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# *Final Reflection Paper*

This semester of Italian has been one of the most genuinely rewarding parts of my language-learning journey. As I wrote at the beginning of the semester, I chose Italian because my PhD program requires an oral proficiency exam in a language of my choice, and although I am already fluent in Spanish, I have always admired the Italian language and culture. After completing Introductory Italian last semester, my goal for Intermediate Italian was to move closer to a solid intermediate speaking level: to express most of my ideas clearly, to find alternative ways to communicate when I'm unsure of a word, to deepen my understanding of Italian culture, to cultivate an authentic Italian accent distinct from Spanish, and to build a practical repertoire of everyday vocabulary that I could use confidently in spontaneous interactions. These goals framed every assignment I completed and shaped the progress I made throughout the semester.

When I think about my best achievements, the greatest one is how natural I've begun to feel when expressing myself in Italian. At the start, I wasn't entirely sure how much I could truly say without relying on Spanish. Over time, though, I found myself leaning into the process, letting ideas flow, using tools that work for me, and embracing mistakes as part of genuine communication. My speaking samples especially show this growth: I can now talk about myself, my experiences (past and present) and the world around me. This aligns directly with my personal goal of reaching a functional intermediate level where I can communicate ideas clearly and describe aspects of my own life with ease.

Reflecting on the course goals, I feel that I have met them in meaningful ways. Goal 1, communicating orally and in writing about everyday topics, is the one where I've made the most visible progress. My writing samples demonstrate that I can construct clear, thoughtful paragraphs about real-life experiences, and my speaking recordings reflect increasingly natural speech. Goal 3, using language both functionally and expressively, also feels closely connected to my work this semester. Describing jobs,

sports, routines, feelings, and past experiences required me to employ a range of verb forms and vocabulary intentionally, which strengthened both my accuracy and expressiveness. Goal 2, developing analytical skills through reading and writing, emerged organically as I drafted assignments, revised structures, and paid closer attention to verb forms and style.

If I had to identify a weaker area, it would still be speaking, specifically because of the Spanish influence that occasionally slips through. Sometimes my mistakes remind me of how deeply Spanish sits in my linguistic muscle memory. But even this challenge connects directly to my personal goals: one of my aims was to cultivate an Italian accent and grammatical intuition distinct from Spanish. The fact that I can now notice when Spanish influence appears (and correct myself) is already progress. Moving forward, I think increased exposure to spoken Italian through podcasts, films, and travel will help strengthen this area.

Thinking back to the personal learning goals I set at the beginning of the semester, I do feel that I achieved them. I reached a level where I can express myself in everyday contexts, often comfortably and naturally. I built a repertoire of vocabulary that I now recognize in readings and can use in my own writing and speech. I strengthened my ability to rephrase ideas when I don't know a word, and I began developing an Italian accent that feels increasingly less influenced by Spanish.

Looking at my portfolio as a whole, what stands out most is a portrait of a learner who is reflective, motivated, and genuinely enthusiastic about languages. My work reveals a commitment to both creativity, and self-improvement. Overall, this semester reaffirmed why I love learning languages. Italian challenged me, inspired me, and reminded me that language learning is both humbling and deeply rewarding. I'm proud of the progress I've made and excited to continue growing – even if it may not be in the classroom environment. I am ready to travel to Italy and put everything into practice. So, professoressa, thank you for all of your guidance and support throughout this semester.