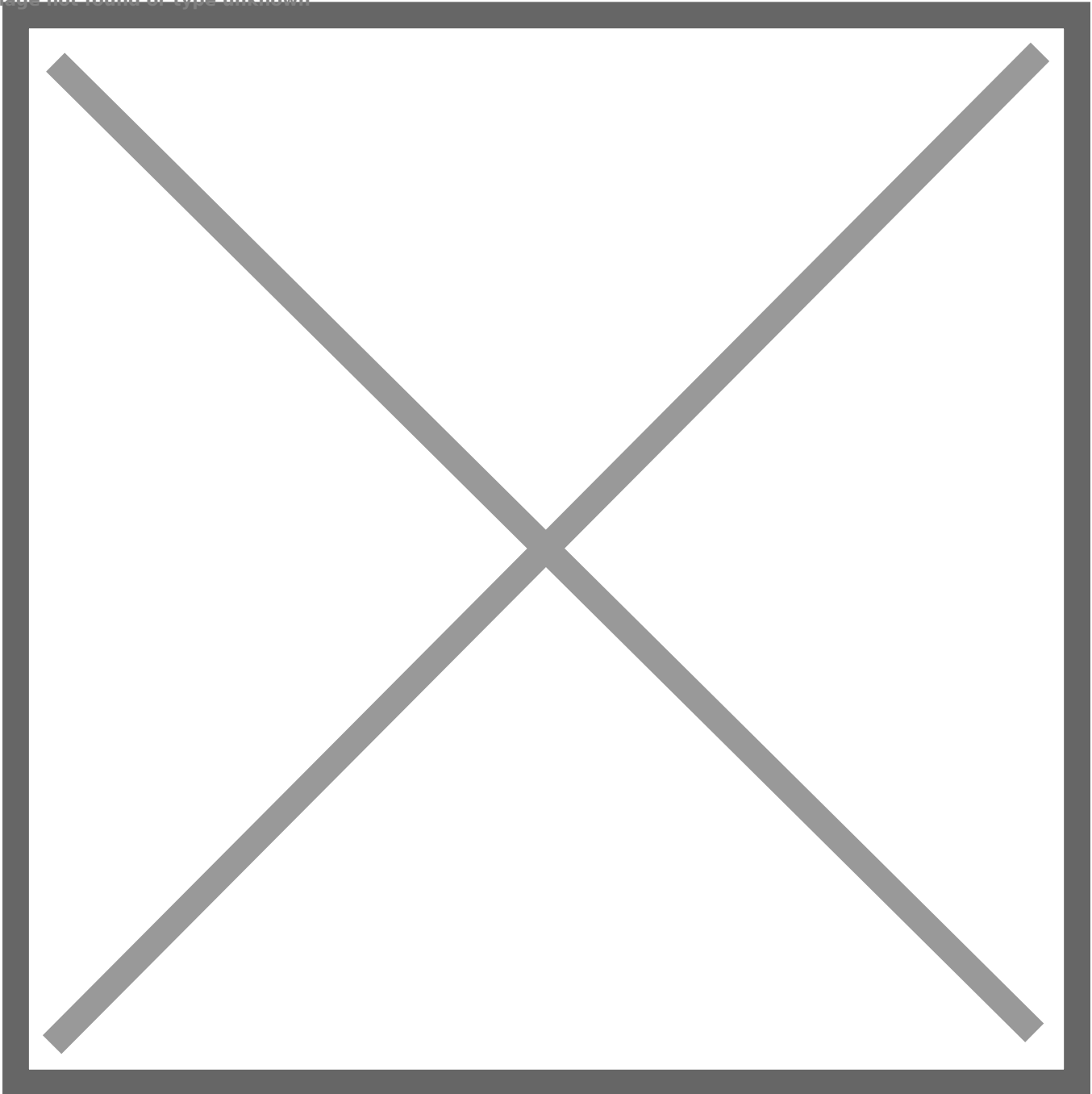


Act 3: Dare i numeri!

