EDITED BY

Marco Tamburelli and Mauro Tosco

Contested Languages

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Contested Languages. The hidden multilingualism of Europe
Edited by Marco Tamburelli and Mauro Tosco

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The hidden multilingualism of Europe

Edited by

Marco Tamburelli
Bangor University

Mauro Tosco
University of Turin

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Introduction

CHAPTER 1

What are contested languages and why should linguists care?

Marco Tamburelli and Mauro Tosco
Bangor University / University of Turin

The literature on regional and minority languages has seen strong developments in recent years, and new frontiers have been opened on issues of minority language planning and development as well as on issues of speakers' rights. Nevertheless, there are many varieties that are left in a sort of "linguistic limbo" within both the public and the academic domain. These are varieties that likely qualify as regional languages from an *Abstand* perspective (Kloss 1967), but are typically treated as "dialects" or "patois" by their respective governments, by many of their speakers and often by linguists, who typically cite the low sociolinguistic status for their terminological choice. In this chapter we discuss the characteristics of these "contested languages", what underlies their "contestedness" and how they differ from the more widely accepted regional and minority languages. Specifically, we discuss how the very notion of regional "language" presupposes the notion "language" in opposition to that of regional "dialect", though this supposed distinction is hardly ever tackled in any depth by the mainstream literature on regional and minority languages. Furthermore, we argue that the widespread, purely socio-political view of what qualifies as a "language" is untenable as well as undesirable in a discipline that, like linguistics, is also concerned with the structural and communicative properties of its subject matter as well as with objectivity and scientific inquiry. Throughout the chapter, we bring to the fore the need for a discussion of the notion of "language" with a focus on regional varieties and reject the supposedly sociolinguistic nature of the distinction between regional "languages" and regional "dialects".

1. What are contested languages?

In a nutshell, contested languages are languages that are generally listed in international language catalogues and atlases (e.g., they are duly reported in *Ethnologue*, have an unambiguous ISO 639 code, and many of them are listed in the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger), but that have not attained any reasonable

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degree of official political recognition by the states within which they are spoken. Although contested languages are in some sense minority languages and are generally endangered, they are not coterminous with either minority or endangered languages: minority languages that enjoy some amount of recognition, "protection,"[1] or support escape contestedness by definition. Many endangered languages also benefit from some recognition, and are therefore not contested. While many contested languages are at risk of disappearing and therefore also qualify as endangered languages, their endangered status is perpetuated partly because of their contestedness (see Section 2 of this volume).

As a consequence of the scarce or non-existent interest and recognition from official government bodies, contested languages are often disregarded by the literature on regional and minority languages. This trend is exemplified by the volume "The Other Languages of Europe" (Extra and Gorter 2001): while the authors purport to focus on 'all those languages apart from the eleven official languages that are ignored in public and official activities of the EU' (2001: 1), all of the languages included in the volume enjoy some form of institutional recognition. For instance, the volume lists Friulan – a language that is protected under Italian state law – among the Regional Languages of Italy, but does not list, for example, Piedmontese (ISO 639–3 pms), which is not recognised under the same Italian state law. The exclusion of languages like Piedmontese in the literature on "regional and minority" languages is in keeping with a political and sociolinguistic definition of what qualifies as a "language", a perspective that is pervasive in the literature (see Tamburelli 2014 for an overview). Such tendency is paradoxical if we consider that a principal *raison d'être* for the interest in minority languages is their study, fostering and development.

This tendency to disregard contested languages is often perpetuated by appealing to the genealogic proximity between contested languages and the official languages of the nation-state(s) in which they are spoken (e.g. Benincà and Haiman 2005; see also the concept of "attack" in Trudgill 1992). However, this is potentially misleading, as it is well known that contested languages have a good level of *Abstand* (Kloss 1967) separating them from their respective state language(s) (see for example Ammon 1989). Furthermore, a number of contested languages have a distinct written literary tradition and display some level of standardisation and corpus planning (usually not the product of binding or semi-binding entities such as state-mandated or state-sponsored institutions).

Nevertheless, these languages are regularly referred to as "dialects" or "patois" in everyday discourse as well as in academic contexts, though some authors have

1. Protection is different from recognition or downright support, though it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what a language is protected from and how.

occasionally used the terms "disputed languages" (Craith 2000) or "debated languages" (Ammon 2006).

Indeed, it is not uncommon for researchers to acknowledge that many so-called "dialects" or "patois" are in fact languages from a purely *Abstand* perspective, while at the same time continuing to reserve the term "language" only for those varieties that happen to enjoy political recognition from governmental institutions (e.g. Benincà and Price 2000; van der Auwera and Baoill 1998, among many others). Reasons for doing so do not necessarily include any ideological commitment on the part of linguists: simple adherence to a local tradition and the supposed need to be "easily understood" can be rightly invoked. Yet, following a tradition for tradition's sake does not seem to be the wisest course of action; it is certainly not the most scientifically minded one. Moreover, in these cases a note stating the reasons behind one's terminological choices would do the job. Sadly, however, this is often not the case. Examples of this tendency can be found in a wide range of linguistic sub-disciplines, including those that are unconcerned with sociolinguistic questions. This potentially perpetuates the issue of "language contestedness" across the broader discipline and depresses the consciousness of language diversity among both linguists and the general public (cf. Tosco 2017).

If the chasm separating the contested and the officially recognised languages is belittled or ignored, it is no wonder that contested languages typically receive little mention in linguistic reports on bi- and multilingualism, with their speakers systematically reported as "monolingual" (in the national language) even though they communicate daily in both the national language and a contested language. Situations of this kind can be found in many Western European countries such as Italy, Germany and France, and present researchers with an ontological as well as a terminological problem whereby the term "dialect" is used to indicate two radically different and irreconcilable concepts. On the one hand, the term "dialect" is widely used to refer to linguistic dialects, namely varieties closely related to, and with a minor degree of linguistic distance from, the national language of which they are dialects. On the other hand, the term may also be found to refer to varieties that are or have been in a diglossic relationship with a national language but that are neither particularly linguistically close to nor necessarily mutually comprehensible with that national language or its linguistic dialects. The recent development of new, local varieties of the national languages of Europe (cf. Auer 2005) adds further layers of complexity to an already sufficiently complicated picture.

These considerations take us all the way to the time-honoured "language v. dialect" debate, which in much current academic literature is approached from an almost exclusively sociolinguistic perspective, and, more specifically, from the perspective of "*Ausbau*-ization" (Fishman 2008; Tosco 2008): any variety which has been "*Ausbau*-ized" becomes a "language," irrespective of its linguistic distance

from neighbouring varieties in structural and/or communicative terms. As for non-*Ausbau*-ized varieties, they are "languages" in one of two cases: either they have been declared to be so by government authorities, or they are deemed to be so under the tacit proviso that lack of relevant data prevents linguists from being more specific on their structural diversity from neighbouring varieties (this is the situation in most of the world's countries). Examples of these cases abound: alongside others, Francoprovençal has been dubbed a language in Italy despite the fact that no *Ausbau* variety has ever developed. Of course, the legion of "national languages" which are duly acknowledged in many constitutions (especially in non-European countries) alongside generally one single "official language" (usually the former colonial language) are cases in point. This single fact is enough to prevent them from being dubbed "dialects" in official and academic discourse, and notwithstanding their subordinate sociolinguistic status.

In order to sustain the claim that the distinction between dialects and language is fruitless, recourse is often made to the presence of continua and the widespread idea that dialect chains make intelligibility unusable as a criterion for establishing "languageness." As with links in a chain, each linguistic variety is mutually intelligible with the adjoining varieties, but differences accumulate over geographic distance, with intelligibility decreasing as more intervening varieties are considered, until it finally disappears. Consequently, it is usually presumed that any "language" separation in the dialect chain is therefore arbitrary. This view is so popular among linguists that it is invariably repeated in any freshman course in linguistics (e.g. Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams 2013) as well as in any review concerned with the dialect/language distinction. Thus, Edwards (2018: 17) opens a very recent discussion on nonstandard dialects by acknowledging how "difficult definitions and distinctions can be," immediately followed by the issue of dialect continua. Doing so enables him to then mention the case of Chinese dialects/languages (where degrees of *Abstand* are demonstrably very large, e.g. Tang and van Heuven 2009) in an article devoted essentially to the nonstandard dialects of English (where *Abstand* is rather limited): once again, the substantial *Abstand* differences are ignored and the matter is assumed to be entirely the domain of sociolinguistics. As a result of this position, Edwards' definition that '[n]onstandard dialects, in a word, are those that have not received the social imprimatur given to standard forms' (Edwards 2018: 19) can be easily construed to unite African American English with Cantonese and, perhaps unwittingly, the great majority of the world's languages.

The fact that languages can still be counted even in situations of dialect continua – as mathematically demonstrated by Hammarström (2008) – does not seem to register in a science like linguistics, which has so desperately fallen in love with variation that it apparently forgot that, in order to discuss change, we must first identify the subjects of change. In order to talk about X and Y changing, veering

towards each other or giving way to Z, we must first identify X, Y and Z. In line with this, it may be worth noting that the problem of continua is by no means unique to linguistics: it is also well-known, for example, in biology (e.g. Nicholson and Wilson 2003). However, it is linguists who often seem particularly zealous in throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

The fallacious idea of the impossibility of language identification (and, by extension, language counting) goes hand in hand with, or perhaps is actually based upon, the commonly held view that all borders are alike. Since one cannot conceive of political borders without taking into account sovereignty, itself one of the cornerstones of the nation-state and therefore a relatively recent political and ideological phenomenon, linguistic borders must necessarily be a construct of linguistics, itself a product of the 19th century and its hubris of imposing categories, names and labels. Reality, especially social reality, we are told, is by necessity fuzzy (a view that has been strongly held among many dialectologists, e.g. Chambers and Trudgill 1998). Languages do not exist: they are a figment of our imagination (e.g. Makoni 2005); or they do exist, but only as a result of a political act (e.g. Pennycook 2007): ways of speech, writing and style are made into a language by power holders and court intellectuals. As scientists – so the story goes – we should rather be content with recording endless variation and continuous change, and use the names of specific languages as nothing more than convenient tags, or maybe as attractors around which reality permanently fluctuates (e.g. Reagan 2004). Credit must be given to Pennycook (2006: 67) for following this line of reasoning to its logical consequences: after having defined language as 'a pernicious myth,' he goes on to question the "grand narratives:" in the absence of languages, it does not actually make much sense to talk of "language" rights or "language" policy.

In such an approach, the word "language" is therefore not applied as a result of a conscious, data-driven attempt to measure "languageness" on its own terms and without resorting to external factors. Quite the contrary, the general consensus is that 'languages' and 'dialects' are basically social constructs and as such they are definable only in terms of socio-political status and breadth of use (e.g. Chambers and Trudgill 1998; Görlach 1985; Janson 2002; Lepschy 2002; Pennycook 2007; among many others). This view, which effectively puts *Ausbau* considerations at the centre of the entity "language," is essentially an implementation of the well-known statement that 'a language is a dialect with an army' (Weinreich 1954: 13).[2] However, as Nunberg (1997: 675) puts it:

2. Although often credited to Max Weinreich, who would have heard it (not come up with it himself) in the Second World War years and then published it first in an article in Yiddish in 1945, the quip has a long and disputed history. Other possible authors include linguist Antoine Meillet, literary theorist Viktor Shklovsky and even the French general Hubert Lyautey.

> That's the trouble with that "dialect with an army" joke: what it comes down to is simply saying that the question is not our pigeon. […] But if linguists don't speak to that question, who will?

Indeed, by focussing almost entirely on *Ausbau* considerations, linguists have given up their role in defining their object of investigation and delegated it to the communities of speakers and, more often than not, to politicians (see Tamburelli, this volume, for a more detailed discussion). As both groups have basically no interest in the structural diversity of human languages (perhaps rightly so),[3] the result is a hodgepodge of criteria (see also Brasca, this volume).

As Tamburelli (2014) reminds us, this has not always been the case: there was a time in language studies when the assessment and measurement of the structural, inherent diversity between different "ways of speaking" was at least attempted. In relation to this, it is quite telling that languages such as Francoprovençal and the Rhaeto Romance languages, which historically score very low on *Ausbau*-ization, are sometimes called "linguist's languages" (e.g. Benincà and Haiman 2005) in opposition to just (normal? politician's?) "languages". This peculiar terminological distinction arises from two important points:

- there is a strong tendency to identify languages on the basis of socio-political considerations (i.e. *Ausbau*) rather than on linguistic criteria (i.e. *Abstand*), to the extent that examples of the latter case are taken as "marked";
- linguists have indeed been able to identify languages without relying on socio-political criteria, and have done so successfully on various occasions, Francoprovençal and Rhaeto Romance being just two examples.

The need to objectively assess language diversity through the application of *Abstand* criteria is explicitly advocated in Tamburelli (2014) and Tosco (2011, 2017). Specifically, it is our contention that

- one may define dialects and languages on purely structural and communicative terms, irrespective of the use of these and similar terms ("vernaculars," "patois," etc.) in sociolinguistics and other disciplines;
- the opposition between dialects and languages is scalar rather than discrete, and
- this scalar opposition can be measured by taking into account *Abstand* considerations, such as the degree of mutual comprehensibility and/or the degree of linguistic distance (e.g. lexical, phonological, morphological etc.) between varieties.

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3. The lack of interest in structural diversity by speakers and the general public is explicitly advocated as a reason for neglecting matters of language death by Joseph (2004). Cf. Tosco (2017) for a rebuttal.

For example, Tamburelli (2014) measured the distance between Italian (ita) and Lombard (lmo) using a sentence comprehension test and validated the linguistic status of Lombard as a (contested) *Abstand* language, despite its sociolinguistic subordination to Italian. Similar work has been carried out on the so-called Chinese "dialects" (Tang and van Heuven 2009) while Gooskens and Heeringa (2004) have used phonetic distance measurements to consolidate the linguistic status of Frisian as a separate *Abstand* language from Dutch, despite the fact that Frisian is both related and sociolinguistically subordinate to Dutch.

Tosco (2017) has stressed the link between a "language-internal" definition of language and a full realisation of the extent of language diversity (and the threats it faces) around the globe.

The next section will explore in fuller detail this schism in linguistics, where on the one hand there seems to be a belief that *Ausbau* is the only viable dimension along which "languages" can be defined, and on the other hand important sub-disciplines rely specifically (though not always overtly) on the concept of linguistic distance (i.e., *Abstand*).

2. *Ausbau*-centrism

Ausbau-centrism is the widespread mainstream view that – when dealing with linguistic continua – 'languages' and 'dialects' cannot be identified through linguistic means; they are social constructs definable only in terms of socio-political status and breadth of use. This essentially equates 'language' with '*Ausbau* language' (Kloss 1967), giving a central role to social construction (Blommaert 2005) or *Ausbau*-ization (Fishman 2008; Tosco 2008): the process through which a specific variety within a continuum is socially elevated through systematic status, corpus, and acquisition planning and subsequently becomes a 'standardised tool of literary expression' (Kloss 1967: 69) within a polity (which more often than not is a nation-state). This leads to a schism within linguistics, where two opposing and potentially irreconcilable positions emerge. On the one hand, the mainstream position in general linguistics is that *Ausbau* is the only viable dimension along which "languages" can be defined. Hence Lombard or Platt are typically referred to as "dialect clusters" due to their relatively low level of *Ausbau* compared to their national counterparts, Italian and German respectively, despite the fact that they are linguistically rather distant from the languages they are supposedly dialects of. This view percolates down to the press and is largely taught in schools (and more often than not in undergraduate linguistics courses). In the press and in layman views it is often associated with notions of "grammar" (i.e., prescriptive grammar,

primarily orthography) and, even more fundamentally, to writing as the core criterion of languageness.

On the other hand, however, there are important sub-disciplines that rely specifically (though not always overtly) on the concept of linguistic distance (i.e. *Abstand*). For example, language surveying / enumeration and linguistic classification (see for example Li 2004; McMahon & McMahon 2005). It is this schism, together with the shortcomings of *Ausbau*-centric linguistics, that lead to the concept of Contested Languages and that this volume aims to bring to the fore.

3. What is the contribution of this volume?

This volume aims to analyse a number of cases of language contestedness as well as potential paths towards full recognition of contested languages in both the public and academic sphere. It consists mainly of a selection of papers from the conference "Contested Languages in the Old World-2 (CLOW2)" which was organised by the editors and held at the University of Turin on 5th and 6th May 2016. The volume addresses cases of contested languages with a focus on Italy, while also discussing Poland, France, and Latvia. The focus on Italy is not accidental: Italy has a relatively large number of regional languages (32 according to the UNESCO Atlas) paired with a tradition of monolingual policy, linguistic discrimination, and continuous failure to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (as well as, in academia, the general misuse of *Ausbau* criteria; see Brasca, this volume), all of which leads to numerous cases of language contestedness.

As editors, we tried to locate language contestedness within the broader concerns around the study of language: Marco Tamburelli links it squarely to linguistic rights, their definition and denial. He argues that reliance on *Ausbau* criteria and on speakers' perception as the arbiters of "languageness" unwittingly turns language policy into a tool for the perpetuation of the *status quo* (i.e. the politician's languages), making many regional languages invisible (i.e. turning them into Contested Languages), thus strengthening hegemonic discourse and practices and ultimately hindering linguistic emancipation.

Mauro Tosco addresses the question of whether democracy accommodates minorities more easily than other forms of government and other political ideologies. The answer is generally negative, and it is built upon, on the one hand, the linguistic consequences that civic bonds and shared economic interests have on local differences; and, on the other hand, on the very egalitarian and redistributive ethos of democracy, which stigmatises any symbol of separatedness and diversity and works towards their demise. The question remains, of course, open.

The chapters in Section 2 discuss the identification and perception of contestedness in greater detail.

In 'Mixing methods in linguistic classification,' Lissander Brasca delves into what may at first seem a purely terminological and classificatory debate: where do Gallo-Italic languages of Northern Italy stand in a genealogical tree of Romance? While the traits which distinguish these languages from the rest of Romance are well-known and unanimously recognised, they are classified by different authors as 'Gallo-Romance' – i.e., as a part of Western Romance (alongside the Romance varieties of France and the Iberian peninsula) – or as 'Italo-Romance', which entails an Eastern Romance classification. The second solution is favoured, and it is actually standard practice, in Italy. In his contribution, Brasca successfully shows how the Italian dialectological tradition has misused the Klossean distinction of *Abstand* vs. *Ausbau* for classificatory purposes. According to Brasca, this is a classic example of nationalistic drives engendering dangerous biases in science, with the added result of "changing" bona-fide languages into dialects and further muddling the research on the complex linguistic landscape of Italy.

