

Le parole sono importanti

A COLLECTION OF ITALIAN WORDS TO INSPIRE YOU

italearn
LEARN ITALIAN AT YOUR OWN PACE



Introduction

When you learn a new language, you find new ways of expressing yourself, even ways that you felt were not available to you in your native language. But it's not that easy to "feel" a foreign language as we do our native one. We have to learn with all the senses and be receptive to nuances. At Italearn I work a lot with words, but they are never in a void, they may be single words but they carry meanings and connections with them.

A basic vocabulary can take you anywhere, but there is always a time when you feel the need to go deeper in order to really articulate your thoughts. As all language learners know, words don't come when you need them. But we can train our minds to find those words, focus on them, make them ours. So we don't lose them.

It does take a long time to become an advanced speaker of a foreign language. And we're not patient because we learn a language to be able to talk about what interests us more. We want to "use" Italian, not just say we are learning it. We want to be able to share our feelings, our ideas, our beliefs without sounding superficial. And being able to really communicate in Italian.

All the words and idioms you find in this guide have been published on Instagram during the course of a few years. I decided to bring them all together in the form of a book so you don't have to scroll hundreds of posts and you can have all of them together in one place.

I hope you are not only inspired by these words, but also cuddled, welcomed, heard.

Some of the captions have been slightly edited compared to the original ones published on @silvia_italearn but I have kept the questions, so you can use them as reflection prompts.

Silvia

Spoilerare

Did you know you could use the word "spoiler" as a verb? In Italian we do. There are many English words that we adopt in the Italian language, in this case we add the verb suffix -are and a new word is born.

#sayititalian like this:

- Stasera mi guardo la nuova puntata di Trono di Spade, tu l'hai già vista? Sì! Allora non spoilerare! >> I'm watching the new Game of Thrones episode tonight, have you already seen it? Yes! Then no spoilers!

Finimondo

It's not the end of the world, but it does mean chaos, confusion, turmoil. We often use the verbs scoppiare and scatenare il/un finimondo. Examples:

- all'apertura del nuovo negozio c'era il finimondo = there was so much chaos at the opening of the new store
- oggi la pioggia ha scatenato il finimondo = today the rain has caused a lot of chaos

Can you think of more examples?

Merenda

Facciamo merenda? The time we were so looking forward to when we were little: the afternoon snack. Io comunque faccio merenda anche da grande 😊 I have my afternoon snack even as a grown up.

Mischia

This word in rugby means "scrum". There is also an idiom that we use a lot: "gettarsi/buttarsi nella mischia" which means "to enter the fray", to become involved in a fight, or an argument, or a competitive situation.

Spiccioli

Small change, spare change, coins.

Today's new word is SPICCIOLI that's a very common word in Tuscany and many other regions.

Some variations you can hear are: spicci, piccioli.

Examples:

- hai spiccioli per il parcheggio? Got any spare change for the pay & display parking? .
- ti offrirei un caffè, ma non ho più spiccioli. I'd buy you a coffee but I don't have any spare change not a good reason to not buy someone a coffee though).

Preludio

Prelude, introduction. It may sound a little vintage, but it is still used. It can also be used ironically when you want to sound formal in everyday conversations. You can hear it often in songs or poems about love. Examples:

- Dal preludio ho capito che mi avrebbe chiesto un favore. I understood from the intro that they were going to ask me a favor.
- Questo vento freddo è il preludio dell'inverno che sta arrivando. This cold wind is the prelude of the upcoming winter.

Mancino

Mancino = Left-handed

The feminine word is "mancina".

if you hear this phrase:

- giocare un tiro mancino

Yes, it is an idiom! And it means to play a dirty trick on somebody. There is also another version of this idiom: giocare un brutto tiro.

Qui pro quo

It comes straight from Latin (probably quid pro quo) and means "misunderstanding".
Literally: something for/instead of something else.

Example:

- c'è stato un qui pro quo, l'appuntamento era alle sei, non alle sette. // there was a misunderstanding, the appointment was at six, not at seven.

