

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 15 August 2010 12:51

To speak Italian well you need to think like an Italian and try to have fun.

Italians gesture – A LOT

Italians are very expressive people and tend to be emotive in conversation as well as use lots of gestures in conversations. This can be a lot of fun. Even when I spoke very little Italian we enjoyed lengthy conversations that consisted of mainly gestures. Some have said it is almost like sign language and can be very helpful to deaf people. It is amazing certainly the kind of funny (and sometimes explicit) that you can think up when you have to improvise. You can find your hands doing the strangest things you never expected and raising many a giggle. Much more is said kinetically and without words using body language than we ever say.

The attitude in Abruzzo to the language is generally very sympathetic. They are keen to have fun and make the effort to communicate with you. Italians are also very curious to know all about English people and that fuels most of the initial conversations.

I speak Italian quite well now and can certainly follow most conversations and participate as long as people don't speak really fast or speak in slang.

The thing I find hardest about the language is the big words. Italian words are not just long, they have many, many syllables. I find this very hard to get my tongue around even when I know what to say. It is almost like my English mouth just cannot say it quickly enough. Italians get very used to all the long words and find it no trouble at all. They do sometimes abbreviate things. But mostly they use the whole word. They all speak with a definite rhythm that keeps the conversation going. This can be very hard to master, but gets easier with time.

They can have whole conversations saying nothing. I have heard conversations, particularly on the phone, where they say nothing at all. Following the word "PRONTO" which is what they say when they pick up the phone to a series of "buh", "mah", "ayyy," "euuuuww" with very little inbetween and then the phone goes down. It is comical to watch.

Pronouncing the words.

Pronunciation is key. Italian has a set and rigid pronunciation format. It is spoken phonetically unlike English. The rules are very simple to learn and normally take up just one page of a mini Italian English dictionary. It is well worth sitting down and learning these as this is the key to you mastering how to say the whole language. This is hard for us to imagine, English is a mixture of languages, therefore it varies from one word to another as to how we pronounce it. Italian is not like this. Once you know how to pronounce the letters in order, you know how to say almost any word. If you stick to that you will not go far wrong.

The rhythm.

Once you have learnt how to pronounce the words you will then need to know how to string them all together. I have said sentences before that were word perfect. But because the emphasis was in the wrong place for Italians, they do not understand me. This can be hard to learn as all the sentences are in a very different order when compared to English and some even have no real or literal translation in English. The best bet for this is just practice, the more you try, the more you converse, the more you pick up and it comes with time.

Translation

There is no other way to describe it. Proper translation from one language to another is extremely difficult indeed. It takes a long time, and is a major struggle. Why is this?

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Translation can only be done from one language into your mother tongue.

Some people were brought up in a dual lingual home, (like Antonietta) so have 2 mother tongues. Proper translation must be done 100% accurately so needs to be done by someone who is absolutely letter perfect in spoken and written language.

We do not realise this but even when we write, we use slang and English references. We use clichés and terms that are only known in our own language. We do it without thinking, but when translating that to another language and you are completely stumped.

Using a translator tool

The best one we use all the time is Google Translate, it is quick and free.

You need to start with your text on the computer, a paper document will not work.

Copy your text and paste it into Google Translate, it will then spit out your translation.

It will always be abysmally poor. It is impossible for a machine to translate text properly. That is because so many words have many different meanings. A machine without intelligence cannot understand the gist of what is being said so it puts the most ideal or the most likely fit for each sentence. You can always tell translation that has been done by a robot. It is sucky.

To get the best out of your paid translation or your Google translate:

Write in very short punchy sentences.

Write sentences that you would write for someone who does not speak good English.

Avoid long clumsy sentences that have lots of parts to them.

Avoid big words and definitions.

Before you translate your document sit down and rewrite it with the above in mind.

This takes time but it is well worth it. This way you have the best chance of getting something decent out the other end.

Try to be very sympathetic to your translator. Much of the time when you translate a document what comes out the other end is completely garbled and makes no sense at all. This means that for huge parts of your document your translator must improvise or just make it up. If they are not a confident writer this will put them in a very nervous position that will worry them a lot. Offer to sit down with them after your translation to go through any questions or straighten out any sections they were not sure of. This is an essential part of the process if you are keen to get it right.