In 'The cost of ignoring degrees of Abstand in defining a regional language: evidence from South Tyrol', Mara Leonardi and co-editor Marco Tamburelli offer empirical evidence that highlights the importance of recognising contestedness. While the language rights of the Germanic-speaking population of South Tyrol are recognised by the Italian government, is the ensuing Italian-German bilingualism – as maintained by the government and according to *Ausbau*-centric classifications – grounded in the linguistic reality of South Tyrol? Or is the local Bavarian variety, commonly referred to as a 'dialect,' so distant from Standard German that speaking of trilingualism would be more empirically accurate? The authors use an implementation of the intelligibility criterion to demonstrate that the degree of *Abstand* between Standard German and South Tyrolean Bavarian leads to noticeable effects in the linguistic performance of South Tyrolean children, a result which they suggest is both avoidable and unnecessary if we move away from *Ausbau*-centric views of language.

In the third instalment of this section, 'Deconstructing the idea of language: the effects of the *patoisation* of Occitan in France,' Aurélie Joubert traces the history, meanings and uses of the word *patois*. Ubiquitous in the French (and francophone) linguistic discourse, the success of this word goes hand in hand with the implementation of a language policy promoting French not only as the sole language, but also as the very embodiment of a nation-state. Slowly percolating from official ideologies to the everyday speech of the speakers (even of Occitan and other minority languages) and their attitudes towards their own forms of speech, *patoisation* remains a prime example of the destructive force of nation-states and

their ideologies, highlighting, in the author's words, 'the connection between macro language policies and socio-psychological self-evaluation of speakers.'

We move to quantitative sociological analysis with Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska and Claudia Soria in 'Surveying the ethnolinguistic vitality of two regional collateral languages: the case of Kashubian and Piedmontese.' The chapter discusses the results of a joint Polish-Italian research project aiming at assessing the vitality of two regional languages: Kashubian in Poland and Piedmontese in Italy. Ethnolinguistic vitality is measured by the authors through a questionnaire evaluating 1. *self-assessment* of language competences (oral and written production, understanding and comprehension); 2. language *use*, both actual and perceived, in different contexts and with different interlocutors; 3. *intergenerational transmission;* 4. *desire and language attitudes*, assessing the relation between language and identity, perceived attitudes of non-speakers and usefulness of the language; 5. *awareness* of the language's status and its effectiveness; and 6. *stigma*, i.e., awareness of discrimination. Although Kashubian is presently recognised while Piedmontese is not, the research shows that, when speakers have their say, they essentially regard their own speech as a dialect, and the index of ethnolinguistic vitality is low in both cases, and even consciousness about the maintenance of the language is weak. In short, according to the authors, current accounts of language vitality for Kashubian and Piedmontese overestimate the importance of the number of speakers over speakers' attitudes, and the lack of awareness of their language contestedness.

Emanuele Miola takes a closer look at the writing behaviour of users of a partially *Ausbau*-ized contested language in 'Contested orthographies: taking a closer look at spontaneous writing in Piedmontese.' Although it can boast a relatively standardised orthography (at least as far as contested languages go), Piedmontese writing never went beyond a restricted circle of artists and activists. Laypeople trying to write it, as is increasingly the case on the internet, are prone to following the orthographic norms of the language of schooling, namely Italian. In order to accommodate this usage, orthographic reforms and revisions were proposed in the early 2000s, albeit unsuccessfully. The author, in his thorough analysis of spontaneous writing, shows how naïve writers tend to adhere closely to Standard Italian orthographic choices when writing Piedmontese. In so doing, they make use of only a restricted number of allographic choices and do not adhere to a strictly phonemic writing nor to any planned orthography. Their behaviour, far from unique, is consistent with what writers of other contested languages of Italy do when trying to graphically represent phonemes that are not part of the Italian inventory.

The last chapter in this section is 'Revitalising contested languages: the case of Lombard,' where Paolo Coluzzi, Lissander Brasca and Simona Scuri discuss the ongoing standardisation of Lombard, a contested language that has recently been the object of a Regional law aimed at its protection. A good deal of attention is

devoted to the issue of creating a polynomic writing system able to suit the speakers of different dialects and aimed at achieving a written standard while avoiding the pitfalls or raising a "single dialect" to *Ausbau* status in the standardisation process.

Section 3 shifts the focus to a variegated picture of grassroots experiences and projects. The authors are in a few cases not academic scholars but people from various backgrounds brought together by their involvement in language maintenance and revitalisation. Their experiences, problems and suggestions must be listened to attentively by any linguist who cares for language revitalisation and, to repeat Fishman's felicitous catchphrase, about "reversing language shift."

Language and community strengthening lie at the core of Musumeci's 'Community-based language strengthening: bringing Sicilian folk-tales back to life,' where the author presents a blueprint for an interdisciplinary, community based project aimed at the valorisation of Sicilian, a contested language that is still actively spoken but utterly neglected in the socio-political domains. Musumeci's plan starts from current local social activities and revolves around theatre, local resources, and participatory community involvement.

In 'Teaching Piedmontese: a Challenge?' Nicola Duberti and co-editor Mauro Tosco report on a teaching experience of a contested language, Piedmontese, at university level. A 36-hours-long introduction to the language and its writing has been active at the University of Turin since the academic year 2015–16. Elsewhere, expatriate linguist and Piedmontese activist Gianrenzo Clivio (Turin, 1942 – Toronto, 2006) was assigned in 1964 to teach Piedmontese at Brandeis University (Waltham, Massachusetts). Much later, around ten years ago, extracurricular courses were inaugurated at the Faculty of Languages of the University of Córdoba (Argentina), where a large community of Piedmontese speakers emigrated and, to a certain extent, the language is still spoken. As is typical of contested languages in general, the situation is worse *in situ*, and in Turin Piedmontese has been and still is the object of many university classes, especially in Romance Philology and Italian Dialectology (sic!), but never under the label "Piedmontese," let alone "Piedmontese language." The authors argue that teaching a "dialect" *per se*, and even more so under the label of "language," borders on *lèse-majesté*, as shown by the fact that in Turin the classes go under the name of "Piedmontese Laboratory," politely avoiding any reference to the language/dialect issue.

Andrea F. D. Di Stefano's 'Publishing a grammar and literature anthology of a contested language: an experience of crowdfunding' also deals with Piedmontese, but from an entirely novel perspective, namely the involvement of the public at large in language matters, asking how contested languages fare when big projects, recognition and law are set aside and laypeople are directly asked to fund initiatives out of their own pocket. Not bad at all, answers Di Stefano, who raised enough money to publish a grammar and a literary anthology of Piedmontese. The author concludes

that social networking and crowd funding are able to reach the potential users of endangered language material in many unexpected ways. This is particularly important in the case of contested languages where, by definition, no government support is available.

In 'Which Sardinian for education? The chance of CLIL-based laboratories: a case study,' Federico Gobbo and Laura Vardeu comment on the ongoing and difficult standardisation of Sardinian, a language whose vitality, as is so often the case, seems to be inversely proportional to recognition by law and efforts at standardisation. Trying to cope with an early demise of the language among schoolchildren, the regional government "issued" in 2006 a common written standard, the *Limba Sarda Comuna* ("Common Sardinian Language," LSC). Although LSC remains highly contested, the chapter reports on a successful pilot experiment in which Sardinian was used at school both orally (in the local variety) and in written form (LSC, for the didactic material).

In the fourth and last Section, 'Beyond contested languages: when contestedness creeps in,' Christopher Moseley, in his short but informative contribution 'Citizenship and nationality: the situation of the users of revived Livonian in Latvia,' takes us on a fascinating journey through the end and the possible new life of Livonian: through its difficult existence under different political regimes up to modern times when, with the death of the last speaker in 2012, self-identification as Livonian is nowadays encouraged in Latvia, and a new generation of heritage speakers are learning the language.

Finally: can a planned, stateless and borderless language also be contested? According to Federico Gobbo in 'The language ideology of Esperanto: from the world language problem to balanced multilingualism,' the answer is a resounding yes. In fact, the author argues that it has been so since the very birth of Esperanto in the late 19th century. As a planned language, Esperanto was born with an ideology which has undergone change and adaptation in order to accommodate and reduce the level of contestation of the language. In its turn, this adaptation re-framed the perception of the language by its speakers and their very attitudes toward Esperanto. The author follows the link between Esperanto and pacifism in the First World War years, its connections to anarchism and communism in Asia, and its association with linguistic rights in more recent times, up to an ideological convergence with other contested languages, in particular regional and minority languages.

4. The conclusion of an introduction

It is our contention that a full acceptance of language-internal considerations in the definition of what counts as a "language" will also help disciplines working on the social dimensions of language – from sociolinguistics to language policy and planning – to overcome what May (2006: 256) has called their "presentist" approach. May ascribes it to early stages of language policy studies, preoccupied more with nation-building processes centred around an official (often European) language than with the status, rights and fate of minority languages. Early students in language planning embraced and openly encouraged the adoption of a unifying, national language which carried the extra advantage of being ready for use in administration and modern domains. There was another bonus for its proponents in such an approach: to curb the potentially separatist tendencies of parochial languages and put citizens in closer contact with the power holders. Laitin's (1992) work remains a favourite example of this tendency (see also Tosco's contribution, this volume).

Are these views the province of bygone stages in language policy? After all, the preoccupation with linguicide correlates of nation-building is nowadays widely held, and linguistic rights have been a respectable and burgeoning area of research for many years now.

Still, the chapters in this volume bear witness to the ongoing strength of the nation-states and their linguistic – but most of all ideological – corollaries. If political unity (and ever-wider and overarching unification processes) is still almost universally seen as good (or necessary, or even inevitable), and, conversely, secession is bad (and/or anti-historical, maybe even discriminatory), it is difficult to escape the conclusion that, rather than 'the need to rethink nation-states in more linguistically plural and inclusive ways' (May 2006: 267), what needs rethinking is the nation-state *per se*.

More importantly, unless we address the *Ausbau*-centric bias in linguistic research and rediscover the importance of *Abstand* relations in defining "languages", we will continue to delegate definitions to the acts of politicians and political entities that are frequently hostile towards linguistic and cultural diversity, and whose historical and ideological stances are often the very root cause of language endangerment.

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SECTION 1

The broader picture

CHAPTER 2

Contested languages and the denial of linguistic rights in the 21st century

Marco Tamburelli
Bangor University

In this chapter I argue that over-reliance on socio-political criteria (i.e. *Ausbau*-centrism) in the linguistic literature is partly responsible for the discrimination to which speakers of contested languages are subjected at both the social and the institutional level. Further, I argue that an *Ausbau*-centred approach also leads to undersplitting of languages (i.e. recognising as few languages as possible), which is ultimately detrimental to the maintenance of linguistic diversity. I conclude by suggesting that the introduction of an *Abstand*-based perspective is necessary if we are to achieve a taxonomy of "languages" that cuts through socio-cultural biases and that works in favour of language rights and linguistic diversity.

1. Introduction

In May 2005, a secondary school in Naples decreed that a €0.10 fine be issued to every student caught speaking Neapolitan. Students were encouraged to report each other for the "common good": once enough money was collected through the linguistic fines, the whole school would be taken on a field trip free of charge. While taking place a century later and involving monetary sanction rather than corporal punishment, this approach is very similar in spirit to the use of the "Welsh not":[1] children are turned against one another, and against (one of) their own mother tongue(s). In December 2009, a Venetian-speaking fishmonger labelled his produce in Venetian at a local market. The local authority fined him 1167 euros, stating that "it is more honest to label produce in Italian" (emphasis mine). While

1. The "Welsh not" was a piece of wood attached to a string that was hung around the neck of children caught speaking Welsh in school. The child carrying the "not" could then pass it on to a different child who s/he overheard speaking Welsh. The child left wearing the "not" at the end of the day would then be punished.

https://doi.org/10.1075/wlp.8.02tam

arguably not as systematic, this is reminiscent of the "Commerce Law" forbidding the use of Catalan in commerce during Franco's rule (Spain, 1940–1975). A few months earlier (in May 2009) the regional government of Piedmont approved a bill for the "maintenance and development of the Piedmontese language" (L. R.11/09). The central government issued an order for the annulment of the bill, on the basis that only the State can make decisions on issues of "linguistic recognition", thus officially cementing the link between *Ausbau* languages and political power. These are but a few examples of how linguistic discrimination is overtly perpetrated and legally enforced in modern European countries. As Blanchet (2017) pointed out, no other form of discrimination would be allowed to take place so openly and with full legal and governmental backing. In this chapter I argue that this form of perpetual linguistic discrimination slips under the radar of regular anti-discrimination laws, even when those laws have been specifically developed to curtail linguistic discrimination. I shall argue that this is an immediate consequence of the fact that the notion of "language" is heavily biased in favour of *Ausbau* languages, a practice that I have previously called "*Ausbau*-centrism" (Tamburelli 2014. See also Tamburelli & Tosco, this volume). As a result of *Ausbau*-centrism, linguistic classifications become at best unhelpful and at worst antagonistic to the instruments aimed at the maintenance of language diversity and the protection of linguistic rights. Further, I will argue that other sociolinguistically-based criteria for defining "language-ness" do not offer a viable alternative. I will conclude by shifting the focus towards *Abstand* considerations, and by introducing structural measurements for the identification of linguistic diversity.

2. The failure of *Ausbau*-centric linguistics

An often-ignored problem in relying almost entirely on *Ausbau* considerations when identifying "language-ness" is that *Ausbau* levels are a matter of degree.[2] French is more highly standardised than English (there is no English equivalent of the *Académie Française*), which in turn is more highly standardised than Welsh. In the same vein, some regional varieties have undergone systematic (e.g. Galician) or even extensive (e.g. Catalan) *Ausbau*-isation, while others have only reached partial levels (e.g. Lombard) and others still have remained almost entirely vernacular (e.g. Lorrain). The existence of these various degrees of *Ausbau*-isation, however, has hardly ever been considered problematic. In fact, a complex sociolinguistic

2. This is particularly ironic given that many sociolinguists have rejected the idea of intelligibility as a valid criterion of demarcation between "languages" and "dialects" on the basis that intelligibility is a matter of degree rather than an absolute (e.g. Chambers and Trudgill, 1998).

apparatus has been developed to account for this variation (Muljačić 1997; Auer 2005) rather than deem sociolinguistic criteria as unworkable, or discard the concept of *Ausbau* language altogether on the basis that it is "fuzzy" or "not an absolute". The interesting, if perhaps puzzling, outcome that results from these attempts at providing an *Ausbau*-based definition of language despite its non-absoluteness, is that current official use ends up being chosen as the decisive factor for "language-ness", relegating all other varieties to the status of "dialect" regardless of their degree of *Ausbau*-isation. May (2000: 369) calls this the "pivotal role of the nation-state […] in determining what is and what is not a language" (the Piedmontese case presented in the introduction is a prime example of this phenomenon). Hence, officialdom (in the form of state recognition) becomes the arbitrary cut-off point along the *Ausbau* continuum. The consequence is that an almost total correspondence is achieved between the (socio)linguist's "languages" and the "languages" recognised by European states, thereby academically legitimising the nationalist ideology that is "so central to the question of minority language loss" (May 2000: 369). As Ammon (1989: 31) has eloquently pointed out, this sets linguistics apart from other sciences where official stances are far from influencing the scientist's taxonomy. Indeed, in keeping with Ammon's observation, political scientists have had no qualms in defining, for example, the People's Republic of China as a dictatorship despite its official name and the official position of the Chinese government (e.g. Yan 1992). Hence, the *Ausbau* criterion appeals to a cut-off point that is arbitrarily entrusted to governments, usually nation-state governments, and thus to heavily biased political entities with a reputation for being rather penurious when it comes to extending linguistic support beyond the state language (e.g. Romaine 2002). Importantly, relying on officialdom as the criterion of demarcation is not a mere description of a socio-political reality, namely that the x-ish language is a highly *Ausbau*-ised variety recognised by state A, while the y-ish language is mostly vernacular and lacks recognition. This would involve calling y-ish a language *despite* lack of *Ausbau*-isation and/or official recognition, and would thus be equivalent to the political scientist who states that China is a dictatorship, despite the Chinese government's claim to the contrary. Instead, what *Ausbau*-centrism tends to create is a situation where linguists call x-ish a language if and only if x-ish has sufficiently powerful socio-political backing to have achieved extensive *Ausbau*-isation and/or recognition. Besides its questionable dependence on political decisions, this approach can actually have adverse effects on the maintenance of linguistic diversity, serving as a powerful keeper of the *status-quo*, since academic stances can, and often do, influence lay perceptions of what constitutes a "real" language (on the influence of academic discourse on lay perception see also Foster and Sharp 2002).

Indeed, this situation can lead to the formation of a lasting "*Ausbau* circle" whereby governments do not recognise or do not allow for the *Ausbau*-isation of a

certain variety, which is then in turn called a "dialect" by linguists, a position that is consequently relied upon by hegemonic institutions to further prevent recognition and disallow the *Ausbau*-isation of that variety, which in turn leads linguists to keep calling it a "dialect", thus perpetuating the circle further.

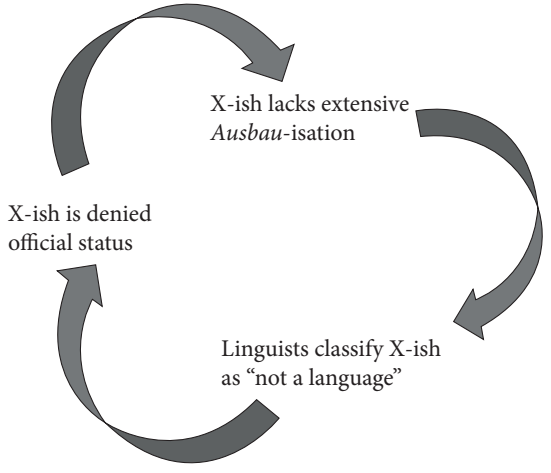

Figure 1. *Ausbau*-centrism hindering linguistic emancipation

Indeed, this circle can be, and often is, institutionalised through official policy, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (henceforth 'the Charter') being a case in point. A look at Part 1 of the Charter makes it clear that linguistic rights are the prerogative of those who speak a regional or minority 'language', and that such 'language' is somehow objectively identifiable as well as different from other objects called 'dialects' (only statements directly relevant to the discussion are included below. Boldface original, italic added):[3]

Article 1 – Definitions
For the purposes of this Charter:
a. 'regional or minority languages' means *languages* that are:
   i. traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population; and
   ii. different from the official language(s) of that State;
   it *does not include* […] *dialects of the official language*(s) of the State

3. Cited from https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages/text-of-the-charter. Accessed: 28/09/2020.

When an *Ausbau*-centred perspective is applied in order to identify these 'languages', we are faced with the circularity problem represented in Figure 1. The use of one's linguistic variety in educational, administrative, literary or media contexts (i.e. extensive *Ausbau*-isation) is a right established by the Charter as well as a prerequisite for that variety to be considered a 'language' (as dictated by *Ausbau*-centric linguistics) and thus for accessing the very rights established by the Charter. The *Ausbau*-centred perspective turns language policy into a tool for the perpetuation of the *status quo*, a tool that serves the "invisibilization strategy" of European states (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, & Kontra 2001: 145), namely the process through which politically-entrenched linguistic labelling brings certain varieties to the fore while rendering other varieties invisible as 'non languages'.

