

Vocabulary Learning Strategies for Italian L2 Informative Texts in Lower Secondary School

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Abstract

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This study examines the vocabulary learning strategies exploited by newly arrived immigrant adolescents in lower secondary schools when engaging with an informative text. Through an experimental study, the research analyzes word frequency, the GULPEASE, and the density indices based on the written productions of 68 students within a CLIL-based learning unit on the Discovery of America. Findings indicate that targeted vocabulary instruction, incorporating lexical breadth and depth, enhances comprehension and production. Moreover, the overall readability of the learners' texts is 73.5/100, with a negative correlation between readability and lexical density ($r = -0.6$). The data suggest that an excessive reliance on basic vocabulary can limit lexical expansion. The research aims to offer a starting point for future studies, deepening the understanding of the role of VLS in Italian L2 education, its correlation with learners' linguistic development, and the application of innovative teaching models in lower secondary schools.

Keywords: Italian as a second language; specialized vocabulary; vocabulary learning strategies; CLIL; lower secondary school.