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Hello everyone! Ciao a tutti! Come state, cari amici? Here we are, once again, about to enjoy a new installment of our play. So, did you make some time to learn by heart the words on our flashcard? Did you study the lesson available on our website? Today, among other things, we will be dealing with Italian indefinite articles. Did you fill out the grammar quizzes? Yes? Excellent! Ottimo! This means we're all set!

Today Connor seems a little stressed out. Last night, as he will tell Silvia, his grandparents had a rather noisy fight. No big deal, actually. Looks like grandma Carmela burnt her famous maccheroni in smoked

sauce. A big disappointment to grandpa Giovanni, apparently... but I don't want to disclose too much and spoil all the fun! What I will tell you, though, is that Silvia, to cheer poor Connor up, will take him on an imaginary stroll around Rome. Well, that sounds appealing, doesn't it? Let's join them!

Introduction

Silvia: Buongiorno, Connor! Come stai?

Connor: Meglio, Silvia, grazie.

Silvia: Meglio than... when...?

Connor: Better than yesterday.

Silvia: Cosa è successo ieri, yesterday?

Connor: My nonno Giovanni...

Silvia: Lui non sta bene?

Connor: Lui sta benissimo! But he had a fight with nonna Carmela...

Silvia: E come sta adesso nonna Carmela?

Connor: After the fight, molto male... now, sta meglio.

Silvia: Tell me about the fight, the litigio.

Connor: Well, it was a cosa strana, Silvia! Nonno Giovanni always says that nonna Carmela's pasta è the best in the world! And ieri she decided to experiment with a new recipe. She called it "maccheroni con salsa fumè".

Silvia: Maccheroni with smoked sauce? Was it buona?

Connor: Nonna always makes buone paste!

Silvia: I bet she does! I bet she is a brava cuoca!

Connor: Sì, but ieri... I don't know what happened...

Silvia: What do you mean?

Connor: The pasta was completely burnt! Come you say that in italiano?

Silvia: Pasta bruciata.

Connor: And nonno Giovanni made such a scene! He was saying "Mamma mia, Carmela!", che disastro! E nonna Carmela was saying "Non capisco, Giovanni".

Silvia: Do they speak italiano to each other?

Connor: They do when they fight! And their voices get really loud!

Silvia: Voce alta!

Connor: I never raise my voce, Silvia...

Silvia: Sei un ragazzo tranquillo.

Connor: Io sono molto tranquillo e calmo... Tu sei calma, Silvia?

Silvia: Sì, most of the time, but I cannot eat pasta bruciata either...!

Connor: I think that italiani sono everything but calmi!

Silvia: È la passione of the lingua italiana!

Connor: Maybe... but nonno Giovanni got really carried away by molta passione, ieri. Poor nonna Carmela...

Silvia: How far away?

Connor: He said "time to see a therapist, Carmela!"

Silvia: The psicologo? Veramente? Because of the pasta?

Connor: Veramente, Silvia! Io sto male when I think about it...

Silvia: Sono sicura that they will calm down soon! È just a piccolo screzio.

Connor: I hope so! All of a sudden they switched to this weird dialect italiano which I don't understand and thought to myself... Non capisco un'acca!

Silvia: Bravo, Connor... I can tell that you've been studying a lot!

Connor: Grazie, Silvia, I actually did!

Silvia: Bene, sono molto contenta. Anything else about nonno Giovanni?

Connor: Sì, when I asked him whether this pasta incident had happened before, he said to me "Ehhh, Connor, è una lunga storia!"

Silvia: Do you know what that means?

Connor: Sì, *it's a long story*.

Silvia: Esatto! Nonno Giovanni used an expression that fits in perfectly with today's lezione di grammatica italiana!

Connor: Veramente?

Silvia: Sì! Un bellissimo esempio. Let's start our lezione and you'll see!

Grammar 1: Indefinite articles

Silvia: Oggi we will talk about the *articoli indeterminativi*. As you know, the *articoli indeterminativi* in inglese are "a" or "an".

Connor: Sì, a lezione di grammatica italiana.