Infatuarsi

This word in Italian is somehow not too common anymore, but I find it very clear and to the point: it's that feeling you have when a sudden and inexplicable passion for someone grabs you in the stomach, makes you do and say silly things, and then, as inexplicably as it came, it goes.

Meaning: to feel passionate, crazy, about someone or something.

- Maria si era davvero infatuata di quel palestrato.

Who is a palestrato?? I'll tell you another time

Presuntuoso

I don't want to sound over-confident, pretentious, cocky, but this list of Italian words is the best thing you have ever read.

So that's your translation and example of today's word in Italian.

Assillante

What's more annoying than someone who constantly bothers you with their problems? in Italian this person is "assillante", pestering, annoying, nagging, insistent. You can also use this word to describe a thought or a concern that is always present in your mind.

Ritratto

This #awordinitalian means "portrait", it is used to indicate the representation of a person through a picture, a drawing, a sculpture, etc. And is also used in some fixed expressions:

- Francesca è il ritratto di sua madre = Francesca looks like her mother a lot.
- Gilda è il ritratto della salute = Gilda is the personification of health.
- Il giornalista ha fatto un ritratto realistico dell'incidente = the journalist has reported the accident in a very accurate way.

Impaziente

Non vedo l'ora che arrivi la primavera, sono impaziente!

This #awordinitalian means IMPATIENT, the meaning is the same in English and Italian // yay!!!

You can use IMPAZIENTE for both genders, masculine and feminine. The plural is IMPAZIENTI for both genders.

Smalto

The word SMALTO means nail polish, enamel, varnish, brilliance and can be used figuratively as in this sentence: non voglio perdere lo smalto/per non perdere lo smalto.

Examples:

- quale smalto vuoi? Quello rosso = which nail polish do you want? The red one.
- bisogna proteggere lo smalto dei denti = you need to preserve the teeth enamel.

Geloso

Jealous, if you like stereotypes about #italians, that's a word you want to remember.

In my example, I have shown the masculine form, but of course, there is also the feminine: gelosa.

Chi è geloso/a alzi la mano! Raise your hand if you are jealous!

Campionato

A very important word you need to know if you want to have a conversation with Italian men: CAMPIONATO = championship.

In Italy, campionato is mainly referred to football (soccer), but is used also for other sports.

Imbarazzante

I went out wearing two different shoes this morning, how embarrassing in front of my boss!

This is just an example, I would never do that ... or would I?

Imbarazzante means "embarrassing"

- uscire con due scarpe diverse è imbarazzante (per qualcuno!)
- il tuo amico ha la zip abbassata, dai è imbarazzante! = your friend has his pants unzipped, come on it's embarrassing!

Cosa è imbarazzante per te?

Arcobaleno

L'arcobaleno, uno dei fenomeni naturali più amati.

Rainbow #initalian is a compound name:

Arco = arch/bow

Baleno = lightning, flash, the arch that appears after the lightning.

There is a very common saying with the word baleno (which is not the masculine of balena - whale!): fare in un baleno = to do something very quickly, in the time of a lightning.

Orgoglio

Pride. A word you can either love or hate. It can have a positive connotation or a negative one.

How do you feel about this?

Follia

Folly, madness, insanity. I often give a positive connotation to this word, maybe I like how it sounds, or I associate it with songs that I like.

Here are some examples:

- Davvero vuoi andare a vivere in una foresta? E' una follia! Do you really want to go live in a forest? It's insane!
- Un pizzico di follia nella vita serve sempre. A pinch of madness is always useful in life. Fare una follia. Do something crazy.

Hai mai fatto una follia? Ma folle davvero

Personalità

The word "personalità" in Italian has two main meanings:

1. personality, character, behaviour.

Examples:

- Quella ragazza ha una personalità molto forte, supera tutte le difficoltà = that girl has such a strong personality, she overcomes all difficulties.
- Avere un disturbo della personalità = to have a personality disorder.

2. personality, notable person (sometimes also celebrity).