This, in turn, facilitates "attacks" (Trudgill 1992) on some regional language communities by unwittingly backing the "refusal of majority communities to recognise their [the regional] language as a language rather than a dialect" (Trudgill 1992: 167). The ubiquitous *Ausbau* views provide ammunition to these "attackers" in a manner reminiscent of what has been identified in other social sciences. By using a term with clearly negative connotations (in our case "dialect" as a "non-language" or "less than a language"), academic work can have negative consequences on the perception of the communities (in our case, linguistic communities) involved. This is not unlike what Theo (2010: 298) argued in relation to race issues:

> [t]he idea that Black individuals are intellectually inferior by nature […] when expressed in an academic article has consequences for the Black reader or for non-Black readers who might construct the Black person as intellectually inferior, which might change their behavior or attitudes.

In the same vein, when expressed in academic articles and textbooks, the idea that varieties without political recognition and/or advanced *Ausbau*-isation are "non languages" has consequences for speakers as well as non-speakers of those varieties who might construct specific communities as linguistically inferior (i.e. as speakers of "non languages"), which might change their behaviour or attitudes towards their own variety as well as that of others. Examples of this behaviour can be seen whenever a community aspires to emancipate a variety that has little or no current *Ausbau*-isation (even if relatively high levels of *Ausbau* and/or officialdom might have existed in the past), or whose *Ausbau* levels are lower than those of the state language (which is almost always the case, by definition).[4]

In the summer of 2009, the Lega Nord, an Italian political party, suggested an educational reform aimed at introducing a test for teachers which would examine their knowledge of the "history, tradition, and language of the region in which they

4. Except of course in the case of immigrant languages.

intend to teach".[5] While the proposal was potentially objectionable for a number of reasons,[6] the reactions that ensued showed how academic discourse and the *Ausbau* circle are at work against the emancipation of regional varieties. The general idea being almost invariably this: languages are meant for schools, media, administration and other high domains, and dialects are not languages, thus dialects cannot and must not be used in schools, media, administration and other high domains.

For example, on 30th July 2009 the daily broadsheet *La Repubblica* published an article by Vittorio Coletti who stated that the proposal by the Lega was "buffoonery" since a dialect "is not a language", because it cannot be used to "carry out all the discussions pertaining to a country's culture".[7] Note how this relies on the synchronic focus of the *Ausbau* circle: x is a dialect because *today* x is not used in high domains (though it might have been in the past, e.g. Sicilian, Lombard, Piedmontese, among others), and therefore it cannot be introduced in high domains. A similar statement was issued by the president of the 'Centro Studi e Ricerche Francesco Grisi', who maintained that "dialects are not languages", with the implication that they should therefore remain relegated to the spoken domain. Similar statements were then made two years later, by media and the public alike, when – on 31st May 2011 – the regional government of Sicily approved a bill for the "promotion and teaching of the history, literature, and linguistic heritage of Sicily".[8] In the words of the dialectologist Burgio: "Sicilian is a dialect" and therefore it cannot be taught "as if it were a *real* language"[9] (emphasis mine).

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5. "un test dal quale emerga la loro conoscenza della storia, delle tradizioni e del dialetto della regione in cui intendono insegnare". *Corriere della Sera*, 28 July 2009. http://www.corriere.it/politica/09_luglio_28/lega_dialetto_prof_riforma_scuola_f3e05830-7b9c-11de-9006-00144f02aabc.shtml

6. It was arguably aimed at hindering teachers from southern Italy from being admitted in northern Italian schools, and lacked any active measures for the protection of linguistic diversity in (any part of) Italy (see also Coluzzi, 2008). With a couple of exceptions, the proponents talked of "knowledge of *dialect*" rather than "regional language", demonstrating lack of awareness of the linguistic situation and of commitment towards improving public perception.

7. "[u]na lingua è tale quando in essa si possono fare tutti i discorsi della cultura di un paese." *La Repubblica*, 30/07/2009. http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2009/07/30/lezioni-di-dialetto-si-torniamo-pure-al.html

8. Legge Regionale n° 9 del 31 maggio 2011 "Norme sulla promozione, valorizzazione ed insegnamento della storia, della letteratura e del patrimonio linguistico siciliano nelle scuole".

9. "Innanzitutto va sgombrato il campo dal fraintendimento che si debba o si possa insegnare il siciliano come una vera e propria lingua". http://www.rosalio.it/2011/05/24/lurgenza-di-insegnare-il-dialetto-a-scuola/

Stripped of their rhetorical disguise, these statements are simply declarations of commitment to the *status quo* that rely on the *Ausbau* circle: a variety that is not used in high domains today cannot be used in high domains tomorrow because it is not used in high domains today. Similar assertions have been made against the emancipation of Scots (Nic Craith 2001), Asturian (Wells 2011), and many other European varieties including, at some point in its history, Catalan (e.g. Cornellà-Detrell 2011). Dialects are not languages, so their speakers cannot claim any *language* rights.

Note that these shortcomings cannot be overcome by a mere terminological change, such as substituting "dialect" with other terms (e.g. "variety"). Any term that is used instead of and/or in opposition to "language" is likely to "emphasise rather than reduce the hierarchical implication" (May 2000: 401. See also Ammon 1989). What is needed is an alternative, non-politically biased, taxonomy that provides a way out of the deadlock situation arising from the *Ausbau* circle.

For these reasons, the development and application of a structural criterion that is independent of political prejudice becomes crucial not only for its purely taxonomic value (see Brasca, this volume), but also because of its potential to break the *Ausbau* circle, and thus to diminish attacks on linguistic diversity. If varieties along a continuum can be and are recognised by linguists as languages by *Abstand* independently of political stances, then we will be talking more often of recognised and unrecognised regional *languages*, thereby limiting perpetuation of the *Ausbau* circle and narrowing the escape hatch of linguistic hegemony.

In sum, an *Ausbau* perspective of language also requires a cut-off point, which is almost invariably entrusted to the decision of the state where a variety is spoken, with potentially disastrous consequences for linguistic diversity. Consequently, and contrary to what its proponents have advocated, the move towards *Ausbau* definitions of "language-ness" does not constitute an improvement over more structural considerations (e.g. the intelligibility criterion). However, some sociolinguists have proposed alternative, "speaker-centred" views of what constitutes a "language", appealing to self-perception as a primary criterion. As we shall see in the next section, these proposals come up against issues of non-absoluteness, and are therefore not a viable alternative.

3. Self-perception: A reliable taxonomical alternative?

An alternative definition of "language" involves taking speakers' self-perception as the basis for any classification of varieties as "languages" or "dialects". This view, which probably dates back to the work of Weinreich (1979), is explicitly stated by Fasold (2005: 698):

> If there is a social group that believes and acts as if a linguistic system is a language then it is one.

This view is problematic for a number of reasons. To begin with, it is ultimately a reformulation of – rather than a solution to – the problem of defining "language", since the criterion can only be applied once we have developed a general definition of the concept of "language". As Ammon (1989: 31) explains:

> [i]t would not be sufficient to find out (by which ever method) that the British, for instance, rate a linguistic system as a separate "language", the Germans as a "Sprache", the Chinese as a "yûyán" etc. In addition, we would have to show that all these words (*language, Sprache, yûyán* etc.) are synonymous […] This could, however, only be established on the basis of an independent conceptual explication.

In other words, delegating the decision to speakers only pushes the problem of defining "language" down the road.

Moreover, as others have pointed out "majority belief doesn't tell us anything about the existence of what is believed in" (Pennycook, 2007: 91. See also Ammon 1989). While the study of cultural beliefs, their dynamics and effects is certainly a worthwhile and fruitful venture (e.g. Harkness & Super 1996), it is neither equivalent to nor mutually exclusive with the study of independently identifiable taxonomic entities.

In addition to these reasons, two more issues appear evident. Firstly, a given speech community may not be in agreement about the status of their speech variety. A clear example is given by a 2010 study on speakers' attitudes towards Scots.[10] When asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement "I don't really think of Scots as a language, it's more just a way of speaking", 34% of respondents agreed strongly, 30% agreed slightly, 14% disagreed slightly, 16% disagreed strongly, and 6% did not have an opinion. Similar situations have also been demonstrated for other regional languages (see Kockel 1999, for Kashubian; Marten 2012, for Latgalian; and Dołowy-Rybińska and Soria, this volume, for Kashubian and Piedmontese). Self-perception – like intelligibility – is therefore a matter of degree, and the question arises of what to do in these cases. Are we to go with the majority vote, thus totally disregarding the opinion of 30% of speakers (16% + 14%) according to which Scots is nothing less than a language? In the same vein, how "strongly" must speakers feel in order for linguists to take requests for language status seriously? Is it enough for speakers to "disagree" with the questionnaire's statement, or do they have to "strongly disagree"? What are we to do in cases where the State government

10. "Public Attitudes towards the Scots Language", published online by The Scottish Government, 2010. Accessed 28/09/2020. http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/01/06105123/0

has no intention to fund a survey on speakers' attitudes? Are public protests enough to sway linguists or do speakers need to threaten violence in order to prove serious will? If public demonstrations are deemed sufficient, how many speakers need to attend? Even a preliminary analysis of the self-perception criterion reveals that it too needs a cut-off point. If, on the other hand, total agreement among speakers is deemed necessary for the self-perception criterion to be fulfilled, then chances are that only very highly *Ausbau*-ised languages will pass the test, with the same negative consequences for linguistic diversity that result from *Ausbau*-centrism.

A final issue with the self-perception criterion is that a community's attitudes towards their language variety or varieties are heavily influenced by educational, political, and ultimately hegemonic agendas (see for example the volume edited by Garcia 1991). Relying on self-perception as a criterion of demarcation is equivalent to stating that what speakers believe *today* is an empirically adequate yardstick for an objective taxonomy. The inadequacy of this view is particularly apparent when we consider that current belief is rooted in hegemonic discourse (e.g. Cluver 2000; Grillo 1989), which shapes speakers' perception of linguistic hierarchies. Hence, particularly in the case of Europe's languages, relying on speakers' self-perception boils down to perpetuating a language hierarchy rooted in the hegemony-driven paradigm of "one nation one language", entirely unconcerned with linguistic diversity or taxonomic authenticity (the "nationism" of Fishman 1969).

Therefore, the "self-perception" view amounts to little more than a description of how successful hegemonic discourse has been in suppressing awareness of linguistic variation. Linguists who talk of the "Sicilian dialect" and the "Catalan language" are partly stating that Italy has been more successful than Spain in preserving the illusion of linguistic and cultural homogeneity. Relying on speakers' self-perception is not a viable method to sidestep institutional agendas and/or institutionally-driven hierarchies (see also May 2000, on this point). For this reason, the self-perception view suffers from many of the shortcomings of *Ausbau*-centrism, including a strong bias towards recognising as 'languages' only those varieties that already have some amount of state backing.

Relying on self-perception as a criterion of demarcation can therefore lead to a vicious circle. On the one hand, governments' negative policies and/or neglect (the "no-policy policy" of Fishman 2006: 325) against certain varieties lead to the development of negative speakers' attitudes towards those varieties. This results in a situation where speakers' supposedly self-declared 'languages' will strongly overlap with the 'languages' recognised by the state. By relying on self-perception, linguists will consequently recognise as legitimate 'languages' a set of varieties that strongly overlaps with the 'languages' recognised by states, which in turn reinforces negative attitudes towards the excluded varieties, perpetuating the circle further. The self-perception criterion is therefore very close to being a "self-fulfilling prophecy"

(originally identified by Merton 1948. See also Jussim 1986, 1989; Jussim et al., 2003; Smith et al., 1999). Self-fulfilling prophecies are defined as situations where "a perceiver's originally false belief about a target is behaviourally confirmed by the target" (Smith et al., 1998: 531). When a self-fulfilling prophecy occurs, "people actually behave in a manner that confirms the initially erroneous belief" (Jussim et al., 2003, 376). Merton's classic example of African American "strikebreakers" at the beginning of the 20th century delineates how self-fulfilling prophecies can develop from an interaction between people and institutions (see also Jussim & Fleming 1996, for an in depth analysis). There was a belief among American union members that African Americans were strikebreakers and could therefore not be trusted. This belief severely limited African American's opportunities on the job market, where unions had strong influence. As a consequence of this disadvantage, African Americans were more likely to take on work when companies were desperate for labourers, namely during a strike. This behaviour would then be cited by union members as "evidence" for their original belief, thus completing the self-fulfilling circle. While not entirely equivalent to them, the self-perception criterion shares a number of characteristics with self-fulfilling prophecies. For example, exclusion of non-standard regional varieties from the education system (often accompanied by overtly negative attitudes) typically instils negative attitudes among speakers, who then proceed to regard those varieties as "not proper", "slang", "not real languages" and so forth, and therefore unworthy of being introduced in schools (e.g. Menzies 2004; Romaine 1999; Siegel 1999). By harnessing these attitudes as arbiter for language recognition, linguists are likely to provide institutional and authoritative assistance towards fulfilling the government's original plan. Self-perception, therefore, is not a reliable basis for an objective taxonomy of languages. This kind of "self-discrimination" and its effects on self-fulfilling circles is well known in a range of disciplines, including clinical psychology (e.g. Gallo 1994) and gender studies (e.g. Malinowska 1995).

It is of course not the case that a community's attitudes are always invariably in tune with their government's stance, as demonstrated by the Catalans' linguistic resistance despite the Francoist government's attempts at invisibilising Catalan varieties. Nevertheless, a community's self-perception may and often is heavily influenced by official attitudes, which in turn means that relying on self-perception as a necessary condition stacks the cards in favour of maintaining the *status quo*, and thus in favour of continuing language invisibilisation at the expense of linguistic diversity.

4. Taking *Abstand* seriously: The intelligibility criterion

So far we have seen that both the *Ausbau* criterion and the idea of self-perception suffer from some serious shortcomings and that they both ultimately lead to circularity. Therefore, the need arises for the development of a solution to the 'regional language' vs. 'regional dialect' problem that relies on something other than *Ausbau*-ization or self-perception as a criterion of demarcation. I have argued elsewhere that the Intelligibility Criterion offers such a solution (Tamburelli 2014), and that – contrary to received wisdom – it is actually operationalisable. Nevertheless, there are two outstanding objections that are regularly raised as supposedly problematic for the intelligibility criterion, and which have been claimed to render it unworkable (see for example Blust 1999; Comrie 1987; Dirven and Verspoor 2004; Hudson 1996). Below I argue that these objections do not stand up to scrutiny, and that therefore the intelligibility criterion does have an applied dimension.

4.1 Asymmetry, or "non-reciprocal" intelligibility

One of the supposed shortcomings of the intelligibility criterion is that intelligibility rates, whether reported or measured, may sometimes be asymmetric, in that speakers of variety A understand speakers of variety B better than speakers of B understand speakers of A. For example, Comrie (1987) states that speakers of Tunisian Arabic are more likely to understand speakers of Egyptian Arabic than vice versa (although, as is often the case with intelligibility claims, no empirical measurements are provided to support this assertion). An empirically attested example of asymmetric intelligibility is reported by Gooskens (2007), who found that her Danish-speaking subjects understood Swedish better than the Swedish-speaking listeners understood Danish. In a comprehensive study of Yuman varieties, Biggs (1957) reported that degrees of non-reciprocal intelligibility fluctuated between 5% and 15%.

The supposed problem of asymmetry dissolves, however, when we consider that these situations are almost invariably the result of non-reciprocal *acquired knowledge*. As originally reported by Wolff (1959), supposed cases of nonreciprocal intelligibility almost always find their root in political or socio-economic factors that have led speakers of A to be exposed to B more than speakers of B have been exposed to A (see also Casad 1974; Olmsted 1954). Far from being problematic to an *Abstand* approach, these cases simply remind us that there are variables that need to be controlled for, particularly the possibility that one group might have had the chance to learn another group's variety. As Hammarström (2008) points out, however, such situations are no different from cases where A and B are not closely related, but speakers of A have also learnt B while speakers of B only know B. Crucially, in both cases it is exposure to and/or learning of B

that allows understanding of B, not prior native knowledge of A. Of course, in cases where A and B are (closely) related, learning of B may be facilitated, but this is an issue of second language learning and its interaction with language relatedness, not a question of independently identifiable intelligibility rates. While the existence of non-reciprocal learning may show that speakers of A are somewhat socially subordinate to speakers of B, or that they see B as a means of linguistic emancipation, it says virtually nothing on the inherent linguistic distance between A and B. Therefore, the "asymmetry argument" is no more a problem for *Abstand* measurements than the spread of English as a second language to, say, France is for classification of French as a Romance language. Both situations involve variables that need to be controlled for in order to achieve valid results, but neither variable is conceptually problematic to the core issue at hand. Hence, the "asymmetry argument" is at best a warning about how social relations between speakers of different varieties need to be controlled for when measuring intelligibility rates.

A second type of asymmetry has been presumed in cases which are supposedly not explainable in terms of exposure or learning. Dixon (1997) cites Spanish and Portuguese as an example, claiming that the supposed asymmetry that leads Portuguese speakers to understand Spanish more than Spanish speakers understand Portuguese can be explained linguistically. As he puts it:

> [p]art of the reason is that Spanish has – in certain respects – a more conservative structure; it effectively retains the underlying forms, to which Portuguese has applied various diachronic changes. Compare Spanish *mano* 'hand' and *color* 'colour' with Portuguese *maõ* and *cor*. It is easier to understand another variety when one has to apply certain rules of change – Spanish to Portuguese – then when one has to unravel changes – Portuguese to Spanish. (1997: 8)

While this idea might be worth pursuing (see also Hock and Joseph 2009), it is entirely speculative in nature, and no systematic study has been carried out to date in order to test its validity. Moreover, the only study that has empirically tested intelligibility between Spanish and Portuguese (Jensen 1989) found that the asymmetry is not only rather low (58% vs. 50%), but also that it can be accounted for by the higher level of exposure that Portuguese speakers tend to have to Spanish (particularly through media) compared to the relatively little exposure that Spanish speakers have to Portuguese.[11] Once again, the supposed "asymmetric intelligibility" seems to be a case of *asymmetric learning* which, as explained above, is in no way problematic to the concept of intelligibility measurements *per se*.

11. This study tested speakers of Latin American Spanish and of Brazilian Portuguese. No information is provided as to the exact provenance of the Spanish speakers.

4.2 Attitudes and motivation

Another supposed shortcoming of the intelligibility criterion is that speakers may not always be forthcoming about their willingness (or, indeed, unwillingness) to understand each other. Once again, this argument amounts to no more than an assertion that measurements involve potential confounds that must be minimised. As this is true of any measurement in any discipline concerned with any phenomenon, the point is effectively a truism. Of course, the warning within the objection is indeed legitimate (though not the objection itself): socio-cultural biases must be controlled for if we are to obtain valid intelligibility measurements. Pointing out the existence of a variable is not, however, an argument against the feasibility of carrying out measurements in general or the measurability of intelligibility rates in particular.

