteca*
that night go.PTCP.PST nightclub
'that night I went (to a) nightclub'

In (7), the INF.PRS *venire* 'to come' and the PTCP.PST *andato* 'gone' – which are both unpredictably formed – refer to two realis past/previous situations and have a perfective meaning. However, as the deictic adverb *qua* 'here' suggests, the INF.PRS has a perfect value in (7): G16 represents the event of 'coming to Berlin' as complete but still relevant at a given reference moment, which is interactionally provided by the interviewer's question in (7) (see, also, (5) and (6) in §4.2 for analogous constructions after an interviewer's interrogative). Consequently, the situation referred to by the INF.PRS is discursively old/given and informatively backgrounded.

By contrast, the PTCP.PST has an aoristic interpretation in (7): as the adverbial *quello notte* 'that night' points out, G16 visualizes the reported situation as having no connection with the present. Simultaneously, he refers with the PTCP.PST to a foreground event that constitutes discursively new information and marks a punchline in his short story.

5.3. Acquisition of new textual functions

Connected to their semantic and pragmatic properties, generalized INF.PRS – or, more specifically, their alternation with other moods/tenses – tend to acquire innovative textual functions. This clearly emerges if we consider verb dynamics in longer narrative sequences, like in (8):

(8) 1 INT: *ma tu sei passato per la libia? (pause)*
'But did you pass through Libya?'

2 G16: <German> *ja (pause) [[year omitted]]*
yes
'Yes, (in) [[year omitted]]'

3 INT: *°mh:°*

4 G16: *quello tempo libia FORte (pause) tante persone* morte
that time Libya strong many people die.PTCP.PST
'At that time Libya (was) strong, many people died'

5 G16: *(pause) mio paesani* andato *insieme scuola africa*
my villagers go.PTCP.PST together school Africa
'(with) my (fellow) villager we went to school together (in) Africa'

6 G16: *(pause) tutto insieme (pause) come un fratelli (–) tutti giorni*
everything together as a brothers every day
'(we did) everything together like brothers, every day'

7 G16: *africa °mh:° si tu* visto *mi (pause) un secondo e tu* visto *lui*
Africa mh if you see.PTCP.PST me a second and you see.PTCP.PST him
'(in) Africa if you saw me, a second (later) and you saw him'

8 G16: *(pause)* andiamo *(–) io* ANdato *con lui TUtti i cosi*
go.IND.PRS.1PL I go.PTCP.PST with him all the things
'we go, I went with him every(where)'

9 G16: *(pause) una giorni io* ho lasiato *con lui*
one days I have.AUX.IND.PRS.1SG leave.PTCP.PST with him
'one day I left (lit. have left) with him'

10	G16:	*(pause)*	venire	*(pause)*	*algeria*				
			come.INF.PRS		Algeria				
		‘we came to Algeria’							
11	G16:	*(–)*	*algeria*	*(pause)*	*eh*	*libia*	*(pause)*	*dopo*	*libia*	*(pause)*
			Algeria		eh	Libya		after	Libya	
		‘(from) Algeria (to) Libya, after Libya’								
12	INT:	*°mediterraneo°*								
		‘Mediterranean’								
13	G16:	*mediterraneo*	*lui*	*non*	andare	*mediterraneo*				
		Mediterranean	he	not	go.INF.PRS	Mediterranean				
		‘Mediterranean, he didn’t go (to the) Mediterranean’								
14	G16:	*(pause)*	*°ecco°*	*uno giorni*	*(pause)*	fatto	*colazione*	*con lui*		
			here is	one days		have.PTCP.PST	breakfast	with him		
		‘here is, one day I had breakfast with him’								

In the story’s orientation (lines 4-8), G16 introduces the main characters, i.e. the I-narrator and his friend. In doing so, he reports a series of habitual activities they used to do together through verbs conjugated in PTCP.PST (the only exception is the IND.PRS *andiamo* ‘(we) go’ that, however, is repaired by a PTCP.PST *andato* ‘gone’ at line 8). Semantically, these PTCP.PST denote past/previous situations and have an imperfective meaning. Pragmatically, they convey background information that constitutes a sort of atemporal frame introducing the narration.

The beginning of the plot of the story at line 9 is marked, among others, through both a temporal adverbial *una giorni* ‘one day(s)’ and a switch into an IND.CMPD.PST *ho las(c)iato* ‘(I) have left’. Semantically, this verb refers to a punctual action and has a perfective-aoristic interpretation. At the pragmatic-textual level, it marks a narrative turning point.