Silvia: **Una** lezione di grammatica italiana. The *articoli indeterminativi* precede singular nouns and have three forms in italiano. To choose the correct form of the *articolo indeterminativo* you'll have to look at the genere of the noun that the article precedes, which can be (maschile o femminile). You will also need to consider the initial letter of the parola in question.

Connor: Tre forme... genere... Initial letter...

Silvia: Prima di **una** consonante, if the noun è maschile, you will use **un**, if the noun è femminile, you will use **una**. Would you like to try?

Connor: **Un** giorno. **Una** donna.

Silvia: Molto bene. My turn. **Un** treno e **un** biglietto. **Una** bicicletta e **una** ruota.

Connor: This will be very helpful in Italia...

Silvia: The treno o the bicicletta?

Connor: Both... that's another dream of mine...

Silvia: **Un** sogno... A dream...

Connor: **Un** sogno bello! **Un** sogno bellissimo!

Silvia: Quale?

Connor: I want to travel around Italia and see the places of *La Dolce Vita*...

Silvia: Viaggiare in Italia nowadays è diverso from what it was like in the anni Cinquanta.

Connor: But è **un** sogno!

Silvia: Well, let's try to get back to realtà and continue to talk about the *articoli indeterminativi*. What do you say?

Connor: **Una** realtà of grammatica!

Silvia: Bravo! If **una** parola begins with an "s" plus consonant, with the lettera "z" or the lettere "ps", you will use **uno** when the noun è maschile e **una** when the noun è femminile.

Connor: **Una** storia lunga e **uno** psicologo... like the one nonna Carmela will have to see.

Silvia: Well, this è **una** frase molto bella, Connor! ... E let's hope nonna Carmela won't have to see **uno** psicologo!

Connor: **Una** amica di nonna Carmela says...

Silvia: Ah! Sorry to stop you there...

Connor: Did I say something wrong?

Silvia: ...You said something that brings us back to our grammar topic. When a noun è femminile e begins with **una** vowel you will use **un'**. You drop the "a" di **una** and add the apostrofo. Like **un'**isola.

Connor: So, **una** amica becomes **un'**amica?

Silvia: Esatto. **Un** altro esempio could be... **un'**ambasciata italiana in America.

Connor: **Un'**americana a Roma! Well, that was the film **Un Americano a Roma**... I just got a bit creative!

Silvia: I like that! Creativity è molto useful for these esercizi. The article **uno** in italiano is also used to refer to the numero one, and follows the same rules as the articolo indeterminativo.

Connor: I would like **uno** shot of espresso...

Silvia: Here we go, bravo! ...I recently read that in Italia people drink in media tre espressi a day.

Connor: **Un** espresso usually keeps me awake the whole day!

Silvia: Well, the ideal numero è due al giorno. Quanti caffè americani do you drink al giorno, Connor?

Connor: Usually due.

Silvia: Each caffè americano is equivalent to due caffè espressi... so you basically drink quattro espressi al giorno!

Connor: I didn't know that...

Silvia: **Un** caffè americano contains the same amount of caffeina as due espressi with the addition of some acqua.

Connor: No wonder why at night I have trouble sleeping...

Silvia: Quattro espressi al giorno sono molti!

Grammar 2: **C'è** and **Ci sono**

Silvia: Connor, during our prima lezione di grammatica we conjugated the verbo essere.

Connor: Esatto.

Silvia: Today we'll practice some more with the verbo essere per tradurre due espressioni of the lingua inglese: *there is* e *there are*. In italiano we say **c'è** e **ci sono**.

Connor: **C'è** e **ci sono**.

Silvia: Molto bene.

Connor: Can you give me un esempio?

Silvia: Certo! Here we go, **ci sono** molte chiese in Italia.

Connor: **C'è** un'amica americana who lives in Roma.

Silvia: Keep going...

Connor: **C'è** un park next to my casa where **c'è** un lake. In the lake **ci sono** tre ducks.

Silvia: Benissimo! Let's experiment now with the same espressioni in the negative form: **non c'è** e **non ci sono**.

Connor: **Non c'è** un park next to my casa. **Non c'è** un lake. **Non ci sono** tre ducks.