Indeed, intelligibility rates have been successfully measured and socio-cultural variables appropriately controlled. For example, van Bezooijen and Gooskens (2005) and Gooskens (2006) report measurements where influence from attitudes has been minimised by screening subjects so as to exclude those with strong positive or negative attitudes, as well as matching the subject groups according to their attitudes towards the varieties to be tested. Techniques for the elicitation of attitudes include the use of screening questionnaires and the matched-guise technique.

It also appears that the presumed role of attitudes has been overestimated. Van Bezooijen and Gooskens (2005) report some degree of relationship between intelligibility and nonlinguistic factors such as language attitudes, but ultimately found only low correlations between the two, and conclude that there is little evidence of a direct relationship, if any. More complex measurements have also been recently developed, particularly in relation to calibrating intelligibility measurements against computational measures such as Levenshtein distance (Beijering, Gooskens, and Heeringa 2008; Gooskens, Kürschner and Bezooijen 2011). In view of these developments, while linguistic attitudes are an important variable to be controlled for, it is simply misleading to portray attitudes as if they were an insurmountable barrier to intelligibility measurements.

Last but not least, linguistic attitudes cannot negatively affect intelligibility measures in contexts where they are employed as a criterion of demarcation between regional languages and regional dialects of the state language. For the purposes of determining regional languages, the problem we might encounter is that speakers who identify with the state/majority language insist that the variety at issue is a dialect of the state language rather than a separate *Abstand* language. This attitude is very common in cases of linguistic continua socially dependent on one *Ausbau* variety (e.g. Romaine 2002; Trudgill 1992), and where the potential recognition of regional languages is often seen as an attack on nationalistic discourse

and the presumed linguistic unity that underpins it (see also Tanczos 2012). In these cases one might argue that such strong sentiments in favour of "one nation one language" would make it very difficult to obtain any objective measurement of intelligibility rates. Nevertheless, nationalistic attitudes of this type would not affect the intelligibility measurements necessary for the *Abstand* classification of regional languages, for the simple reason that while one may pretend not to understand something that they do understand, the reverse is not possible: one cannot pretend to understand something they cannot understand. If there is sufficient linguistic distance between the state language and the variety under consideration for regional "languageness", speakers of the state language will not be able to understand enough of that variety when empirical measurements are carried out, no matter how willing they may be to demonstrate linguistic unity. Linguistic distance will be a barrier to successful linguistic communication, regardless of motivation. Indeed, it is now well documented that intelligibility levels correlate with linguistic distance (e.g. Gooskens 2006; Munro, Derwing, & Morton 2006): the further away a variety is from one's own in phonology, grammar, and lexicon, the harder it will be to understand. This is the basis for systematic and objective measurement of *Abstand* relations, and thus for the identification of *Abstand* languages within a continuum.

4.3 Intelligibility as a way forward

By relying on intelligibility as a sufficient condition for regional language status, we have a solution that offers an objective measure for an operationalisable criterion of demarcation. Unlike perspectives based on *Ausbau* or on self-perception, the intelligibility criterion cuts through socio-cultural biases and prejudices, and it is therefore a better taxonomical tool as well as one that is independent of the *status quo*. Importantly, the intelligibility criterion acts as a sufficient (but not necessary) condition for "languageness", and it therefore does not interfere with the possibility of separate standardisation and *Ausbau*-isation processes within what could be defined as dialects of the same *Abstand* language. Hence, two intelligible varieties such as Norwegian and Swedish can still be separated into different *Ausbau* languages, exactly because – as originally pointed out by Kloss and reiterated by Ammon (1989) and Tamburelli (2014) – *Ausbau* and *Abstand* are different criteria concerned with different characteristics, and are thus not mutually exclusive. The same goes for self-perception: if two communities speaking closely related varieties perceive themselves as speaking different languages, then there is nothing in the intelligibility criterion (or, indeed, in any *Abstand*-based criterion) which forbids such sociolinguistic separation. The important point here is that *Ausbau*-isation and self-perception must not be seen as "if and only if" criteria (see also Hammarström 2008, on a similar point). An independent, taxonomically sound *Abstand*-based

criterion must also be considered when deciding which varieties are separate languages and which are dialects of the same language. Such an *Abstand*-based criterion will allow us to provide a politically unbiased linguistic taxonomy, and thus help to minimise perpetuation of the hegemonic circles discussed in this chapter. Intelligibility, I have argued, can be the basis for such criterion.

Finally, I would like to point out that the sufficient rather than necessary nature of the intelligibility criterion has a positive effect on linguistic diversity. Let us take Czech and Slovak as an example. The fact that they are considered separate languages through *Ausbau* and/or self-perception *despite* being highly intelligible is only minimally detrimental to their speakers, if at all. Let us take for example the nine major evaluative factors of language vitality laid out by UNESCO (2003), summarised below.

Factor 1. Intergenerational Language Transmission.
Factor 2. Absolute Number of Speakers.
Factor 3. Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population.
Factor 4. Trends in Existing Language Domains.
Factor 5. Response to New Domains and Media.
Factor 6. Materials for Language Education and Literacy.
Factor 7. Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes And Policies Including Official Status and Use.
Factor 8. Community Members' Attitudes toward their Own Language.
Factor 9. Amount and Quality of Documentation.

Factors 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9 are likely to be met to high standards as a result of *Ausbau*-isation and government support (indeed, factor 7 is met to a high standard by definition). Which, as a consequence, will mean that factors 1, 3, and 8 are likely to be met to a reasonable standard. The only factor that is obviously likely to suffer is factor 2, as the absolute number of Czech speakers is by definition lower than the potential number of a hypothetical Czech-Slovak *Ausbau*-language.

Furthermore, separation of Czech and Slovak into separate *Ausbau* languages does not entail discrimination against their respective speakers to the extent that there exist polities, namely the Czech Republic and Slovakia respectively, within which each variety can be used to access high domains. The problem for linguistic diversity arises in the opposite situation, namely when two poorly intelligible varieties are erroneously considered dialects of the same language through application of *Ausbau* and/or self-perception criteria as "if and only if" criteria, as is almost invariably the case with contested languages. This leads to undersplitting of languages (i.e. recognising as few languages as possible), which is detrimental to the maintenance of linguistic diversity. The non-*Ausbau*-ised variety becomes "invisible" as a "non-language" (as discussed earlier in this chapter), thus failing to

meet many of the evaluative factors of language vitality to any reasonable standard (particularly factors 6–9). Low intelligibility with the *Ausbau* variety will also lead to abandonment of the non-*Ausbau* variety in high domains, where the *Ausbau* variety is required for communicative functionality. It is in such cases that the intelligibility criterion becomes key.

5. Conclusions

In this chapter I have argued that speakers of contested languages are subjected to linguistic discrimination at both the social as well as the institutional level despite the great advances made in recent years towards awareness and protection of regional and minority languages. I suggested that the *Ausbau*-centric perspective widespread in the linguistic literature is partly responsible for the lack of recognition behind language contestedness, effectively serving as a tool for the perpetuation of the *status quo* and of the invisibilization strategy favoured by a number of European states. An *Ausbau*-centred approach also leads to undersplitting of languages (i.e. recognising as few languages as possible), which is ultimately detrimental to the maintenance of linguistic diversity. With this in mind, I argued that only an *Abstand*-based perspective offers an adequate yardstick for an objective taxonomy of "languages" that cuts through socio-cultural biases, and that the intelligibility criterion is still the most promising way forward.

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CHAPTER 3

Democracy

A threat to language diversity?

Mauro Tosco
University of Turin

This chapter argues that democracy has both theoretical and practical implications that negatively affect the maintenance of language (and cultural) diversity. Attention is paid to the levelling effects of welfare policies, which tend to depress the speakers' interest in language preservation and transmission and which typically negatively affect the quality of revitalisation programmes. The presentation discusses the practical and theoretical problems posed by possible ways out such as a voluntary, self-imposed "boundary maintenance" policy (Fishman 1991) and "the creation of linguistic fortresses or ghettoes" (Laponce 1984) in order to protect a minority language. Further, it argues that the democratic state – in itself just the last instalment of the nation-state – may have a special problem with multilingualism, and that language diversity possibly fared better in past forms of government.

> Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities
> (Mill 1882: 310)

I start with a platitude: policies directed at the preservation and revitalisation of language diversity should aim at fostering the *use* of endangered languages, i.e., at securing (and possibly extending) intergenerational language transmission. This is their goal and their only measure of success (as we are aptly reminded, e.g., by Fishman 1991).[1]

If this is a truism, one cannot help being struck by the curious lack of a principled, theory-driven analysis and explanation of the universal *failure* of such policies: language rights are benignly bestowed and language policies upon language policies are promulgated – and even, sometimes, implemented. Still, language upon

1. This may actually be contested: e.g., language documentation and the preservation of a modicum of language identity are legitimate goals; another can be, to put it bluntly, the creation and securing of academic positions in language endangerment.

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language falls into disuse – often, exactly the same ones that were the prime target of protection.

Why is it so? Just another case of "unintended consequences"? After all, it is well known that welfare policies supposedly aiming at increasing the general well-being of individuals and groups occasionally (often? usually?) backfire and lead to opposite results.

I assume that the reduction of language diversity in the modern and contemporary Western world is positively correlated with the tremendous increase in the state apparatus of control and intervention. I elaborated on this concept in a number of articles (Tosco 2011a, 2011b, 2014 – with reference to Africa; 2015 – with reference to the Arab world; 2016) and will take it for granted here.

It is my contention in this chapter that there are principled reasons for such a generalised failure, and that they are embedded in democratic ideology and practice. A caveat is in order: not a single language will be mentioned nor cases of language demise be discussed. My case rests instead entirely on logical reasoning.

1. The difficult life of the objects of the third kind

Language is, as most convincingly demonstrated by Keller (1994), an object of the third kind. It is neither natural nor planned: natural phenomena are unintended; artificial phenomena are planned for a specific purpose. Objects of the third kind are neither natural nor planned, but "grow" involuntarily out of a multiplicity of instances of a behaviour that is logical and aimed at something else. Language is therefore an instance of the "invisible hand" operating in human actions (cf. also Ullmann-Margalit 1978). An example of such objects of the third kind are, in Keller's beautiful example, the footpaths which "spontaneously" come into existence to connect various points of interest, e.g., in his example, the buildings surrounding a green area in a university campus. The footpaths are not the result of anyone's intended plan, but the unintended consequence of everybody's logical behaviour (to reach a certain point in the minimum amount of time and with the least effort). Such a solution is "klug, ökonomisch und durchdacht 'angelegt.' Ganz offensichtlich ist seine Struktur sinnreicher als die Struktur der von den Architekten geplanten Pflasterwege" ['clever, cheap, and thoughtfully 'laid out'. Quite clearly, its structure makes more sense than the concrete footpaths designed by the architects'] (Keller 1994: 99).

Other objects of the third kind are towns which grow "naturally" (*vs.* those which are planned), common and customary law (*vs.* positive legislation), "natural" currencies, such as gold and other precious metals (*vs. fiat*, paper money), and market phenomena in general.

If there is one thing the modern states do not like it is objects of the third kind. In a way, one can even view language planning and language policies as facets of a wider *fight against objects of the third kind:* centralised, top-down town planning and Keynesianism and interventionism in economics are other instances, with more far-reaching consequences (cf. von Mises (1996: 786 foll.).

What all these developments have in common is the will to change objects of the third kind ("natural"-artificial objects) into objects of the second ("artificial"-artificial objects). And such a will is all the more effective in contemporary nation-states, as the following sections will show.

2. The unstoppable aggrandisement of government

State intervention in modern democratic societies finds its foremost means of expression in welfare policies, whose extension and functionality can serve as rough indicators of government and society intertwining.

On the government's side, welfare is an obvious advantage, and not only because it enables the government to pay off the voters who put the government in place, thereby securing their continuing favour.[2] Recipients of welfare will come to be dependent on government, and will regard as dangerous any change in government (because this could mean a reduction in the level of their subsidies). The attachment of the people to their government will therefore be strengthened, if only as part of an implicit *quid pro quo*.

Different from pre-state political entities, any kind of government activity in a modern nation-state can only be financed by money provided, generally involuntarily, by the citizens. Extension of government activity therefore requires an intensification of taxation. Although in principle the citizens may be more than willing to pay, extension of taxation increases the likelihood of resistance. Governments generally resort to debts and inflation in order to avoid direct taxation without having to reduce spending, but these may only be provisional solutions. Territorial aggrandisement (either through the costly solution of war or through political unification) is a likely way out: as political competition (i.e. the availability of areas with lower taxation) is reduced, the cost of resistance (e.g., through emigration) is increased; this makes taxation and the extension of government power less risky.

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2. Conversely, the only hope of the opponents (the party or parties who lost the election) to become in their turn the next power holders is to convince the citizens that they will embark on an even better (i.e, more fruitful for the recipients) welfare scheme. In order to do this, they can only engage in more redistribution. This may pose unsurmountable limits to any scheme for reducing government aggrandisement.

Therefore, unification (the "extension" of government) may provide a way to escape the limits of taxation (its "intensification").[3]

Like any other kind of government activity, a modern welfare system can therefore only be guaranteed through the regular inflow of the taxpayers' money. An efficient welfare system is tantamount to a radical programme of wealth redistribution, in which, ideally, citizens will get back what they paid in taxes, minus what is needed for the machinery to operate: the costs derived from tax collecting, assessment of the needs and of the recipients of welfare, and redistribution.

What are the consequences of welfare when applied to language and cultural diversity? What are, in such cases, its unintended consequences?

3. Language and welfare

First, we may observe that, as different languages exist because at least partially different cultures exist, it is also probable that the economic results of the different communities will be different. The link between wealth, redistribution, and language is well expressed by Laitin as follows:

> [T]he principle of equality requires not only that social stratification be kept at a minimum, but that regional disparities in wealth, participation, and political influence be minimised as well. Language has a bearing on the issue of regional inequalities because linguistic competence often sets the limits to political participation and, therefore, to access to the government by the citizenry.
>
> (Laitin 1977: 12)

While within any community (i.e., among the speakers of any language) even striking wealth differences will certainly exist, it is also probable that the average wealth levels of different communities will be different. A logical consequence of a (successful) welfare system is therefore that its extension will negatively affect the existence of different cultures and language groups by blurring the economic and historical reasons of wealth inequality and this even before welfare touches upon language use in general and language groups in particular.

But there are more practical aspects of state-subsidised language welfare which make it a poor solution to language endangerment, and they involve the attitude of the community members towards their language.

To see how a minority language can easily become a casualty of massive state intervention we must first of all accept that economic considerations do play a role in matters of language policy.

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3. On the reasons why governments may be willing to abandon part of their power through political unification, see Hülsmann (1997).

Much of the literature on language protection steers clear of any economic reasoning at all; such a position is closely associated with a starkly anti-market stance, which may be taken as the mainstream view and can be exemplified by Rannut (1999):

> human rights – linguistic human rights included – act as correctives to the free market, they should guarantee that the basics needed for survival and for the sustenance of a dignified life overrule the law of supply and demand. Thus they should be outside market forces. (Rannut 1999: 101)

and Skutnabb-Kangas (1999):

> [H]uman rights, especially economic and social rights, […] act as *correctives to the free market* […] Among the necessities from which "price-tags should be removed" are not only basic food and housing […], but also basics for the sustaining of a dignified life, including basic civil, political *and cultural* rights.
> (Skutnabb-Kangas 1999: 197–198; emphasis by Skutnabb-Kangas)

This is an even more radical interventionist policy – as implied by the reference to food and housing among the state-guaranteed goods and by the following excerpt, where control over the economy is seen – *tout court* and with some disregard for historical facts – as a *sine-qua-non* of sovereignty:

> The earlier tests of the sovereignty of a state had to do with the extent to which the state had political control over *the economy*, the military and culture, and the extent to which it was self-sufficient and sovereign and could provide for its citizens.
> (Skutnabb-Kangas 1999: 199; emphasis added)

A more balanced stance is taken by economist François Grin, who explains how "[M]arket forces do not necessarily result in the demise of all other languages, even in the long run, because market dynamics contain a built-in system of checks and balances" (1999: 182) and how

> market forces may well contribute to the spread of a language; but their very logic implies limitations on their homogenizing tendencies by generating mechanisms that reward behaviours which maintain diversity […] Ultimately, market regulation is largely a system of checks and balances, and it would be missing the point to claim that market forces are only, and by their very nature, detrimental to diversity; the real problem is not market exchange as a form of rationality, but the unequal power structures within which market exchange takes place […] [U]nhampered market forces may provide built-in safeguards against linguistic uniformity; unfortunately, they offer no guarantees for the preservation of minority languages with little economic clout. (Grin 1999: 179)

If we bring economic considerations into the evaluation of "language welfare", we have to recognise first of all that it is difficult to find sound arguments in favour

of subsidising a minority language without assigning intrinsic values to language diversity. Church and King (1993), using a game-theory model and assuming the absence of "any intrinsic value of a particular language" ("no one cares if one language disappears, and no one prefers communicating in one language rather than the other"), arrive precisely at the conclusion that "it is never optimal to subsidise the learning of the minority language. Also, there exist ranges of values of the cost of learning for which subsidisation of majority language acquisition may be called for" and "a need for some sort of coordinating policy that ensures that the minority language group becomes bilingual" (Church and King 1993: 343).

But even admitting that languages have intrinsic values, subsidising them has its problems:

> subsidisation of the [language] policy itself (which would amount to earmarked transfers that lower the cost of carrying out activities in the minority language) is problematic. The reason is that direct subsidisation of minority language policies may well result in an artificial increase in its vitality; the policy may imply expenditure not corresponding to what members of the minority community themselves would be willing to spend on their language. By the same token, direct subsidisation may also fall short of the amount of resources they would be ready to devote to this end – if they had them. (Grin and Vaillancourt 2000: 108)

Therefore, "the distribution-based rationale for subsidising minority language policies is exposed to criticism because of its allocative implications:" "justice" alone, note the authors, may be a weak argument, and not only because different actors have differing opinions on what is "just," but also because a just solution can be detrimental from the point of view of an efficient allocation of resources. It is better, Grin and Vaillancourt argue, to seek a remedy on allocative grounds directly: if linguistic diversity is valuable, they argue, "just like an unspoilt natural environment," and if language as a commodity has "unusual features", then

> we are in presence of a case of "market failure" justifying government intervention. In short, supporting minority languages may often turn out to be more defensible not because it is (distributive) *fair*, but because it is (allocative) *efficient*.
> (Grin and Vaillancourt 2000: 108; emphasis in the original)

Following on the parallel between language commodities and environmental commodities, Grin argues that "clean air or unspoilt landscapes, as such, have no market value, and they cannot be bought or sold […] Nevertheless, they have economic value, because the enjoyment of clean air and unspoilt landscapes generates utility". And, he continues, "as they do not have market value, unhampered market forces are likely to induce behaviours that will result in the destruction of those assets (or an inadequate supply thereof, which is analytically the same thing)" (Grin 1999: 180).