Examples:

- Al concerto ci sono tutte le personalità del mondo della musica milanese = at the concert there are all the personalities of the Milan music scene.
- La mostra sarà aperta da personalità come X and Y = the exhibition will be opened by notable people such as X and Y.

Grammar tip: personalità is feminine, but can also be used to describe men, and it is uncountable - this means you only have to modify the articles, adjectives, etc. according to the subject.

Sfumatura

So many possible translations for this word: shade, undertone, connotation, detail, nuance.

I like the light feeling of this word in Italian, I find it a very delicate word.

Some examples:

- questa sfumatura di giallo mi piace molto = I really like this shade of yellow.
- devi cogliere la sfumatura di significato = you need to catch the meaning connotation
- facciamo attenzione alle piccole sfumature = we notice the small nuances/details

Naturalezza

This is another of those words that I enjoy, yes, I like to use it and listen to it. It sounds soft.

It means naturalness and spontaneity.

When you do something so graciously that anyone can see it is natural for you, this is fare qualcosa con naturalezza in Italian.

Invenzione

A gift from brilliant minds: inventions.

Un'invenzione can be a single object or a general concept:

- questo attrezzo è una mia invenzione = this tool is my invention, I have devised and built this tool.
- l'invenzione della stampa in Europa risale al 1400 = the invention of printing in Europe dates back to 1400

As a young kid, I used to identify inventions with Gyro Gearloose (Archimede Pitagorico in Italy). Can you make any connection with this word?

Stupore

Lo stupore is a feeling that you cannot hide from your face. It is astonishment, wonder, surprise.

We probably don't say this word as much as we write it, but it is common though.

We use more the verb than the noun: stupire, or the reflexive stupirsi.

- stupire con effetti speciali
- il talento di questa ragazza stupisce
- mi stupisco di quanto sei migliorata
- cucini tu? Stupiscimi!

Passeggiare

So appropriate for this season (every season!) it's a verb that means to stroll, to walk
andare a fare una passeggiata = to go for a walk

Tu dove vai di solito a passeggiare?

Afa

If there is one word you can listen to everywhere in Italy in summer, it's this one:

AFA (fem.) It means muggy weather. Hot & humid weather that makes you want to live in a gelato

We often say:

- che afa!
- oggi è afoso

Here in Tuscany people say: "Mi fai afa" when someone is annoying or bothering you.

Marea

For me, this is another of those highly-evoking, romantic words that make Italian so rich.

It means "tide" and is very similar to the word MARE (sea). Another meaning is "multitude, large quantity", maybe not as evoking as tide?

La marea can be alta or bassa.

Divina

Divine, heavenly, perfect.

What can be divine?

- questa torta è semplicemente divina = this cake is simply divine
- la Divina Commedia

We can make this word into an adverb by adding -mente at the end:

- Sofia Loren è divinamente bella = she is heavenly beautiful
- questo vestito ti sta divinamente bene = you look amazing in this dress, it fits you perfectly

Who or what is divina in your life?

Cornetto

This is literally a small horn, but we use it to mean many other things.

The less common is cornetto as green bean/French bean, it's not called like that everywhere in Italy.

Meaning #2: a cornetto can be a hearing aid, an ear trumpet, this is also not too common.

And now the 3 main meanings:

Cornetto 1 = croissant

Cornetto 2 = horn-shaped pendant, the red one that looks like a chili pepper

Cornetto 3 = a cone gelato. Cornetto is a brand name, if you ask for a cornetto, they will give you that specific brand.

Costanza

Perseverance, resolution, consistency. There are several options if you want to translate this word into English, and all of them point in the same direction.

If you really want to learn Italian, make perseverance and consistency your best friends.

Motivation sometimes is not enough, you need a strategy that works for you and you need to keep going, day after day. Schedule your breaks along with your study time, and celebrate your success, big or small.

Have you found your strategy yet? Does it work?

Impegno

Such a complex word. Not just for its meaning (commitment, dedication), its pronunciation is difficult because you have two consonants combinations: ɪmpɪgn
Commitment is so important when you learn a language, but it doesn't mean that you have to study hours and hours every day.