Silvia: Let's make un viaggio virtuale a Roma... a Roma **c'è**...

Connor: A Roma **c'è** the Colosseo. A Roma **ci sono** molte vespe. A Roma **c'è** Castel Sant'Angelo... a Roma **c'è** the most romantica cosa in the world...

Silvia: Ah sì?

Connor: Sì! A Roma **c'è** una... fonte!

Silvia: You meant una fontana?

Connor: Sì! A Roma **c'è** Fontana di Trevi! I want to wade in it!

Silvia: **C'è** un problema.

Connor: Which problema?

Silvia: You can't wade into the Fontana di Trevi...

Connor: But the movie... film... **c'è** Anita Ekberg in the Fontana di Trevi! Why can't I do the same thing?

Silvia: Because that was un film, Connor. But, you are more than welcome to throw una moneta in the fontana and esprimere un desiderio to come back to Roma.

Connor: **Ci sono** molte monete in the Fontana di Trevi?

Silvia: It's filled with coins!

Connor: Silvia, I do not understand the **ci** in this espressione...

Silvia: **C'è** una ragione grammaticale... Let's say that è una ragione un po' complicata. For now we'll just practice **c'è** and **ci sono** without worrying too much about the grammatica... OK?

Connor: OK...

Silvia: We Italians have another parola per tradurre *there is* e *there are*. È the parola **ecco**, which is used to point out the existence of something in view. È invariabile e can be used with parole singolari o plurali.

Connor: **C'è** una parola nuova e... how did you say? Complicata?

Silvia: Non è complicata... let me give you un esempio. Siamo a Roma. I am strolling around the city on a sunny day... and suddenly... **Ecco!** I see the fiume Tevere shining in the distance e Castel Sant'Angelo!

Connor: **Ecco** un bellissimo dream!

Silvia: **Ci sono** molti sogni, but **ecco** una bella realtà: Roma!

Connor: **C'è** Roma e **ci sono** i sogni!

Silvia: I think you're making progress, Connor!

Expressions: Numbers and Idiomatic Expressions

Silvia: **Facciamo due chiacchiere** about the espressioni with numeri...

Connor: I'm sorry?

Silvia: **Fare due chiacchiere** means *let's chat a bit*.

Connor: Why due?

Silvia: That's because of the Briscola! Do you know the rules of the Italian card game named Briscola?

Connor: Nonno Giovanni e zio Luciano, his son, my zio, play that game all the time! They talk in a voce alta... They once had un litigio so loud that I thought the casa would collapse!

Silvia: I can imagine! So, in this Briscola game the **due di picche** è the lowest-point card, it really counts for nothing. Hence, due è sinonimo for a very small quantity.

Connor: Right! I remember nonno Giovanni saying "**il due di picche** mi ha dato!", which... I figured... something was wrong...

Silvia: Connor. Sì, completely wrong. **Dare il due di picche**, which could be translated literally as "to give the two of spades" has also another meaning, by the way. It is an informal expression that means "to not accept somebody's romantic advances"!

Connor: Veramente?

Silvia: Sì, è un'espressione molto comune in Italia.

Connor: Well, I hope I won't experience that!

Silvia: Ci sono molte espressioni idiomatiche italiane con i numeri... did you know that?

Connor: No, I didn't, but I always wondered why you say "**grazie mille!**".

Silvia: Well, **grazie mille** means "thank you very much" or "thanks a lot". It traces back to un fatto storico. As you may know, Giuseppe Garibaldi began the process of Italian unificazione by landing in Marsala, Sicily, l'11 maggio 1860. Along with him went a small esercito of mille uomini, a thousand men. As soon as they got ashore, he said "**Grazie, Mille!**" Hence, the current expression **grazie mille**.

Connor: È molto interessante, no?

Silvia: Giusto!

Connor: **Grazie mille**, Silvia! Facc.. how did you say to chat a bit?

Silvia: **Facciamo due chiacchiere**.

Connor: **Facciamo due chiacchiere** again soon?

Silvia: Sì, but senza **dare i numeri!**

Connor: Un'altra espressione italiana?

Silvia: Esattamente!