This would be a case of market failure, necessitating state intervention, whereby "policy intervention is indispensable to avoid the undersupply of environmental goods and, for similar reasons, of linguistic diversity" (Grin 1999: 180), and thus creating a "regulated" context, i.e., "a situation in which market forces are constrained by public policy measures" (Grin 1999: 180).

Obviously, Grin and Vaillancourt's argument stands and falls only insofar as one accepts that market failures exist, and that language and other commodities (such as the environment) are cases in which government's intervention is justified by market failure.[4]

Grin concedes that such public measures are not necessarily mandatory in nature (as in the case of the legally prescribed use of a language):[5] they may make use of market mechanisms, as would be the case of fiscal benefits offered to "those firms that have a particularly commendable language-use policy" (Grin 1999: 180).

One can devise other plans to make the use of minority languages advantageous for their speakers; for example, one can advocate "affirmative action" (or "positive discrimination") policies, whereby those communities which preserve their ancestral languages and cultures are "paid" in the form of social benefits. In a way, this would be tantamount to paying people not to integrate into the mainstream culture. Although the mainstream-culture taxpayers will tend to object to such measures, one can well imagine that a majority of them will be willing to compensate for past and present disadvantages of the minority cultures; the additional fact that the minority language speakers are often demographically weak would make the financial burden comparatively sustainable. Other problems could arise, e.g., by making all those potential mainstream-culture members willing to enter the minority culture in order to get a financial advantage. One would have to ban the possibility of entering a minority community, while at the same time preserving a reasonable degree of freedom of movement within the mainstream culture.

But even admitting that all these problems are successfully solved and all opposition quenched indefinitely, it is arguable that all this will be of no avail to minority languages, simply because the community to which they give expression is no longer a vital one: in fact, it will be even more dependent on the in-flow of money from the mainstream culture. The end result will be language as folklore and as a museum item.

If we leave aside these preoccupations and decide on subsidising minority languages, we will still face the obvious problem of choosing the recipients. It is

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4. Both assumptions are weak at best. The current flourishing of research on market solutions to environmental problems seems to point to an altogether different direction.

5. "Mandatory" is of course just a gentle word for "coercive" (although the problem of coercion lies at the very heart of political theory, it is apparently a taboo word when talking about democracies).

probable that only a minority of the languages will be targeted as the "rightful" ones; they could be the strongest ones (and in principle the most dangerous for the government's well-being and for the preservation of the status quo); conversely, it could well be that relatively small and innocuous minorities, which by themselves pose no threat to the power holders, may be selected as suitable targets, with the added advantage for power holders of showing their benign interest in language diversity.

In either case, government agencies will first and foremost engage in revitalisation activities which cannot by their very nature (or rather: given the public nature of their property) be carried on by individuals and private companies: street signs and other public signs are among the typical examples. They fulfil that symbolic function of the minority language which is often the first target of minority activists and which certainly plays an important role in rising pride for their language among the speakers.

The problem, as aptly pointed out by Fishman (1991), is that such policies often stop at symbolic functions. Like many other more practical actions in favour of language revitalisation, they are (and they should be seen as), means, not goals. As means, they are by their very nature not focused on intergenerational continuity and transmission. In the end, the community language will become a sweet souvenir of bygone days – a language that, as Laponce (1984: 162) put it, having lost its value as a medium has become "une langue de boutonnière".[6]

Rather than carrying on the production of cultural goods by themselves (such as, in the first stages of revitalisation, primers, dictionaries, language courses), as was done in 20th-century socialist countries, government agencies of modern democracies will subsidise their production by language activists' groups. A first consequence of public funding will be the reduction of the marginal interest of any unfunded activity. Subsidised publications and activities will have their bill footed by government agencies, and will be free from the burden of being economically competitive, while private, grassroots work could soon be driven out of the market: after all, who pays for a good primer if primers are provided free of charge? Their only hope of survival will be to vie in their turn for public subsidy. Very often they will get their slice of the cake, but on merely political grounds rather than on the basis of the quality and efficacy of their proposal.

As a result, the overall quality and efficacy of the language preservation activities will decrease (cf. also Tosco, 2018). Rather than looking at the favour and utility of the proposed activity for the community, or its benefit for intergenerational transmission, activists will gear their work towards the attainment of government

6. Here and below, Laponce's original French wording will not be translated, as an English edition of the 1984 French original is available (*Languages and Their Territories*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1987).

support. Squeezed between intellectuals and politicians, language revitalisation yields its place to folkloric research and academic debate – the scientific investigation of variation included, of course. Although the speakers may feel pride in the interest that "their" language raises, it is very much doubtful that they will use the language in the realm of modern life as a consequence of the dialectologists' and folklorists' work.

If culture in general is a public good, more or less freely provided by the government, speakers of minority languages will get used to having things done by politicians – who appear so well disposed and ready to solve other people's problems with other people's money. They will therefore lose interest in the preservation of their language, and activity in favour of the languages and cultures will take the form of lobbying in order to have a language "protected" or "saved" from above – often, paradoxically, from the very agent of its present endangerment.

4. Neutering diversity

The more providing and caring the welfare state is, the more difficult it is to free oneself from its loving embrace.

As the aim of redistribution is to reduce the differences in living standards among citizens, there is no principled reason for the object of redistribution to be restricted to the inhabitants of a certain area: on the contrary, if redistribution is ideologically justified as a (partial) fulfilment of positive, universal rights, the more extensive (as well as intensive) the redistribution, the better.

There are therefore good logical grounds for the universalist and egalitarian tendencies of the welfare state. But are these same tendencies also working against linguistic and cultural diversity?

First of all we must remember that care for linguistic and cultural diversity may well be associated with a strongly nationalistic and monolingual language policy. In fact, it typically was: as detailed in Tosco (2018), this move is characteristic of contemporary nation-states but was theorised, conceived and carried on for the first time during the French Revolution. The very birth of dialect studies as an academic discipline in the early 19th century is linked to and can only be understood with reference to the ideological climate of the nation-state.[7]

7. After all, linguistic diversity may show the wealth of the national language. In order to do so, minority languages need to be properly tamed, for example classifying them alongside the national language: a case in point is represented by the never-ending controversies surrounding the classification of the Northern Italian languages/dialects, which often see Italian scholars pitted against the rest of the academic world (cf. Brasca, this volume).

In Tosco (2018) I argue that a "democratic language death" is perfectly consonant with the ideology of the nation-state ("[L]a folklorisation de la différence est le corollaire d'une politique d'unité nationale"; de Certeau, Julia, & Revel 1975: 178).

We thus arrive at what Fishman (1988) aptly calls the "folklorisation" of language: languages lose their communicative value and are reserved to irrelevant domains. In this way, diversity is neutered and made politically and ideologically irrelevant, bypassing the need to eliminate it altogether.

The values of the democratic state are not at odds with a policy aiming at the neutering of languages.

In many Western European countries, where the integrationist tendencies of the nation-state have worked more effectively and for longer, the speakers of the minority languages often regard themselves no longer as members of a different community, identified by a peculiar language, culture and habitat, but simply as members of the wider national community.

The network of the national socioeconomic interests has emptied local differences of any value, and the original community does not exist anymore. People can still take pride in the trivia of regional symbolism (the regional cuisine or the local history, for example), and even in their accent of the state language. The original language, if not gone for good, is considered a "dialect" of the national, state language, or as a *cultural* marker of distinctiveness within the broader economic, political and social national community.

The problem is that, as a marker of distinctiveness, language is very costly and inefficient.

In order for a language community to survive, its members must be willing to use the language among themselves and to transmit it to later generations. However, once the members of the community are also members of the larger language community of the nation-state, i.e., when they have become bilingual, and are therefore able to engage in a wider communicative net, the communicative usefulness of the original language is largely lost.

To actively use a minority language within the community means to create a separate network independent of the larger, nation-wide one: this would be tantamount to linguistically discriminating against all the other members of the larger linguistic community. Such a discriminatory behaviour will not only be communicatively useless; it will also be morally and ideologically untenable – according to the moral and ideological standards of the modern nation-state, which the members of the former minority have assimilated.

The use of the minority language would therefore come to signal, even if only covertly, a separatist attitude (either culturally, politically, or both). To use it outside the community, as, e.g., when first meeting a foreigner, could be construed as

an act of discrimination. Separatism and discrimination are precluded, because they are antithetical to integration (and separatism is of course antithetical to any government's best interests). Such a preclusion is ideological – stemming as it does not from an analysis of what is best for the smaller or larger community, but from the ideal premises upon which democracy is based, such as: openness, inclusion, equality.

Being ideological, the ban on the creation of language barriers "from below", i.e., on the part of the speakers of the minority language, is aprioristic and incontestable: to oppose it means to put oneself out of the larger community and its values, out of the democratic ecumene.

5. Language-preserving boundaries?

Faced with the problem of preserving or recreating a communicative network for minority languages, Fishman argues:

> it is precisely because most modern democracies engage in conscious or unconscious cultural genocide, and precisely because they do so via many of their most central and most prized and admired social, economic and political processes, that LS [: language shift] is so common and that RLS [: reversing language shift] is so difficult to attain and so heartbreaking to pursue. […]
>
> Modernisation and democratisation lead to increased interaction between individuals from different cultures […] and, therefore, to increased impact of the strong on the weak. Modernisation and democratisation erode 'parochial' cultural differences, even religious differences, and lead to universal dependence on the same media, political parties, educational institutions and programs, and economic endeavours, which, although they may be ideologically fractionated, are, nevertheless, not segmented along ethnocultural lines but along highly generalised socioeconomic and sociopolitical lines […]
>
> The result of such nominally 'free access of everyone to everything and everywhere' is that the majority culture […] is endemic and omnipresent; and minority cultures, having very little, if any, public legitimisation and private space, thereby constantly decline in survival potential, the more their members participate in 'the greater general good'. For ethnocultural minorities, the predictable outcome of such untrammeled participation in 'the greater general good' is dependency interaction […] it is easy to argue that modernisation and democratisation themselves are the enemies of RLS because *they undercut the very cultural and identity distinctions on which minority language maintenance must be based.*
>
> (Fishman 1991: 62–63)

In Fishman's opinion such a view is misguided, and the problems that modernisation and democratisation engender for minorities "can be coped with and ameliorated by means of *recognizing cultural democracy as a component and as a responsibility of the general democratic promise*." (Fishman 1991: 65). Still, it is perhaps not by chance that, after having expounded the dangers of democratisation for minority languages quoted above, Fishman continues with a section on "Boundary Maintenance". And something very akin to "state-mandated discrimination" seems advocated by Laponce (on the basis of the Quebec experience), who argues that

> la dynamique dominante des langues en contact étroit c'est de s'exclure, de s'éliminer, de se vaincre totalement. *Entre langues, l'état normal, c'est l'état de guerre*
> (Laponce 1984: 64; emphasis ours)

> les langues s'imposent par la force, lors même que cette force n'est pas utilisée
> (Laponce 1984: 192)

Laponce remarks on the different attitudes of majority and minority languages (i.e., of their speakers):

> La langue dominante […] a intérêt à ce que le plan social […] soit dépourvu de barrière, d'écluse, ou de remblai. À l'inverse, la langue dominée voudra que le flot de la langue supérieure soit endigué et détourné. La langue dominante parlera liberté et égalité, la langue dominée dira frontière, sécurité, exclusivité, privilège. En l'absence de remblais naturels, on érigera des barrières artificielles à l'aide de lois et d'institutions. (Laponce 1984: 36–37)

> L'importance qu'on attache à l'identité spécifique est une source fréquente d'incompréhension entre le groupe dominant et la minorité linguistique. Le premier ne comprend pas que le second attache tant d'importance à sa langue […] aussi, et indépendamment de l'opinion qu'il porte aux langues autres que la sienne, parce qu'il ne s'identifie que très faiblement à sa propre langue. On ne pense pas plus à sa langue, si elle est dominante, qu'on ne pense à sa santé si elle est bonne. Or le minoritaire, pourvu qu'il soit conscient de son état minoritaire, est, de ce fait, en mauvaise santé linguistique, et cette mauvaise santé contribue à la virulence de son identité spécifique, de cette identité périphérique qu'il accroche à son parler différent.
> (Laponce 1984: 41)

Which way out? Laponce's answer is radical:

> La création de forteresses ou de ghettos linguistiques peut fort bien entraîner des coûts économiques ou sociaux regrettables, coûts qui résultent d'une mise en marge des centres de décision que contrôle l'ethnie la plus puissante; mais, du point de vue de la protection de la langue, le point de vue qui nous intéresse, c'est la seule tactique qui, à long terme, ait de fortes chances de réussir.
> (Laponce 1984: 144)

Are Fishman's boundaries and Laponce's "linguistic ghettoes" acceptable (even granting they are possible) in modern democratic states? Is such an outspoken stance for separation still "democratic"?

One could argue that if, as per Laponce, the 'creation of fortresses or ghettoes is the only long-term successful solution in order to protect a language', language protection is in principle impossible in a modern democratic state.

Still, the maintenance or downright creation of language barriers, although of a less radical variety and maybe more in line with Fishman, is not entirely unknown in the literature. Writing about the Australian languages, Fishman, noting that "[a] very few, fortunate (i.e. govermentally benignly neglected) Aboriginal languages are genuinely linked to the intergenerational mother tongue transmission process", adds:

> Self-help and self-regulation in everyday intergenerational mother tongue transmission contexts, safeguarded by *boundary setting and boundary preservation*, are the *sine qua non* of RLS [: reversing language shift]. Money and planning along such lines by national authorities are unlikely, given the ethos of shared participationism that dominates both democratic and authoritarian regimes today.
>
> (Fishman 1991: 277; emphasis ours)[8]

It is true that Fishman's boundaries are voluntary and self-imposed ("without sociocultural separation, without the most stubborn maintenance of *voluntary boundaries* between Xmen and Ymen and between Xishness and Yishness the future of Xish is problematic"; Fishman 1991: 110; emphasis mine), but the compatibility of self-segregation with the universalist ethos of democracy remains dubious at best.[9] Democratic nation-states are based upon the principle of the equality of citizens before the law and in political representation: the citizens are sovereign; but, as sovereignty is indivisible, people must be indivisible, too. Internal fortresses and ghettoes have no place, and neither do separatist dreams.

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8. Austin (2014), e. g., reports on the successful revitalisation of Diyari in Australia. Still, '[T]he Diyari language is unique in Australia in having been the subject of intensive interest and support by outsiders (missionaries, linguists) as well as by native speakers for almost 140 years'. This resulted inter alia in 'a large amount of translations and language documentation materials', and, maybe most importantly, 'a continuous period of active literacy' which lasted until the 1960s. The 1990s saw the rise of a Dieri Aboriginal Corporation and recognition among others of land rights. Much later, the group benefited from a grant from the Australian Office of the Arts in 2012–2013. Although most heartening for language revitalisation programs, Diyari can hardly be considered a "typical" endangered language.

9. We have to leave aside here the fascinating question of the religious nature of political ideologies, as most clearly argumented by Voegelin (1997).

Much more common in the literature is the plea for a language-based territorial unity, federated to others within a state, and responsible for the implementation of welfare in that area. As advocated by Laitin (1992) for Africa, this could quell the separatist tendencies on the one hand, and realise a measure of plurilingualism on the other. As a side-effect, it would bring along the extra bonus of "bringing the citizens closer to the power", thereby realising a measure of nationhood.

A sort of "cultural federalism" is likewise suggested by Nettle and Romaine (2000). The languages the authors have in mind are generally on the recipient side of wealth redistribution within their respective states. Admitting that such communities are granted cultural and linguistic autonomy within their respective nation-states, they will therefore still be dependent on the central government for economic sustainability – thereby violating the authors' wise warning that "[N]o language or culture can endure if it is dependent on another for its intergenerational transmission" (Nettle and Romaine 2000: 189).

6. Conclusions

In the end, the crucial question remains: does democracy accommodate minorities more easily than other forms of government and other political ideologies?

For one thing, democracy is not programatically built upon the unification of different peoples or groups under a common ideology or faith, as was typical of the multinational empires (cf. Tosco 2015 for the Islamic empire). Democracy may *accommodate* diversity, but it is the last instalment of the nation-state and it is still built upon nationhood: while the nation was traditionally interpreted as the political embodiment of a single people (and a single language), it is often viewed nowadays as the creation of civic bonds and shared economic interests. Still, these bonds and interests entail the subordination or downright elimination of particularisms and local differences.

Second, as we have seen, the redistributive and egalitarian ethos of modern democracies entails the development of mechanisms of wealth distribution that, even when purportedly geared towards the preservation of language diversity, often end up favouring the demise of minor languages as means of societal communication and their change into mere symbolic elements of cultural diversity.

In the end: has democracy a special problem with multilingualism? One does not necessarily have to subscribe to the quotation from Mill which opened this article to raise the question and to ask whether the ideology sustaining the modern Western states is conducive to the maintenance of language diversity or, covertly or overtly, to its suppression.