Non fare né caldo né freddo

This is not my usual quote, but I thought that it's nice to also know how we talk, in real conversations. In Italian if something "non mi fa né caldo né freddo" it means that it doesn't cause any reaction, I don't care about it, it's not hot nor cold.

Partecipare

Partecipare means to take part, participate, contribute.
When you learn a language it's important that you are actively participating and contributing to lessons, conversations, and activities.
Don't let your fear of not being perfect take charge.

Fare finta di niente

We are experiencing very tough times lately, in the news we hear this a lot:

- Le persone fanno finta di niente

It means that people act as/pretend that nothing has happened

Abitudine

Habits are really important in language learning, when you have a routine in place everything is easier.

Make learning a habit. Even reading aloud city names on street signs is practicing the language, you don't have to sit at your desk for hours.

Take small, manageable steps that fit into your schedule naturally.

Avere da fare

Avere da fare means literally to have things to do, here is how you can use this phrase:

- ho da fare, non posso venire a cena con te (I'm busy, I can't have dinner with you).
- se non hai da fare stasera, andiamo al cinema? (If you are free/have nothing to do tonight, are we going to the cinema?).

Costruire

Costruire is a verb that means "to build". There are so many things you can costruire:

- Case
- Ponti
- Relazioni

What are you going to build over the weekend?

Non ho voglia

Oggi non ho voglia di lavorare, vorrei essere al mare, a leggere un libro sotto l'ombrellone.

Non avere voglia means that you don't want to do something, not for a specific reason, just because you don't want to, you're not in the mood for that.

- vieni a correre con me? No, non ho voglia.
- ci prendiamo un gelato? No, non ho voglia di dolci.
- non ho voglia di fare niente!

Chi non ha voglia di lavorare oggi alzi la mano! Raise your hand if you don't want to work today!

Volontà

Willpower is important in learning a language. It won't be enough alone though. This word can also be translated as "will" and when it is used to talk about someone's last will, it is a plural - le ultime volontà.

Some common fixed expressions:

- a volontà, as much as you want, in great quantity
- forza di volontà, willpower
- buona volontà, goodwill

Ti voglio bene

Ti voglio bene means "I love you". So what does "Ti amo" mean?

Well, it means... I love you!

So what's the difference then? In Italian we have two ways of expressing our love for other people.

Ti amo is reserved for romantic love, for passion, for lovers.

Ti voglio bene is used to express love and affection between people more in general, like between friends, parents and children, brothers and sisters, etc.

In the last few years, especially among younger generations, ti amo is being used a lot more between parents and children, and also between girl friends.

Fantasticare

This word is almost the opposite of willpower. Fantasticare means to daydream.

It's not that bad to daydream even if you have concrete goals, like learning Italian. I think having a dream can only reinforce your willpower.

Prendersi una pausa

It's ok to take a break, even if you have deadlines, with clients or with yourself.

Even if you decided to study hard every day and reach your language goal before the deadline. Prenditi una pausa. E un caffè. Or anything else that makes you smile.

Diario

Did you have a secret diary when you were younger? I did, but not for a long time. Many people re-discover journaling as adults, how about you? Would you recommend it?

In Italian, a secret journal is called un diario segreto.

Also, all students from elementary school to high school in Italy have a diario, it's an organizer where they note down their homework and it's also a piece of art because it's usually full of drawings, doodles, photos, etc.

Essere un caso umano

No one would really want to be a caso umano.

It's that kind of person people usually avoid at parties, at work, at the gym... everywhere.

But some other people, mostly women, actually like to take care of them.

A translation that gets closer to the Italian meaning is "charity case", though in Italian the

- being broke all the time, or
- relying on charity

meanings aren't really the best fit.

Some phrases you may hear Italians say:

- a lei piacciono solo i casi umani
- i casi umani li trovi tutti tu
- lascialo perdere, è un caso umano

Regalare

This is such a nice word, regalare, to give as a present.

Puoi regalare delle cose, delle emozioni, dei sogni (well this last example is something that only singers sing about).