Thereafter, G16 switches again to a series of two generalized INF.PRS (lines 10 and 13). This switch has a contrastive-evaluative function at the sequential level: it highlights, from one utterance to the next, the contrast between the punctual decision to leave and the interminable journey through Africa. Simultaneously, it also carries out a structuring function at the textual level, that is, within the whole story architecture. As a matter of fact, like the PTCP.PST at lines 4-8, these two INF.PRS convey background information regarding the main storyline. However, unlike the former, the INF.PRS report events embedded in the story’s plot that are presented as complete at a given reference moment, highly relevant from a story-internal perspective (perfective-perfect value).

Eventually, G16 switches again to a PTCP.PST *fatto* ‘done’ (line 14). Along with the temporal adverbial *uno giorni* ‘one day(s)’ and the discourse marker *ecco* ‘here is’, this switch produces a foregrounding effect.

6. Conclusion

This paper provides a preliminary description of a range of Italian-based multilingual practices for which we propose the label 'Italian in Transit'. Our dataset comprises twenty interviews with speakers born in Sub-Saharan West Africa who have mainly acquired Italian in Italy and occasionally reactivate this language while working as street vendors in a park in Berlin. By focusing on the frequency, distribution, and linguistic properties of generalized INF.PRS, our analysis demonstrates that, despite their high intra- and interspeaker variation, IiT practices show common linguistic features that partially differ from those characterizing Italian learner and contact varieties investigated in previous research. These properties are related to and, simultaneously, exemplarily illustrate some linguistic and sociolinguistic consequences of contemporary superdiversity (Blommaert 2013).

As an overview, the quantitative data discussed in §4 point out that the participants tend to show a relatively complex verb system where, similar to learner varieties, but different from contact varieties of Italian, IND.PRS and, if available, past tenses – i.e. PTCP.PST and/or IND.CMPD.PST – have a complementary distribution. These findings suggest that the interviewees gradually acquired the L2's verb morphology mainly following cross-linguistically valid learning patterns (Banfi & Bernini 2003). However, analogous to Italian contact varieties, but unlike learner varieties, INF.PRS are frequently generalized in our corpus (fifteen out of twenty interviewees).

In this regard, a comparison across three participants – representing a wide range of internal variation in our dataset – revealed that generalized INF.PRS are, from an acquisitional perspective, a shared fossilized feature in the GörliPark corpus regardless of participants' Italian proficiency and/or the composition of their language repertoires. This holds even if their relative frequency tends to drop with the increase in speakers' language skills (G11 > G01 > G16).

Sociolinguistically, generalized INF.PRS constitute a stigmatized and stigmatizing trait, possibly determined by and, simultaneously, pointing out the asymmetrical learning settings and modalities of IiT in Italy. Thus, their generalization exemplarily illustrates the superdiversity of IiT speakers' repertoires that are often 'truncated' (Blommaert & Dong 2010); that is, they contain fragmented and sometimes idiosyncratically fossilized competencies in several codes, learned for mainly instrumental purposes in precarious communicative settings. As negative evidence for this, it can be noted that, apart from two interviewees with whom I conducted a very short conversation, the only three participants who did

not generalize INF.PRS learned Italian in secondary school in Italy (2) or after moving from Spain to Berlin (1).

Eventually, from the perspective of (super)contact linguistics, a qualitative analysis of their use contexts shows that generalized INF.PRS acquire innovative functions in our interviews. This happens at least after IiT practices are displaced in new, mainly alloglot, sociolinguistic settings where they may be reframed as codes for more collaborative and symmetrical communication.

More specifically, INF.PRS tend to be generalized with durative verb phrases and, to a lesser degree, in irrealis propositions, thereby often conveying background information in our corpus. In this sense, like in Italian learner and contact varieties, their generalization may be accounted for by the lack of subjunctive mood in IiT (cf. Berretta 1990). However, INF.PRS especially compete with past tenses and are mainly used with a perfective meaning in our dataset. This peculiar distribution may generally be explained by the fact that the IiT verb system is more complex than the bipartite one of numerous Italian contact varieties: since IND.PRS show target-like temporal properties in IiT, INF.PRS carve out a semantic-functional niche for themselves in past domains. In addition to this general explanation, we also suggest the following specific reasons for this distinctive distribution of INF.PRS in our corpus.

First, since they are highly predictable forms from an unsupervised L2 learner's perspective, INF.PRS may be more easily generalized to compensate for (temporary) lexical gaps as opposed to PTCP.PST/IND.CMPD.PST which, by contrast, are less morphologically transparent, at least in the examined interviews (§5.1).