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SECTION 2

Identifying and perceiving contested languages

CHAPTER 4

Mixing methods in linguistic classification

A hidden agenda against multilingualism? The contestedness of Gallo-"Italic" languages within the Romance family

Lissander Brasca
Bangor University

The scholarly literature unanimously describes Gallo-"Italic"[1] as showing all the structural traits that distinguish Gallo-Romance from the other Romance varieties. Nonetheless, while some scholars classify Gallo-"Italic" as Gallo-Romance, others classify it as Italo-Romance ('pro-Italo- scholars). These two labels ('Gallo-Romance' and 'Italo-Romance') are irreconcilable, as they are normally used in the family tree model to name two cousin taxa: Gallo-Romance is a Western Romance daughter, while Italo-Romance is an Eastern Romance daughter. In this chapter I argue that this problem can best be understood by applying Kloss's distinction of *Abstand* vs. *Ausbau*. I will show that, in their proposed classifications, the pro-Italo- scholars mix the *Abstand* and the *Ausbau* criteria and that this is inconsistent with the aims of classificatory science. In fact, following Kloss (1993), the status of *Abstand* language and that of *Ausbau* language are defined on two dimensions – namely, according to two variables – that are ontologically and conceptually independent (see also Tamburelli 2014). Indeed, however a linguistic variety is classified along one of these two dimensions, it does not affect its classification along the other dimension. Therefore, *Abstand* and *Ausbau* must be seen as classificatory criteria for two independent classifications. I argue that, in science, classifications have an *informative function*, and that by employing mixed criteria, pro-Italo- scholars have provided a flawed "classification" that is informative neither of the *Abstand* nor of the *Ausbau* status of the varieties being classified, hence it is not useful for scientific purposes and should therefore be rejected. The final section sketches out how future research might consider how the acknowledgment of Gallo-"Italic" as Gallo-Romance collides with assumptions of nationalism, possibly constituting a *taboo*, which suggests that the unexpected classification of Gallo-"Italic" as Italo-Romance may be due to extra-linguistic

1. I write Gallo-"Italic" with inverted commas because the Italic linguistic profile of this group is exactly the point of contention in this chapter. Partly interpreting Pierre Bec's suggestion (Bec, 1970–1971: II 316), it might be better labelled as 'Cisalpine Gallo-Romance'.

https://doi.org/10.1075/wlp.8.04bra

reasons. In a preliminary analysis, I propose that contesting[2] the Gallo-Romance genealogical-structural profile of Gallo-"Italic" varieties could be a means of preventing (many of) their speakers from developing awareness of the fact that they speak languages distinct from Italian[3] (and not "Italian dialects", as the nationalist rhetoric assumes), and consequently, inhibiting or containing a possible movement claiming the right of these languages to official public support.[4]

1. Introduction

1.1 Geographical introduction

Scholars agree in considering the Massa-Senigallia line – also known as *La Spezia-Rimini* line[5] –, running along the Apennine mountain ridge in Italy,[6] an important bundle of isoglosses in the Romance domain (Bartoli 1936; Wartburg 1936, 1967; Lausberg 1965; Pellegrini 1975, 1992; Loporcaro 2009), separating two branches known as Western and Eastern Romania. Scholars also agree in considering most Romance varieties historically spoken between the Massa-Senigallia line to the south, and the Alps to the north, as a homogeneous group known as Gallo-"Italic". This group covers the whole territory of the Italian administrative regions of Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Liguria, most of Piedmont – excluding the western Franco-Provençal and Occitan valleys –, Northern Marche, Lunigiana valley in Northern Tuscany, the western part of the province of Trent, some localities on the eastern coast of the Garda lake, the Swiss canton Ticino and the southern slope valleys of Grisons, in Switzerland.[7]

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2. In this chapter 'contestedness' is meant in some different albeit related ways: many Italian scholars contest the classification of Gallo-"Italic" varieties as Gallo-Romance, their acknowledgement as languages distinct from Italian and their right to official public support.

3. The Italian language is based on Florentine (Tuscan), which is an Italo-Romance variety.

4. In this chapter the Gallo-Romance structural-genetic profile of Gallo-"Italic" varieties is meant as a sufficient and non-necessary condition for claiming their status as independent languages from Italian. Indeed, some genuinely Italo-Romance varieties, e.g. Sicilian, are sufficiently distant from Italian to be considered separate languages too.

5. Based on scholarly descriptions, some consider the name '*Massa-Senigallia* line' more appropriate. The 2017 edition of Hull 1982 proposes the name '*Carrara-Pesaro line*' as the most appropriate one.

6. In the present chapter, 'Italy' is used with the currently common extra-linguistic meaning of 'territory of the Italian Republic'.

7. See Devoto & Giacomelli, 1972, among others.

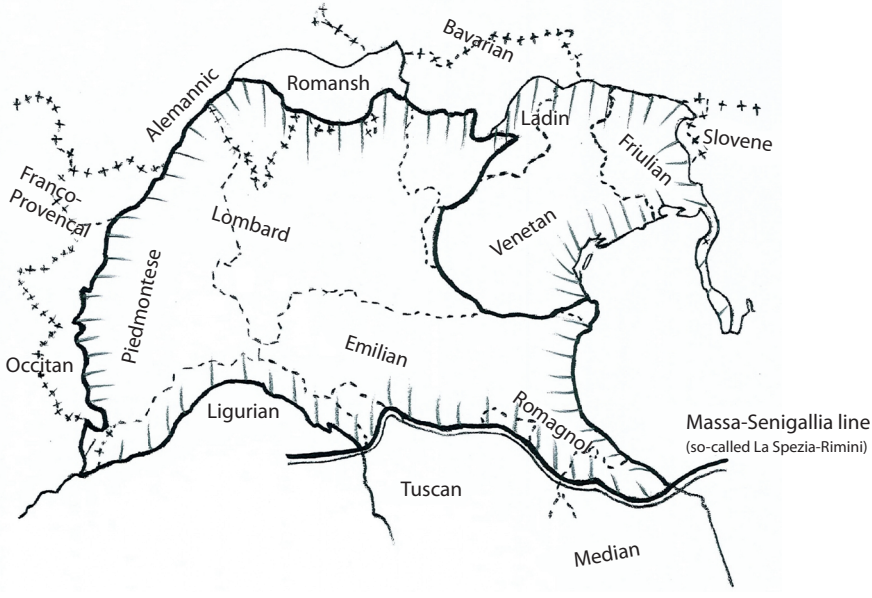

Figure 1. Map showing the Gallo-"Italic" languages (inside the thick lines). The 'fringed' lines indicate the Cisalpine continuum (including Gallo-"Italic"). The Rhaeto-Cisalpine (or Padanian) continuum (Hull, 1982) includes Cisalpine plus Romansh. Small crosses indicate state borders while dashed lines indicate regional administrative borders.[8]

Some studies (e.g. Lausberg 1965) distinguish Gallo-"Italic" proper from Venetan within a "Northern-Italian" group, while others (e.g. *Ethnologue*)[9] also refer to Venetan as a part of Gallo-"Italic". However, what is relevant for the purposes of the present chapter, is that scholars agree in including the geolects labelled as Gallo-"Italic" within a taxonomic unit that contrasts, as a whole, with all the geolects spoken in Italy south of the Massa-Senigallia line.

1.2 Problem statement. Two competing groupings for Romance varieties

While the extent and the internal articulation of Gallo-"Italic" are not a matter of disagreement among scholars, an issue appears when dealing with its taxonomic collocation within wider Romance sub-groups. The issue derives from the co-occurrence of the following premises:

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8. The Töitschu, Mòcheno, Cimbrian and Resian languages are not represented in this map. Information on these languages can be found in: http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php by selecting 'Italy'.

9. http://www.ethnologue.com/subgroups/gallo-italian, accessed on 09/11/2018.

Premise a – the scholarly literature proposes two different groupings concerning Gallo-"Italic". According to some scholars (see Section 1.3 below), Gallo-"Italic" is part of the Gallo-Romance group, along with French, Occitan, Franco-Provençal and Rhaeto-Romance (I will call this the 'pro-Gallo- tradition'); conversely, according to another scholarly tradition, which seems more influential, Gallo-"Italic" is part of the Italo-Romance group, along with Tuscan, Sicilian and the other Romance varieties spoken in Italy south of the Massa-Senigallia line (I will call this the 'pro-Italo- tradition');

Premise b – the labels 'Gallo-Romance' and 'Italo-Romance' are normally used in the family tree model to represent two cousin *taxa*: Gallo-Romance is a Western Romance daughter, while Italo-Romance is an Eastern Romance daughter. Therefore, the two labels are irreconcilable from a cladistic standpoint;

Premise c – the authors from both traditions describe Gallo-"Italic" as sharing all the structural-linguistic traits that, in their own studies, are considered relevant in distinguishing Western Romance, and in particular Gallo-Romance, from Italo-Romance.

Assuming that the labels 'Gallo-Romance' and 'Italo-Romance' are mutually exclusive members of the same nomenclature, as they seem to be in the literature, the ascription of Gallo-"Italic" to both these groups reveals an underlying taxonomic inconsistency that needs to be explained. Therefore, this chapter will address the following research questions: why do some scholars classify Gallo-"Italic" as Italo-Romance notwithstanding their describing it as structurally Gallo-Romance? How can their proposal of classification be useful in advancing knowledge in Romance linguistics?

1.3 Some representative contributions of the two competing traditions

Geoffrey Hull's (1982) PhD thesis could be seen as the most representative study of the pro-Gallo- tradition, in that its main goal is to propose a structural-genealogical classification of Romance varieties spoken in Northern Italy, on the basis of qualitative data taken from dialect studies and from medieval literature. According to Hull, *"Padanian"*, made up of the Cisalpine and Rhaetic[10] continua, is part of the Gallo-Romance branch of Western Romance, and its Gallo-Romance structural nature was still evident in the modern vernaculars at the time of his research

10. In Hull (1982), 'Cisalpine' is the set of the Western Romance varieties spoken in Northern Italy: Gallo-"Italic", Venetan, Dolomitic Ladin and Friulian. Hull reserves the term 'Rhaetian' for the ultra-archaic Romansh vernaculars of the Grisons, in Switzerland.

(Hull 1982). Before Hull, a few other scholars had already explicitly claimed the Gallo-Romance (and not the Italo-Romance) linguistic identity of Northern Italy, among them the Swiss Romanist Heinrich Schmid (Schmid 1956) and the Occitanist Pierre Bec (Bec 1970–1971. See also Hull 1990). Hierarchical clusterings resulting from some dialectrometric studies corroborate these claims, showing that Gallo-"Italic" varieties are closer to standard French and to other Gallo-Romance varieties than to standard Italian or any Romance variety spoken south of the Massa-Senigallia line (Goebl 2008; Tamburelli and Brasca 2017).

Some scholarly studies representing the opposing view, the pro-Italo- tradition, are those of Wartburg (1967); Lausberg (1965); Hall (1976), and Pellegrini (1975, 1992). The present chapter analyses these contributions – specifically Pellegrini (1975) – because, although not particularly recent, they are frequently cited in more recent literature (e.g. Posner 1996 and Loporcaro 2009, *inter alia)* as valid sources in the field of Romance classification. A section is devoted to Loporcaro (2009) itself as a more recent representative of this tradition. Note that by labelling them as 'pro-Italo-', I refer to the fact that in these studies Gallo-"Italic" varieties are either *explicitly referred to* as being part of the Italo-Romance group, or *de facto presumed* to be. This latter case occurs when Gallo-"Italic" is included within Italo-Romance and excluded from Gallo-Romance in graphic representations, organization of the text, separation and titles of sections and so forth.

1.4 *Ausbau* vs. *Abstand*

This classificatory problem (two irreconcilable groupings) can be best understood by applying the distinction between *Abstand language* and *Ausbau language* proposed by Kloss (1952, 1993). The *Abstand* status of a variety depends on the degree of its structural-linguistic distance from other bordering varieties, while its *Ausbau* status depends on the sociological status attributed to it within a literate society (Kloss 1993). Kloss shows that the *Abstand* status and the *Ausbau* status of a language are mutually independent variables from an ontological and conceptual point of view: they are defined along two unrelated dimensions (see Bailey 1994). This is to say that how a variety is classified on the *Ausbau* dimension does not determine its classification on the *Abstand* dimension and *vice versa* (see Fishman 2008; Tamburelli 2014). Therefore, a linguistic variety can be currently heteronomous with respect to a standard (*Ausbau*) variety with which it does not share the same genetic-structural development, namely, that is part of another independent *Abstand* language. In Kloss (1993), various examples taken from the linguistic situation of some European and Asiatic countries show how the *Ausbau* status of a variety is insensitive to – hence freely combinable with – its *Abstand* status (Kloss

1993). Given this ontological and conceptual mutual independence, a linguist who intends to provide a classification of Romance languages by their *Abstand* status should take as relevant only structural-linguistic features, disregarding sociological aspects. Besides, this is what is normally done when classifying the languages of pre-literate tribes (Kloss 1993). Integrating Kloss's reference to pre-literate tribes, one can use expressions like "reconstructed (proto-)languages", "Proto-Germanic language", "Proto-Indo-European language" (Campbell 1998: 123–124; 166, 187),[11] "lingua [antenata] ricostruita" (Alinei 2000: 190),[12] "si ricostruisce una lingua originaria" (Graffi & Scalise 2002: 248),[13] and the like, as examples of scholarly use of the term *language* (*lingua* in the above Italian quotations) in an exclusive *Abstand* sense.

In summary, two distinct ways of conceptualising the status of a linguistic variety in relation to other varieties – *Abstand* and *Ausbau* – are at the basis of the polysemic use of the term *language* in the scholarly literature: "*Abstand* language" and "*Ausbau* language". To avoid misunderstanding, whichever of these two meanings is intended should be specified in any context where the word *language* is used.

1.5 Classificatory criteria and distinct classifications

An analogy can be drawn between the ontological and conceptual mutual independence of:

a. the *Abstand* status of a linguistic variety
b. the *Ausbau* status of a linguistic variety

and the mutual independence of two possible dichotomies according to which animals can be classified:

a′. mammal vs. non-mammal
b′. domestic vs. non-domestic.

Classification of an animal according to one of the two criteria (*a′*. or *b′*.), does not affect classification according to the other criterion (*b′*. or *a′*. See Bailey 1994: 3). Indeed, some animals are *simultaneously* mammal *and* domestic, some are mammal *and* non-domestic, some are non-mammal *and* domestic, some are non-mammal

11. "… for Proto-Germanic…, there are no written attestations at all, and the *language* is known only from comparative reconstruction. … [E]very proto-language was once a real *language*… [T]he original proto-*language* (Proto-Indo-European)." (Campbell, 1998: 123, 124, 187 [emphasis added]).

12. "reconstructed [ancestor] language".

13. "an original language is reconstructed".

and non-domestic. Thus, the two dichotomies (*a′*. and *b′*.) correspond to two distinct perspectives of observation, description and classification of animals (hence two distinct analytical perspectives). This does not exclude the possibility of combining the two classifications, but in this case their combination would yield a bi-dimensional classification (see Bailey 1994: 4), graphically representable by a four cell matrix:

Table 1. Example of a bi-dimensional classificatory matrix

	domestic	**non-domestic**
mammal		
non-mammal		

In this matrix, the independence of the two dimensions (vertical and horizontal) is respected and recognizable. For the same reason, *Abstand* on the one hand and *Ausbau* on the other should be seen as two distinct and independent classificatory criteria of linguistic varieties. They can be combined into a bi-dimensional classification, but not into a unidimensional one.

1.6 Possible causes for the disagreement between pro-Gallo- and pro-Italo- traditions

With the fundamental distinction of '*Abstand* vs. *Ausbau*' in mind, we can shed light on our classificatory problem. Specifically, three possible issues arise as potential underlying causes for the disagreement between the pro-Gallo- and the pro-Italo- traditions. I will consider them in turn.

1.6.1 *First possible cause*

Proponents of the two groupings may aim at different types of classification, namely pro-Gallo- authors aim at a purely *Abstand*-based classification, while pro-Italo- authors, albeit acknowledging the Gallo-Romance genetic profile of Gallo-"Italic", aim at a purely *Ausbau*-based classification. In this case, the 'apparent' disagreement would be due to the questionable[14] *polysemic use of the nomenclature* (system of labels), in the *Abstand* and in the *Ausbau* sense. For the pro-Gallo- authors, the

14. A polysemic (or *inertial*) use of one nomenclature is questionable because two distinct classificatory criteria applied to the same group of items can result in two different distributions of the items among the sub-groups. In this case, the nomenclature that matches one of the two sub-groupings cannot match the other one. So, two distinct nomenclatures are suitable for two distinct classificatory criteria.

statement "Gallo-'Italic' is Gallo-Romance" would mean "Gallo-'Italic' *is descended from* Proto-Gallo-Romance", while for the pro-Italo- authors, the statement "Gallo-'Italic' is Italo-Romance" would mean "Gallo-'Italic' *is currently heteronomous*[15] *with respect to* Italian/Tuscan".

In this view, the two different groupings correspond to two intentionally different analytic perspectives, *Abstand* for the pro-Gallo- studies, *Ausbau* for the pro-Italo- studies. However, this cannot be a sufficient explanation, because in all the pro-Italo- studies that I am aware of, the vast majority of the varieties considered are described and compared in terms of *sharing vs. non-sharing of isoglosses*, with their grouping and labelling justified by this criterion (Wartburg 1967; Lausberg 1965; Pellegrini 1975, 1992; Hall 1976). In these studies, as in the ones that propose classifications of pre-literate tribes (e.g. Greenberg 1950; Ehret and Christopher 1981; Campbell 1998, among others), the structural description of local non-standard varieties normally *precedes* and *determines* their grouping and labelling. This suggests two things. Firstly, that these authors consider it possible to describe and classify the local non-standard varieties purely on the basis of *sharing vs. non-sharing* of isoglosses, disregarding their socio-political status. Secondly, that this is their specific intention. I therefore exclude the possibility that the aim of the pro-Italo- authors is to make a purely *Ausbau*-based classification.

At the same time, I also exclude the possibility that the pro-Italo- authors aim at a purely *Abstand*-based classification. Indeed, in their writings they describe Gallo-"Italic" as showing the effects of linguistic changes that they themselves consider relevant in distinguishing Western Romance, and in particular the 'uncontested' Gallo-Romance varieties (French, Occitan, Franco-Provençal), from Italo-Romance (Wartburg 1967; Lausberg 1963–1965; Pellegrini 1975; Hall 1976). Thus, if the pro-Italo- studies aimed at a purely *Abstand*-based classification, they would necessarily classify Gallo-"Italic" as Gallo-Romance.

1.6.2 *Second possible cause*

According to the pro-Italo- tradition, Gallo-"Italic" would be genetically Gallo-Romance, but a structural-linguistic convergence has taken place over the centuries, such that the ancient Gallo-"Italic" became so highly Tuscanised that, in these scholars' opinion, the classification as "Italo-Romance", or even "Italian dialects", seems more suitable for the modern geolects of Northern Italy. Consequently, the two different groupings would concern two different varieties. Also in this case, the disagreement would be explained by the questionable polysemic use of the nomenclature, but in a different sense from the one seen in the previous paragraph:

15. On the concept of 'heteronomy' and 'autonomy' see Trudgill (1992).

for these authors (i.e. pro-Italo-), the statement "Neapolitan[16] is Italo-Romance" would mean "Neapolitan *is descended from* Proto-Italo-Romance", while "Gallo-'Italic' is Italo-Romance" would mean "Gallo-'Italic' *shows strong signs of linguistic convergence towards Italian/Tuscan due to contact, which relegate its Gallo-Romance traits to a minor amount of inherited lexical relics*".

This interpretation seems to be correct for only one of the studies I examined. It corresponds to what I call 'the Wartburg hypothesis'. Wartburg (1967) is – to my knowledge – the only pro-Italo- study that proposes a classification for Gallo-"Italic" formally based on exclusively structural-linguistic criteria, without apparent recourse to socio-political arguments. Here Gallo-"Italic" seems to be considered Gallo-Romance in terms of genetic development, but would have then "become Italian" (Wartburg 1967: maps 9 and 10) due to a structural convergence beginning in the Middle Ages. The two groupings would therefore concern two structurally distinct varieties. I will discuss the Wartburg hypothesis in a forthcoming contribution. In the present chapter I will focus exclusively on the next (i.e. the third) possibility.