Farsi le coccole

Winter is here, don't you just want to be snug in bed and cuddle?

I do!

Farsi le coccole means to cuddle.

Caminetto

I really wish my fireplace was clean and ready to light a fire, but it's become a home garden these days! The cold arrived over a night and so did snow in many regions of Italy, I'm sure that "il caminetto acceso" is on most people's minds this week!

Non vedo l'ora

This is one fixed sentence that's really useful when you want to express your excitement for something, it means "I can't wait".

Attrazione

Today's #awordinitalian is pretty straightforward: attraction. Also, the meaning is the same both in Italian and English. A little note on pronunciation: the sound of "z" is longer and stronger, but there isn't a double!

Fare scena muta

You know that feeling when you are supposed to say something, maybe it's an exam or an interview, but the words just don't come out? You dry up. In Italian, we say fare scena muta. This saying probably comes from theatre, when actors don't speak, they just act (literally they perform a silent/mute act).

Examples:

- com'è andato il colloquio? Malissimo, ho fatto scena muta.
- sono uscita con un ragazzo ieri sera, ma non ci uscirò più: ha fatto scena muta!

Passione

Today's word is another favorite of mine. Passion is something we are all born with, it's just that sometimes it's hard to let it surface. It's even harder to let it guide our actions. Qual è la tua passione, what are you passionate about? Una delle mie passioni è creare gioielli. E mangiare mi appassiona (this is not a common phrase, but using this verb instead of mi piace gives it a more personal meaning).

Buona fine e buon principio

Here's what #italianssay on the 31st and the days before. The word principio in this case is a synonym of inizio, beginning. How about you, do you have buoni propositi per il nuovo anno?

Inizio

Previously you learned a synonym of this word, principio, they both mean beginning, start. Inizio is definitely the one to use, it's far more common than principio.

È solo l'inizio

It's just the beginning. When it's the beginning of the year, time to set the tone, I want you to be a rebel. Don't let anyone judge how you speak, how many mistakes you make, how "foreign" you sound. Tell them: è solo l'inizio, wait and see.

Ricominciare

Ricominciare is the Italian for start again, re-start. Many times, when you learn a language, you have to start again. Life gets in the way so you can't be consistent all the time. What to do then? Just acknowledge that you are allowed to stop and do something else, and be willing to start again.

Mi serve un miracolo

I need a miracle. What else could I add? The intention here is everything, you decide what this phrase means according to... how you feel. I have heard many learners of Italian saying that only a miracle would help them learn the language, but even though speaking a foreign language is really more difficult for some people compared to others, no one needs a miracle. What you need is a plan. Unfortunately, there isn't a magic formula that works for everyone, we all learn and acquire new information in different ways so it's important to understand how we learn before planning. For example, if we know that our focus and concentration are high for a short time span, we won't plan long live lessons twice a week.

This is just an example, think about what you liked to do in school and you loathed, it's a good starting point.

Riavviare

Riavviare is a verb that means to start again, just like its synonym ricominciare.

You can

- riavviare il motore = re-start the engine
- riavviare il computer = re-start or relaunch your computer
- riavviare i negoziati = re-start or relaunch negotiations

Today, why not take the chance to restart something that you postponed for too long?

Ricomincio da zero

How many times have you felt that urgency to quit everything and start from scratch somewhere else? In Italian, we say ricominciare da zero (to start again from zero).

If you have started learning Italian more than once and always felt like you were never going to make it, don't be afraid to start from zero once again.

Ispirazione

Sometimes we only need a little inspiration to make our day flow again. I just love the moment when you catch that glimpse of you don't know what and you smile and feel so energized that you get back to work and don't even know what time is it when you stop. Inspiration can go a long way, I always try to follow her. What inspired you lately?

Fare il primo passo

This is one of the most difficult things to do, in most situations, especially if you are an introvert: taking the first step. For me the struggle is real! But every time I do take that first step I feel so good that I could almost get used to that. How about you? Fai il primo passo?