Second, when they both refer to past/previous perfective situations, generalized INF.PRS and PTCP.PST/IND.CMPD.PST tend to convey perfect *vs* aoristic meaning, respectively (§5.2). Therefore, their switch is sometimes functionally employed to reestablish an aspectual opposition which is expressed by IND.CMPD.PST *vs* IND.REM.PST in Standard Italian but is subjected to an (ongoing) underdetermination in both Northern and Southern varieties (e.g. Bertinetto & Squartini 1996) of the L2 with which the participants entered into contact. In this sense, generalized INF.PRS may be regarded as a re- or adfunctionalized trait (Smith 2011), that, once entered into the IiT verb system, is reused, among others, to compensate for semantic-pragmatic oppositions missing or disappearing in Italian as a target language.

Third, and in connection with this, a major field of innovation concerns the pragmatic-textual properties of generalized INF.PRS in the GörliPark corpus. Combined with their function of marking background information, the alternation of generalized INF.PRS with other moods/tenses

may be creatively exploited by the participants to evaluate and hierarchize different types of information both sequentially and textually, especially in narratives (§5.3). It should be noted that no mood/tense alternation(s) would be necessary in Standard Italian where similar (evaluative and structuring) results could, for instance, be achieved by using semantically more specific lemmata (cf., however, Centineo 1991 on some pragmatic functions of the switch between past tenses in Italian oral narratives).

As for their source, direct transfer is probably not at stake since Mandinka does not have a unique verb form that corresponds to Italian INF.PRS. (Series of) generalized INF.PRS may, however, have a corresponding syntactic structure in Mandinka, where infinitives in *ka* can mark non-initial sentence(s) in clause-chaining constructions (Creissels *forthcoming*: 35). Nonetheless, the similarities between these two structures concern more their form than their function. Moreover, independently of their origin, the generalization of INF.PRS co-occurs and, possibly, co-determines other lexical and grammatical innovations in IiT, such as the increasing frequency of personal subject pronouns, but also personal object or possessive pronouns, possibly for the sake of agreement disambiguation (e.g. Berruto 1991: 346), which merits future examination.

Abbreviations

GER.PRS = present gerund; IiT = Italian in Transit; IND.CMPD.PST = compound past indicative; IND.IMPF = imperfect indicative; IND.PRS = present indicative; IND.REM.PST = simple/remote past indicative; INF.CMPD.PST = compound past infinitive; INF.PRS = present infinitive; L1 = first/source language; L2 = second/target language; PTCP.PST = past participle.

Transcription conventions

(–), (pause)	Micro-pause, longer pause
:, ::, :::	Prolongation of the preceding sound
LOUD, °quiet°	Louder *vs* quieter speech
f-	False starts
<German>segment	Segment in other languages than Italian
[[…]], [[added information]]	Omissions or information added to transcription to facilitate understanding
no(n)	*no*(unintelligible sound)

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Notes

[1] These features may also occur in Italian contact and learner varieties (e.g. Berruto 1991, 2001; Operstein 2018). Nevertheless, as this paper exemplifies based on an analysis of generalized present infinitives, they do not always show the same frequency, distribution, or linguistic properties in IiT as opposed to previously examined multilingual practices.

[2] The repertoires' languages are listed in Table 1 following the participants' order of mentioning. This order does not necessarily correspond to their acquisition sequence, since many interviewees are simultaneously multilingual. However, it may give some insight into the (experienced) status of a language in the participants' community and/or individual repertoire at the moment of the interview.

[3] By contrast, in pre-basic varieties, Italian L2 learners mainly express temporal, modal, and aspectual information through word order or temporal and local adverbials (Banfi & Bernini 2003: 85-89). Even if some pre-basic traits may remain in their interlanguages, almost all participants of the GörliPark corpus have overcome this pre-basic stage (§2).

[4] Following Bertinetto (2001), but unlike Comrie (1976/1998), we consider the aspectual opposition perfect *vs* aoristic as a subcategory within the domain of perfectivity.

[5] As argued by Berruto (1993), Italian foreigner talk covers a range of extremely simplified to redundant diaphasic varieties of Italian. Their linguistic features, such as INF.PRS' generalization, depend, among other things, on interlocutors' (supposed) language competencies, lay theories of communication efficiency, and social relationships among interactional partners.

[6] One generalized GER.PRS is explainable by the omission of the auxiliary *stare* 'to stay/be' in a progressive periphrasis. The other is used for a past tense (cf. Lipski 2001 for analogous examples).

[7] If we consider both main and subordinate clauses, the data in Table 4 do not drastically change: a considerable percentage of INF.PRS continues to be generalized in past contexts, i.e. 61%, 40%, and 45% in the case of G01, G11, and G16, respectively (cf. §4.1).

[8] The morphological transparency of an INF.PRS or PTCP.PST/IND.CMPD.PST is here understood as being independent of the fact that other forms of the verb paradigm are regularly or irregularly constructed.

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