1.6.3 *The third possibility*

The pro-Gallo- and the pro-Italo- authors are pursuing the same goal (an *Abstand*-based classification), but the classification proposed by one of these two traditions is inconsistent. I believe that this interpretation is the correct one. In Section 2, I show that the way in which the grouping is realized in the pro-Italo-studies is inconsistent with the aims of classificatory science. In fact, all these studies[17] mix two ontologically and conceptually independent classificatory criteria (i.e. *Abstand* and *Ausbau*) within a formally unidimensional classification. Firstly, they describe and compare the vast majority of the varieties that they consider in terms of *sharing vs. non-sharing of isoglosses* (*Abstand*), which are then grouped and labeled on this basis. Secondly, they describe Gallo-"Italic" as sharing all the structural-linguistic traits that in their own analyses are considered relevant in distinguishing Western Romance, and in particular Gallo-Romance, from Italo-Romance. Thirdly, some sociological or geo-political arguments are eventually presented in these same studies which, instead of adding a new independent *Ausbau* dimension to the *Abstand* one thereby establishing a bi-dimensional classification (as in Table 2), compete successfully with the *Abstand* criterion and determine the ascription of Gallo-"Italic" to Italo-Romance *instead of* Gallo-Romance, in a

16. There is no controversy in the scholarly literature about the classification of Neapolitan as Italo-Romance.

17. Excluding Wartburg (1967), which deserves to be considered separately.

unidimensional classification (as in Table 3). I will call this preponderant number of pro-Italo- studies, the 'mixed-criterion tradition', and it is to its criticism that the rest of this chapter is devoted.

Table 2. bi-dimensional classification of Gallo-Romance and Italo-Romance

	Gallo-Romance	**Italo-Romance**
heteronomous with respect to Italian	**Gallo-"Italic"**, Occitan of Piedmont, etc.	Neapolitan, Sicilian, etc.
heteronomous with respect to French	Occitan of France, etc.	Corsican

Table 3. uni-dimensional classification of Gallo-Romance and Italo-Romance

Gallo-Romance	**Italo-Romance**
Occitan of France and Piedmont, etc.	**Gallo-"Italic"**, Neapolitan, Sicilian, etc.

2. Issues with the "mixed criterion tradition"

2.1 Scientific classifications

Classification consists of grouping things according to the type and the number of characteristics that they share (affinity), and placing them in a hierarchical system of categories (grouping), expressing the different degrees of their affinity. Classification also supplies a distinctive name for each group (labelling) (Simpson 1945; Bailey 1994). In scientific research, classifications are "informative tools" (see Simpson 1945: 13; also Devitt 2008: 352). From the position that an unknown item occupies within a classification, the reader should be able to *derive information* about the characteristics that such item shows and shares exclusively with all the other members of that group. Conversely, a scientist should be able to propose the ascription of a new item to any group of that classification. However, for this to be possible, *one* classificatory criterion needs to be *asserted* (see Bailey 1994) and applied systematically *to all the items in the world* that present the conditions of applicability of that given criterion, *without any a priori exclusion*. If these principles are not respected, the resulting "classification" will suffer from what we may call an 'ontological problem' and an '*ad hoc* problem', both entailing the *loss of its informative power*, hence of its scientific utility.

The ontological problem derives from the simultaneous application of two ontologically distinct classificatory criteria in a formally unidimensional "classification". We can observe this issue in the following example involving the fictitious

animal "lyrphaon": *wolf* and *squirrel* have to be grouped together because they both have mammary glands. On the other hand, *dog* has to be grouped with *canary* and *lyrphaon* in a contrasting group *of the same classification (!)*, because it is a domestic animal just as the canary and the lyrphaon are.

Based on these two asserted criteria, one cannot derive from this passage any information that is useful for answering the following questions: does *lyrphaon* have mammary glands? In what group shall I locate *cat*? Moreover, if one found *cat* located in a group of this "classification", he would be unable to work out why it is placed there rather than in the other group. In summary, the ontological problem makes it impossible to derive information about hitherto unknown items (e.g. "lyrphaon") on the basis of their presumed classification, neither from the anatomical, nor from the environmental/behavioural standpoint. Furthermore, the ontological problem does not allow the reader to infer in which group to locate known items (e.g. "cat" in our example above).

In Section 2.2 I will show that these problems appear in a scholarly study – which exemplifies the mixed-criterion tradition – where *Abstand* and *Ausbau* criteria are mixed in a formally unidimensional "classification". However, as we have just seen, such "classification" cannot be informative from the *Abstand* nor from the *Ausbau* standpoints, and thus it is arguably not a classification.

The *ad hoc* problem is conceptually distinct from the 'ontological' problem, even though the two are probably concomitant. The *ad hoc* problem appears when one of the compresent criteria (whose simultaneous intervention entails the ontological problem *per se*) is applied only to some items and not to others that present the same conditions of applicability of the criterion itself. Here is a fictitious "classification" suffering from the *ad hoc* problem: *wolf* and *cat* have to be grouped together because they both have mammary glands; on the other hand, *dog* has to be grouped with *canary* in a contrasting group *of the same classification (!)*, because it is a domestic animal just like the canary.

This "classification" is not informative: one cannot understand why *dog* is included in that given group but *cat* is not, despite it also being a domestic animal. Conversely, a scientist cannot know in which group to locate *cow* or any other animal. What results is not *one* classification, but rather a *non-organic conglomeration of 'pieces'* of classifications. In Section 2.4. I will show how, in a pro-Italo- contribution among several similar examples that the literature offers, a certain *Abstand*-based argument is considered a determining factor for ascribing Corsican to Italo-Romance but, surprisingly, not for ascribing Gallo-"Italic" to Gallo-Romance.

2.2 The ontological problem in Pellegrini (1975), 'The five systems of Italo-Romance'

What I termed the 'ontological problem' in Section 2.1 appears, for instance, in Pellegrini (1975).[18] In this study, Pellegrini describes what he names the "five systems of Italo-Romance":

> (1) Northern Italian or Cisalpine, in which I also include Ligurian, Venetan and Istrioto; (2) Friulian; (3) the Southern-Central dialect system […] (4) Sard […] with the appendix of Corsican; (5) Tuscan (with Tuscanised Corsican).
>
> (Pellegrini 1975: 68)[19]

Pellegrini's declared intention is to describe and compare the "five Italo-Romance systems" according to exclusively structural-linguistic (i.e. *Abstand*) criteria:

> Here I do not intend […] to give priority to Tuscan as a reference point for a classification […] It is my intention to equate all five 'Italo-Romance' systems that we can single out of the great variety of our idioms, *since my description takes into account only linguistic facts*.
>
> (Pellegrini 1975: 67 [my translation,[20] emphasis added])[21]

Pellegrini (1975: 69) mentions the following traits that distinguish Cisalpine from the "other Italo-Romance systems":

1. the ancient palatal pronunciation of CA- ([old] Milanese *las k'ávras*),
2. the retention of Latin final *-s*
3. the retention of the Latin clusters with L (*plan, klaf, blank, etc.*).

Among other "phonetic phenomena that are characteristic of this system", Pellegrini mentions the following (1975: 69–71, [IPA characters added]):

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18. Identical considerations could be made about Pellegrini (1992).

19. "(1) l'italiano settentrionale o cisalpino nel quale includo anche il ligure, il veneto e l'istrioto; (2) il friulano; (3) il sistema dei dialetti 'centromeridionali'…; (4) il sardo… con l'appendice del corso; (5) il toscano (col corso toscanizzato)."

20. In Sections 2.2., 2.3. and 2.4. all the English translations from the original Italian passages are mine.

21. "In questa sede non intendo… dare la preminenza al toscano come punto di riferimento per una classificazione… È mia intenzione di porre sullo stesso piano tutti e cinque i sistemi 'italo-romanzi' che si possono enucleare dalla grande varietà dei nostri idiomi, poiché la mia descrizione tiene conto unicamente di fatti linguistici."

(a) the lenition of voiceless intervocalic consonants, including *-s-*;
(b) degemination;
[…]
(g) -CT- > *it* and eventually *č* ([tʃ]) in Lombardy;
(h) loss of atonic vowels;
(i) 'mixed vowels' *ü* and *ö* ([y, ø]);
(l) sharp contraposition between short and long vowels and possible formation of falling diphthongs from the latter; …".

In line with this description, Pellegrini asserts the Western Romance identity of Cisalpine: "[t]hat Northern Italy belongs, and even more has belonged, to the 'Western Romania' is a truth admitted by all the serious scholars, according to a well-known division supported by von Wartburg (the so-called La Spezia-Rimini line)" (Pellegrini 1975: 69).[22]

Pellegrini is also clear about the linguistic profile of Cisalpine as Gallo-Romance:

> Upper (or Cisalpine) Italy certainly underwent the Gallic influence to various degrees, even in its marginal areas, Ligurian, Venetan and Istrian. […] At least until the eleventh century and even later, it is closely connected to the great Gallia both politically and linguistically. It is certainly not erroneous to think of a large Gallo-Romania which also includes upper Italy (*Italia annonaria*) in addition to *Rhaetia*.
> (Pellegrini 1975: 68 [italic original]).[23]

He also explicitly excludes the possibility of representing the whole of Italy as a genealogical-linguistic *taxon*:

> It is certainly a great heresy to reconstruct a 'proto-Italian' valid for all the geographically and politically Italian regions, and then articulated and branched into the various vernaculars of our nation; unfortunately, this view is still implicit in some studies and even in some recent ones. (Pellegrini 1975: 65–66).[24]

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22. "Che l'Italia superiore appartenga, e ancor più sia appartenuta, alla 'Romània occidentale' è invece una verità ammessa da tutti gli studiosi seri, secondo una ben nota divisione cara al von Wartburg (con la cosiddetta linea Spezia-Rimini)."

23. "L'Italia superiore (o Cisalpina) ha certamente risentito in misura più o meno evidente dell'influsso gallico anche nelle sue aree marginali, liguri, venete e istriote. …[P]erlomeno sino all'undicesimo secolo ed ancora dopo, risulta strettamente collegata con la grande Gallia sia sul piano politico, sia su quello linguistico. Non è di certo erroneo pensare a un'ampia Gallo-Romània che include oltre alla *Raetia* anche l'Italia superiore (l'*Italia annonaria*)…"

24. "È certamente una grande eresia ricostruire un 'proto-italiano' valido per tutte le regioni geograficamente e politicamente italiane, poi articolatosi e ramificatosi nelle varie favelle della nostra nazione; tale opinione è purtroppo ancora adombrata in alcuni scritti anche recenti…"

To which he adds: "it is absolutely impossible to reconstruct a common unitary scheme, a pan-Italian diasystem or a 'Proto-Italian': so deep are the differences between the various regions." (Pellegrini 1975: 86).[25]

In the last statement we see an implicit comparison with the other Romance sub-groups (Gallo-Romance, Ibero-Romance, etc.), for which it would indeed be possible "to reconstruct a unitary scheme". Indeed, the missing "pan-Italian" linguistic traits, to which Pellegrini refers, certainly cannot be the Romance traits, but rather some traits that should be shared *exclusively* by what Pellegrini names "the five Italo-Romance systems", and could distinguish all of them *as a whole* from the other Romance sub-groups. In other words, the "such deep differences among the regions [of Italy]" can only be intended as so deep that some of them are considered relevant in contrasting Gallo-Romance or Ibero-Romance with Italo-Romance, which equates to saying that the label "Italo-Romance" does not represent any *Abstand* taxon.

Moreover, Pellegrini seems to exclude the possibility that the heteronomy of Cisalpine and Southern Italian varieties could have led them to a strong structural-linguistic convergence upon Italian/Tuscan literary language so as to make them mutually intelligible:

> It is well known that mutual understanding between a Northern Italian and a Southern Italian is almost always impossible when both express themselves in a local and archaic linguistic medium, which is not influenced by the Italian koine. I could cite many testimonies of this. (Pellegrini 1975: 64–65).[26]

This being the case, it is unclear what the term "Italo-Romance" means in Pellegrini (1975), or what it is informative of. Deviating from his declared intent to stick to *Abstand* considerations (1975: 67), Pellegrini answers this question by attributing an exclusively *Ausbau* meaning to the label "Italo-Romance", as follows: "by 'Italo-Romance' I refer to the various idioms of the Peninsula and the Islands that *have long since chosen Italian as their 'guide-language'*." (Pellegrini 1975: 56 [emphasis added]).[27]

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25. "… è assolutamente impossibile ricostruire uno schema comune unitario, un diasistema panitaliano o un 'protoitaliano': tanto profonde sono le differenze tra le varie regioni."

26. "È risaputo che la comprensione reciproca tra un Italiano del Nord e uno del Sud, qualora ambedue si esprimano in un mezzo linguistico locale e arcaico non influenzato dalla koine italiana, risulta quasi sempre impossibile e di ciò potrei citare ampie testimonianze."

27. "… con 'italo-romanzo' alludo alle varie parlate della Penisola e delle Isole che hanno scelto, già da tempo, come 'lingua guida' l'italiano."

In his footnote 4, Pellegrini clarifies this position further:

> It is basically an old criterion followed, for example, by F. Diez,[28] 'Grammatik der romanischen Sprachen' (1st ed. 1838); see also Monteverdi… [who states]: 'As Italian is the literary language of Tuscany, Lombardy and Sardinia, in Diez's contribution *very different dialects are grouped together* such as Tuscan, Lombard and Sardinian'. (Pellegrini 1975: 57, note 4 [emphasis added]).[29]

In Monteverdi's expression "*very* different dialects" reported above, we see the acknowledgment that these dialects do not share any traits that are absent in the dialects of other Romance sub-groups. We can expect that also, say, Portuguese and Romanian dialects would be said to be "*very* different" if one tried to include Romanian dialects within the Ibero-Romance group.[30] However, it is not normally stressed that these dialects are "*very* different" when they are analysed as members of the wider Romance group. Consequently, it seems that the sharing of structural-linguistic features is not the criterion that induces Pellegrini to group the "five systems" together as exclusive members of "Italo-Romance". Indeed, the following statements confirm this:

> We should not have any shame in saying that the Italian linguistic unity, and indirectly the political one, is almost exclusively the work of *men of letters* […] and especially of the great authors of the fourteenth century […] [Their] language, clearly based […] on Florentine […] differed profoundly, as we have repeatedly stressed, from the other peninsular and insular linguistic systems. (Pellegrini 1975: 65 [emphasis original]).[31]

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28. Friedrich Christian Diez, 1794–1876, represents the pre-scientific and geo-political approach to the classification of Romance languages, before G.I. Ascoli inaugurated the new linguistic approach. As Pellegrini points out: "the very simple classification proposed by F. Diez… *includes only official languages* with the sole exception of Provençal" (Pellegrini 1992: 279 [emphasis added]).

29. "È sostanzialmente un vecchio criterio seguito ad esempio da F. Diez, *Grammatik der romanischen Sprachen* (Ia ed. 1838); vedi anche Monteverdi, *Avv*., p. 78: 'Essendo l'italiano la lingua letteraria così della Toscana, come della Lombardia, come della Sardegna, risultano nell'opera del Diez raggruppati insieme dialetti diversissimi come il toscano, il lombardo e il sardo.' "

30. Portuguese is part of Ibero-Romance.

31. "Qui non bisogna avere nessun pudore nell'affermare che l'unità linguistica italiana, e indirettamente quella politica, è opera quasi esclusiva di *litterati*… e in prima linea dei grandi trecenteschi il cui linguaggio ha trovato subito fortunati imitatori. Tale linguaggio, di fondamento chiaramente toscano, anzi fiorentino… divergeva profondamente, come abbiamo più volte sottolineato, dagli altri sistemi linguistici peninsulari e insulari."

And again:

> the standard language [Italian/Tuscan] […] encountered serious difficulties to its spread in the different regions before the twentieth century. Therefore, Italian linguistic unity (a relative unity!) is, since the thirteenth century, an *eminently literary* fact, confined to a few high and privileged classes of our country.
>
> (Pellegrini 1975: 66 [emphasis original]).[32]

The cluster of varieties that the author labels as "Italo-Romance" is therefore carved out of the Romance family according to a *non-structural-linguistic* criterion (*Ausbau*), while a *structural-linguistic* criterion (*Abstand*) guides the internal sub-grouping of "Italo-Romance" itself. In the resulting implicit "classification" of Romance languages, both the labels "Gallo-Romance" and "Italo-Romance" are devoid of informative power (see Simpson 1945), so the "classification" as a whole is not useful for scientific purposes. To exemplify this, let us say that we come across the following (fictitious) statement about a Romance variety that we do not know: "the Xese variety is Italo-Romance". From this statement *we cannot derive* any structural-genealogic information about Xese, if the author mixes *Abstand* and *Ausbau* as in Pellegrini (1975). Indeed, Xese could show either Eastern Romance structural traits (as in the case of Sicilian) or Western Romance ones (as in the case of Gallo-"Italic"). Similarly, if we read the statement: "the Yese variety is Gallo-Romance", *we cannot derive* any sociological or geo-political information about Yese. Indeed, Yese could be acknowledged as genealogically Gallo-Romance but heteronomous with respect to Italian (as in the case of Occitan of Piedmont).

2.3 Pellegrini and the exceptional "diversity of the 'Italo-Romance' idioms"

In view of the above considerations, it is important to focus on some of Pellegrini's statements about the exceptional "diversity of the 'Italo-Romance' idioms, which has no analogue parallels in the areas of Romania and of Europe in general." (Pellegrini 1975: 56).[33]

Pellegrini cites Clemente Merlo (1937) and quotes Graziadio Ascoli, who both agree about the 'exceptional nature' of Italy in this respect: "the Neo-Latin dialectal varieties, that cohabit in Italy, differ from each other far more significantly than,

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32. "[la] lingua standard o della scrittura… incontrò serie difficoltà per diffondersi nelle varie regioni prima del Novecento. L'unità linguistica italiana è perciò fin dal tredicesimo secolo (unità relativa!) un fatto *eminentemente letterario*, relegato a pochi strati più elevati e privilegiati del nostro Paese."

33. "…varietà dei linguaggi 'italo-romanzi', che non trova paralleli analoghi nelle aree della Romània, e in genere dell'Europa…"

for example, the various English or Spanish dialects do…" (Ascoli, Italia dialettale p. 99. In Pellegrini 1975: 56, note 2).[34]

Pellegrini quotes Gerhard Rohlfs, who also agrees about this particular 'internal' diversity: "Among the European nations, Italy certainly enjoys the privilege of being *the most fragmented* country in its dialects." (Rohlfs, L'Italia dialettale (dal Piemonte alla Sicilia), 1967; quoted in Pellegrini 1975: 56 [emphasis added]).[35]

At one point, Pellegrini asks himself what could be "the *causes* of the deep differences mentioned [among "the various speeches of the Peninsula"]" (Pellegrini 1975: 57 [emphasis added]).[36]

What I would like to point out is that these statements are justified only if one presumes that all of Pellegrini's "five systems of Italo-Romance" are *the exclusive descendants of a common ancestor* (Proto-Italo-Romance), as, say, the Ibero-Romance varieties are normally intended, as such, to be the exclusive descendants of Proto-Ibero-Romance.[37] Only in this case would it be logical to ask about "the *causes* of [such] deep differences", or to talk about a "*fragmented* country", in that only something that is originally united and homogeneous can be thought of as divisible and diversifiable. However, as we have seen in Section 2.2, Pellegrini excludes this possibility, justifying the classification of Cisalpine as Italo-Romance only on *Ausbau*-based arguments.