Maschera

#awordinitalian this time has something to do with Carnival - which is being celebrated throughout Italy this month [February] - and a lot to do with... people. It means mask. At Carnival parties we all wear masks, we also have the verb "mascherarsi" meaning to wear a costume, and I find there is a positive vibe when I associate this word with this time of year. But the rest of the time, no. I tend to give it a negative feeling as I connect it to wearing a mask to hide who we truly are. What are your thoughts about this?

A carnevale ogni scherzo vale

How many times have I heard this idiom? I must confess I hated it! When I was little I was extremely shy and I didn't like to play with kids I didn't know or who loved "action" games - like hide and seek for example (yes, I consider hide and seek an action game) and of course, I didn't quite enjoy it when people played pranks on me. But at Carnival? Jokes are all the fun, and they are allowed exactly because it's Carnival. That's the meaning of today's Italian idiom.

Coriandoli

It's still Carnival, even if it officially ended yesterday (martedì grasso). So, to get ready for your next party, you should buy a few packages of coriandoli. In English, you call them confetti. While researching for this post I finally discovered why coriandoli are called confetti in English. The word coriandolo also means coriander (cilantro). A few centuries ago, people used to throw sugar-coated coriander grains, a version of Italian confetti, at carnival parties.

Now confetti are no longer made with coriander and they are no longer thrown in the air to celebrate. Mostly they are made of almonds or chocolate covered in sugar. So here is why we call those little paper circles coriandoli and why you call them confetti in English.

Oh, io ci provo

It's almost May (how did we get here so fast??) and I love it! The days are so bright, warm, and full of lightness that I say: oh, io ci provo!

- ci provo - means I'm going to try. I know there are risks, but you know what? I'm gonna do it.

Most times you won't need to say it aloud, it's a promise you make to yourself to at least try. Whisper it in your ear when you are unsure about what to do, then take the plunge. And enjoy it.

My promise to myself (and to you!): post more Italian wisdom, more regularly. Oh, io ci provo, ma voi fatevi sentire! (I'll try to do that, but you gotta show up too!).

Orto

If you sowed well, now it's time to reap the results. In May vegetable gardens (orti) are starting to give us some of the most amazing fruits of summer (feels like summer here in Italy, just not today). I wish I had my own orto, but I still need to learn a lot about gardening so for now I'll just stick to herbs and chilies. This is for you, Italian language student who feels it's too late to start this year: no-no. Start planting your seeds. You'll see the results in a little while.

Cambiamenti

Love them? Hate them? I like changes. I've been through so many in the past few months. How I feel now is still uncertain, I'm just trying to live through all these changes, staying afloat when things are bad, dolphin-ing away when things are better. Or vice versa.

È più forte di me

You know that thing you really cannot stop doing? For no real reason (or for very deep reasons that you can't accept) just because you can't help it? This is what #italianssay: è più forte di me (literally, it is stronger than me).

Novità

I always feel a certain pleasure when there is something new. Sometimes my optimistic side surfaces and I assign a positive meaning to the word novità. Now, this word can translate two slightly different meanings, tell me if it makes sense:

- Any news? Ci sono novità?
- What's this new [haircut, shorts, way of speaking, rules of the house, dinner, etc.]?
Cos'è questa novità?

The word news is novità in Italian, but depending on the context it is notizie:

- Today's news = le notizie di oggi.

One last note: novità is both a singular and plural word: una novità, molte novità.

Che mi tocca sentire

Oh, the things one has to listen to! I say this all the time. I know it may sound like I think I am the beneficiary of innate knowledge about everything, but. Just because we have the opportunity to tell the world what we think about everything, it doesn't mean we have to actually do it.

Annoiarsi

Getting bored happens to me all the time, I think it's become a distinctive feature of mine. But I found a positive side to getting bored: I escape from boredom by creating something new, by starting a new side project, by cooking something more elaborate than a lettuce salad. Grammar-wise you need to know that this verb is reflexive, so you have to use a specific pronoun:

(io) Mi annoio

(tu) Ti annoi

(lui/lei) Si annoia

(noi) Ci annoiamo

(voi) Vi annoiate

(loro) Si annoiano

Usage note:

annoiarsi a morte, to get extremely bored as in

- questa festa non mi piace, mi annoio a morte.
- tu cosa fai quando ti annoi?

