

How to Teach Italian Intransitive Verbs: Focusing on Unaccusatives and Unergatives

Authors : Joung Hyoun Lee

Abstract : Intransitive verbs consist of two subclasses called unergatives and unaccusatives. However, traditionally Italian intransitive verbs have been taught regardless their semantic distinctions and any mention of grammatical terms such as unaccusatives and unergatives even though there is a huge gap between them. This paper aims to explore the teaching of Italian intransitive verbs categorizing them into unaccusatives and unergatives, which is compared with researches on the teaching of English unaccusative and unergative verbs. For this purpose, first, the study analyses various aspects of English vs. Italian unergatives and unaccusatives, and their properties of the constructions. Next, this study highlights the research trend on Korean students' learning errors, which is leaning toward causal analyses of the over passivization of English unaccusative verbs. In order to investigate these issues, 53 students of the Busan University of Foreign Studies, who are studying Italian language as a second language, were surveyed through a grammaticality judgment test divided into 9 sections. As expected, the findings confirmed that the test results of Italian unaccusatives and unergatives showed similar and different aspects comparing to those of English. Moreover, there was a highly affirmative demand for a more careful way of teaching which should be considered both syntactically and semantically according to the grammatical items. The research provides a framework of a more effective and systematic teaching method of Italian intransitive verbs for further research.

Keywords : unaccusative verbs, unergative verbs, agent, patient, theme, overpassivization

Conference Title : ICALTFL 2016 : International Conference on Applied Linguistics and Teaching Foreign Languages

Conference Location : Venice, Italy

Conference Dates : August 08-09, 2016