Ah, ma davvero?

When I say that grammar alone is not going to help you really learn a language, this is what I mean. If you only look with the eyes of grammar you may not get the meaning of this phrase immediately, but if you wait for a second and teleport it into the world of spoken Italian you can spot a similarity with English. And that's helpful sometimes because not all words are #falsefriends Oh. Really?

Immaginazione

How many times did they tell you: use your imagination? I have heard it a lot and I have taken it seriously: I use my imagination all the time. Everything I do for my business begins with a little imagination and slowly becomes something real. Next time someone tells you to use your imagination, do it for real!

Non ci posso credere!

In the last few years, and especially in the last few months, I have said this almost every day - in my mind and aloud. I can't believe it. What? it can't be true. No way.

Needless to say, when you pronounce these words, what you can't believe has already happened.

Fingere

Be real, be spontaneous, be yourself. This is what I see the most in my feed lately, and if we have something in common I think you are seeing the same. But what does it really mean? Is it enough to post unfiltered selfies to show your authenticity? Is it ok to caption with words that come out of our brains without our mind's mediation to show how real we are? How much are we allowed to fake? Fingere, pretending. Grammar note: to pretend is fingere, pretendere is to strongly demand/require.

A saperlo...

How I wish I had known before! At least 50% of the times we say this we are also creating a nice excuse, go figure. A saperlo/a saperlo prima, when used at the beginning of a sentence requires a conditional verb in the second part. This can be a little difficult for beginners so you may want to learn a little trick to avoid the use of a more advanced verb mood and tense: start with the main sentence, for example "Non ho visto l'offerta e ho pagato il prezzo pieno" (I didn't see the offer and I paid the full price) then add "A saperlo" It will sound like a sad commentary and it will automatically imply that you would have acted otherwise had you known before.

Bellezza

They say beauty is in the eye of the beholder, la bellezza è nell'occhio di chi guarda. Sometimes, when our own eyes are closed, or our vision is blurred by tears, we can borrow someone else's beauty.

Tocca a me

This is something Italians say a lot but it does not have a literal translation, it has nothing to do with touching, it means "it's my turn", and "it's on me". When followed by another verb it can take the meaning of "it's up to me now" as in "tocca a me scegliere il ristorante". So don't be afraid to use it, it does not involve any physical action!

Tocca a me

Tocca a te

Tocca a lei

etc. you get the gist!

Romanticismo

I don't know exactly which mental connections led me to choose this word, I am the most unromantic person in the world! But it's here, so we'd better learn something about it, right? See how this word ends? Not just the last letter, you need to go back a little more: -ismo is the part we want to analyze. When you find a word that ends like that, it's always an abstract word. Now, tell me (in Italian of course!) one thing that you associate with romanticismo.

Lo sapevo

"I knew it!" I'm sure you're reading it in your mind with either a self-satisfaction feeling or a hopelessness feeling. These are the two main circumstances in which we use this expression. There is of course a less emotionally charged context which is simply answering to the question "Lo sapevi?" (did you know it?).

Vulnerabile

Is being vulnerable good or bad for you?

If you look for synonyms both in English and Italian you will find words like:

attaccabile, debole, esposto, fragile, indifeso / assailable, weak, exposed, fragile, defenseless.

So you could think that being vulnerable is probably bad for you.

But what do you do when you feel fragile and defenseless? You create boundaries. No one will be able to enter, but you will be able to get outside, and what you bring outside with you is your renewed strength. Can we talk about vulnerability in language learning? I think so. It's very easy to become discouraged, to let frustration take too much space. We see our weaknesses without difficulty and we'd rather give up than feel under attack - by the dark forces of languages :) It's at this moment that we realize that there are no dark forces of languages, so we can come out of the cave and give it another try.

What do you do when you feel most vulnerable (in language learning!)?

I hope you have enjoyed this list of words and learned something new that made you smile.

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