Then, we can conclude that Pellegrini would have no reasons for stressing an alleged 'exceptional fragmentation' of Italy or 'exceptional diversity' of what he defines "Italo-Romance idioms", because he does not presume them to be a unit from the genealogic-linguistic standpoint. We can expect that also zoologists would be surprised with the "exceptional zoological diversity" of the class "mammals" if they ascribed *canaries* and *goldfish* to that class "because they are domestic animals as the *cat* is".

The discrepancy between, on the one hand, Pellegrini's awareness of the lack of such original linguistic unity and, on the other, his classification of Cisalpine as Italo-Romance is summed up in his further work, where he appears to agree with Rohlfs and Tekavčić: "according to Rohlfs and Tekavčić, […] the Italo-Romance

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34. "…le varietà dialettali neolatine, che nell'Italia convivono, differiscono tra di loro assai più notevolmente che non differiscano, a cagion d'esempio, i vari dialetti inglesi o gli spagnuoli…"

35. "Fra le nazioni europee l'Italia gode il privilegio di essere, certamente, il paese più frazionato nei suoi dialetti."

36. "[l]e cause delle accennate profonde differenze".

37. In this case, the "five systems of Italo-Romance" would constitute, as a whole, one of the "exhaustive and mutually exclusive classes" (Bailey 1994: 3) which form the Romance domain, along with Gallo-Romance, Ibero-Romance, etc.

linguistic domain […] represents an *exceptional* sum of dialectal varieties, *a « Little Romania »*" (Pellegrini 1992: 284–285 [emphasis added]).[38]

Stating that Italo-Romance represents a "Little Romania" equates to saying that some Eastern and some Western Romance geolects are included in it. This in turn equates to saying that it does not represent a *taxon* (a "linguistic domain") within a genealogic classification of Romance geolects.

2.4 The *ad hoc* problem in Loporcaro (2009), 'Linguistic profile of Italian dialects'

If the "ontological problem" makes the "classification" non-informative, the additional "*ad hoc* problem" (as I termed it in Section 2.1) makes it a non-organic conglomeration of "pieces" of two independent classifications. As I have already stated, a criterion is applied *ad hoc* when it is applied to some items and not to others that equally present the conditions of applicability of the criterion itself. The *ad hoc* problem appears, for instance, in Loporcaro (2009). At one point, the author is explaining why, in the classification that he is proposing, Sicilian,[39] Corsican and Turinese (the Gallo-"Italic" dialect of Turin, in Piedmont) are equally classified as "Italian dialects", in spite of a number of linguistic changes that Turinese shares with French and not with Sicilian and Corsican (Loporcaro 2009: 10–12, 82–91):

> Why then do we call it [Turinese] an Italian dialect, like Sicilian? The answer is *in part of a socio-political nature*: since the sixteenth century, Turinese has Italian as its roof-language[40] and the standardization processes push it insensibly towards a structural homogenisation to Italian. If the duchy of Savoy in the sixteenth century remained totally *culturally* French, Turinese would now be given *a different classification*. However, it is not to be thought that classification is a *purely* conventional operation, made on a political basis and free from linguistic criteria. Though the Corsican dialects have, as mentioned, French as their roof-language from the second half of the 18th century, they still remain Italo-Romance varieties as just a glance at a linguistic atlas map can show.
>
> (Loporcaro 2009: 11–12 [emphasis added]).[41]

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38. "…[i]l dominio linguistico italo-romanzo… rappresenta secondo il Rohlfs ed il Tekavčić una somma eccezionale di varietà dialettali, una « Piccola Romania »…"

39. There is no controversy in the scholarly literature about the classification of Sicilian as Italo-Romance.

40. See Section 2.4.1. for some considerations about the questionable use of the term 'lingua tetto / roof-language' in this passage.

41. "Perché dunque chiamiamo quest'ultimo [il torinese] un dialetto italiano, al pari del siciliano? La risposta è in parte di natura sociopolitica: il torinese, sin dal Cinquecento, ha come lingua tetto l'italiano e in direzione di un'omologazione strutturale all'italiano lo spingono, insensibilmente,

At this point Loporcaro quotes some Corsican versions of a sentence taken from a linguistic atlas,[42] and referring to them, he continues:

> We can notice [in the Corsican versions] [1] the phono-syntactic strengthening […], [2] the retention of final vowels, which Corsican shares with Tuscan […], [3] the possessive enclitic (mammáda) which is not encountered in Gallo-Romance though it is encountered *in the South-Central Italian* dialects. These and many other isoglosses exclude the ascription of Corsican to Gallo-Romance and qualify it structurally as Italo-Romance. (Loporcaro 2009: 11–13 [emphasis added]).[43]

Note that, based on the argument espoused above, Loporcaro should classify Turinese as Gallo-Romance. This is because Turinese – and Gallo-"Italic" in general – presents, still today, all the linguistic traits that Loporcaro himself considers relevant for classifying a variety as Gallo-Romance, and not Italo-Romance. Specifically, 1. it does not present phono-syntactic strengthening, 2. It does not retain final vowels (Loporcaro 2009: 95), and 3. it does not show enclitic possessives. Yet, Loporcaro does not explain why the same traits would be crucial for classifying Corsican as Italo-Romance and not for classifying Turinese as Gallo-Romance. To add to the difficulty, the author does not list the supposedly numerous Italo-Romance linguistic traits that Turinese would have acquired from Tuscan by contact, "push[ing] it [so strongly] towards a structural homogenisation to Italian" (see full quotation above) to justify its ascription to the Italo-Romance group,[44] notwithstanding all the isoglosses he himself lists that Turinese/Piedmontese still shares with the "uncontested" Gallo-Romance varieties in opposition to Italo-Romance (Loporcaro 2009: 10–12, 16, 82–91). The hypothesis that Loporcaro is applying the *Ausbau* criterion *ad hoc* to Turinese is supported by the fact that the same method is overtly applied by him to Sardinian:

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i processi di standardizzazione. Se il ducato di Savoia nel Cinquecento fosse rimasto per intero culturalmente francese, del torinese si darebbe oggi una classificazione diversa. Non bisogna però credere che la classificazione sia operazione puramente convenzionale, su base politica e svincolata da criteri linguistici. Se i dialetti còrsi, come ricordato, hanno dal secondo Settecento il francese come lingua tetto, essi restano pur sempre varietà italo-romanze come mostra anche solo uno sguardo ad una carta di atlante linguistico…"

42. The atlas maps ALEIC III 433.

43. "Vi si notano il raddoppiamento fonosintattico…, la conservazione delle vocali finali, che accomunano il còrso al toscano…, il possessivo enclitico [mammáda] che ricorre non già in gallo-romanzo ma nei dialetti italiani centro-meridionali. Queste e molte altre isoglosse escludono una pertinenza del còrso al gallo-romanzo e lo qualificano strutturalmente come italo-romanzo."

44. Moreover, as I have pointed out in footnote 14, such polysemic use of the nomenclature would be questionable.

> In the following presentation *we will adopt a mixed criterion*, including [in the Italo-Romance group] both Sardinian, which is structurally more distant but has Italian as its roof-language, and Corsican, which has French as its roof-language but is structurally closer to Italian. (Loporcaro 2009: 70 [emphasis added]).[45]

Apparently, one of the two ontologically independent criteria (*Abstand* and *Ausbau*) is applied *ad hoc* only to Turinese/Gallo-"Italic" and Sardinian, namely to some of the items included in a formally unidimensional "classification". This seems to be clearly against the goal of taxonomy, which aims at an organic classification through the systematic application of *one* specific and manifest criterion to *all* the items classified, taken *as an organic whole*. The result is, instead, a *non-organic conglomeration of "pieces" of two independent classifications* of Romance varieties, the first of which is compiled by applying an *Abstand* criterion to a sub-set of the items included in the "classification", while the second one is compiled by applying an *Ausbau* criterion to another sub-set of items.

2.4.1 *The misleading use of the expression "roof-language" in Loporcaro (2009)*

In some of the above quotations, we have seen that Loporcaro describes Italian as the "roof-language" of Turinese, and French as the "roof-language" of Corsican. In this section I will briefly introduce the Klossian concept of "roofing" and show that Loporcaro (2009) uses "roof-language" in a misleading way.

The expression "roofing language" or "roof-language", currently used by many scholars, derives from the Klossian concepts of "roofed" vs. "roofless dialects" (Muljačić 1984: 78). Kloss understood the "roofless dialects" as "the local dialects [that] either *never were*, or are no longer under the *protecting* 'roof' of the standard language" (Kloss 1969: 71–74 [emphasis added]; also 1952: 21). Muljačić specifies the origin of the expression "roofing *language*" as follows: "Kloss has never needed the German term *Dachsprache* 'roofing language'[…] Nevertheless, he uses 'roofing' (German *Überdachung*) […]. Other linguists who revised the Klossian model coined the term 'roofing language' […]" (Muljačić, 1990: 24 [emphasis original]).

Therefore, the concept of "roofing language" seems to be implicit in the Klossian concept of "roofed/roofless dialects". However, in the scholarly literature, "roofing language" is used in various – and often irreconcilable – ways (see Salamon 2011), moving significantly away from the original Klossian conception of the 'roof metaphor'. Here I will limit myself to pointing out (a few of) the differences between

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45. "Nella presentazione che segue adotteremo un criterio misto, inserendo nella panoramica [nel gruppo Italo-Romanzo] tanto il sardo, strutturalmente più distante ma avente per lingua tetto l'italiano, quanto il còrso, che ha come lingua tetto il francese ma è strutturalmente più vicino all'italiano."

the Klossian concept of "roofing" and the meaning that "lingua tetto" – literally 'roof-language' – has in Loporcaro (2009) as reported in Section 2.4.[46]

According to Kloss, only a closely related variety can play the role of a "protecting roof" (Kloss 1969: 72) for a "local dialect":

> The term roofless dialect is understood to refer to a dialect the speakers of which *never have been* or no longer are familiar with *the kin-standard naturally corresponding to it* and which, in other words, are not *shielded* by the 'roof' of the standard variety but directly exposed to the impact of another, *unrelated or less closely related standard*." (Kloss 1978: 23 [emphasis added])

Also Berruto (1995) insists on this point:

> A concept of particular relevance […] is Überdachung or 'coverage' which was introduced by Kloss in 1978[47] which means that in a given territory, a variety of a language has upon itself a language *closely related* (which is called Dachsprache or 'roof language') as the language of the culture and normative reference variety. But when it is not such a way i.e. when a variety of a language has upon itself a language system *not closely related*, it is named a dachlos variety or 'roofless language'.
> (Berruto 1995: 206 [emphasis added], English translation by Eszter Salamon in Salamon 2011).[48]

Importantly, Kloss mentions Corsican vernaculars among the "numberless […] instances" of "roofless dialects" (Kloss 1969: 72), explaining his choice as follows: "[i]n Corsica, standard Italian today is nothing but a foreign, even alien language, while the local vernacular, a subvariety of the Tuscan dialect, is still fully alive." (Kloss 1969: 72).

It therefore appears that, according to Kloss, (a) only the dominant variety that can play the role of "protecting roof" for the local dialect X – in virtue of its close kinship with X – *can be defined* as *"standard language of X"*; and (b) only Italian *could* play the role of "protecting roof/standard language" for Corsican, in virtue of their close kinship. French (a Gallo-Romance variety), which has been the official

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46. I am presently working on an article devoted to a deeper and wider investigation of the different meanings of "roof-/roofing language" in the literature, mainly as far as the situation of the Gallo-"Italic" languages is concerned.

47. I understand that the 'roof metaphor' was already present in Kloss (1952) (Muljačić, 1984: 78).

48. "Un concetto particolarmente rilevante dal punto di vista dei rapporti areali e territoriali fra le lingue e varietà di lingua è quello di Überdachung, 'copertura', introdotto da Kloss (1978) col quale si intende il fatto che una varietà di lingua abbia sopra di sé in un determinato territorio, quale lingua di cultura e varietà normativa di riferimento, un sistema linguistico strettamente imparentato (che viene chiamato Dachsprache,[50] "lingua tetto"). Quando invece così non è, cioè quando una varietà ha sopra di sé un sistema non con essa strettamente imparentato, si parla di varietà dachlos, 'senza tetto' ".

language and the language of culture for Corsican speakers since the second half of the 18th century, is evidently too far away from a genealogical and structural standpoint to be considered "the kin-standard naturally corresponding to" Corsican (an Italo-Romance variety). That is why the local vernaculars of Corsica are "roofless dialects". The fact that Italian was the dominant language in Corsica before the annexation of the island to France does not identify Italian as the possible "protecting roof" of Corsican; rather, only the linguistic proximity between the two varieties is crucial, as this passage on Flemish shows:

> In some cases we may be dealing with areas where the *standard language* never gained a foothold at all, such is the case of the hinterland of Dunkerque (France) where the speakers of the local Flemish dialect *never got a chance to learn standard Dutch* (the so-called A.B.N.). (Kloss 1969: 72 [emphasis added])

Standard Dutch has never been the dominant (*Ausbau*) language in the hinterland of Dunkerque. However, Kloss considers Dutch the only possible candidate to become the *standard language* for the Flemish dialects spoken there. Indeed, its close kinship (*Abstand*) with those dialects would allow standard Dutch – if it were to become socio-politically dominant in that region – to play the role of "protecting roof" that French, their actual dominating language, cannot play. This suggests that, in the case of Corsican dialects too, only linguistic proximity is relevant in identifying Italian as their possible standard language, regardless of whether Italian was historically their dominant language.

Nevertheless, in the quotations above from Loporcaro (2009), the linguistic proximity/distance between a dominating and a dominated variety appears not to be relevant in considering them as the roofing/roofed variety of each other. Evidently, Kloss and Loporcaro use the 'roof metaphor' in two irreconcilable ways: in Loporcaro (2009) the expression "roof-language" appears to be a perfect synonym for 'dominant language', and thus Corsican and Turinese are said to have simply exchanged their "roof-languages" during their history. On this view, the Klossian distinction "roofed dialects" vs. "roofless dialects" (Kloss 1969: 73), which originally motivated the use and spread of the expression "roof-language" itself, is deprived of any epistemological utility. Therefore, by defining Italian standard language as the "roof-language" of Turinese (Gallo-"Italic") according to his *non-Klossian* conception of "roof", Loporcaro misleadingly induces the readers who are familiar with the original Klossian concept to infer that Italian can be considered "the kin-standard naturally corresponding to" Turinese, playing the role of "protecting roof". This inference would be further encouraged by most scholars' habit – including Loporcaro himself – to classify Gallo-"Italic" as Italo-Romance. However, in the previous sections we have seen that historical linguistic and dialectological studies (Section 2.2.) as well as dialectometric measurements (Section 1.3) show (a) a wide linguistic

distance between Gallo-"Italic" and Tuscan, (b) a Gallo-Romance genealogical profile for Gallo-"Italic" and (c) hierarchical clusterings classifying Gallo-"Italic" as closer to the 'uncontested' Gallo-Romance varieties of France and Italy than to standard Italian and the varieties south of the Massa-Senigallia line. In addition to this, quantitative research (Tamburelli 2014) shows the low intelligibility of Milanese (supposedly the most Italianising of the Gallo-"Italic" dialects) for Tuscan listeners. This being the case, the idea that Italian/Tuscan (an Italo-Romance variety) could be considered "the kin-standard naturally corresponding to" Gallo-"Italic" (a Gallo-Romance variety) is at least questionable, since – as we have seen – French (a Gallo-Romance variety) cannot be considered "the kin-standard naturally corresponding to" Corsican (an Italo-Romance variety) due to their distant kinship (Kloss 1969: 72). I conclude that the expression "roof-language" used in Loporcaro (2009) according to a non-Klossian conception of "roof" is misleading and should be avoided.

In this regard, a possible venue of research could involve a reappraisal of the ancient Lombard language – a supra-local koine used in Northern Italy from the Middle Ages at least until the 16th century (Sanga 1990; Muljačić 1990) – as the historical "kin-standard naturally corresponding to" the Gallo-"Italic" local varieties.

3. Preliminary conclusions

In this chapter I have focused my attention on that section of the traditional Romance linguistic literature that I have called "the *mixed-criterion* contributions". These studies present the following characteristics: (1) they are frequently cited in more recent scholarly literature as authoritative sources for the classification of Romance varieties; (2) they describe and compare the vast majority of the varieties that they consider, in terms of *sharing vs. non-sharing of isoglosses* (*Abstand*), and they group and label them on these grounds, (3) they describe Gallo-"Italic" as sharing all the isoglosses that in their own pages are considered relevant in distinguishing Western Romance, and in particular Gallo-Romance, from Italo-Romance, (4) some sociological (*Ausbau*) or geo-political arguments are eventually introduced in these studies, determining the ascription of Gallo-"Italic" to Italo-Romance, instead of to the expected Gallo-Romance. However, we have seen that *Abstand* and *Ausbau* correspond to two independent analytic perspectives (i.e. two unrelated dimensions), and establish two independent classifications or, if at all, a bi-dimensional one. Then, by mixing these two independent classificatory criteria within a formally unidimensional "classification", these authors contravene an important principle of classificatory science. Therefore, their "classifications" suffer from what I have termed the "ontological problem" and the "*ad hoc* problem". The ontological problem makes the "classification" not informative both from the

Abstand and from the *Ausbau* point of view. The *ad hoc* application of one of the two criteria to just a sub-set of items results in a non-organic conglomeration of "pieces" of two independent classifications, and not in *one* classification (the *ad hoc* problem). Because of either the ontological problem or the *ad hoc* problem, the "classifications" proposed are *devoid of informative power*, hence not useful for scientific purposes, and for this reason they have to be rejected.

4. Some considerations and questions for future research

In the above sections, I have demonstrated that the classification of Gallo-"Italic" as Italo-Romance, proposed by authors who mix the *Abstand* and *Ausbau* classificatory criteria, is formally inconsistent and for this reason it has to be rejected. However, it seems unlikely that so many scholars are 'unable' to compile scientific classifications. If there are no linguistic reasons for the pro-Italo- authors to decide against classifying Gallo-"Italic" as Gallo-Romance, new research could be carried out to identify the extra-linguistic reasons. For this purpose, I shall now propose some questions and preliminary analysis for future research and sketch out some considerations on how the acknowledgment of Gallo-"Italic" as Gallo-Romance collides with some of the assumptions and aims of nationalism, possibly constituting a *taboo* (see Hull 1990).

4.1 Nationalist ideology

The nationalist ideology and rhetoric of the 19th and 20th centuries tend to represent nations as taxonomic units ("exhaustive and mutually exclusive classes", Bailey 1994: 3). In particular, ethnic nationalism assumes that fellow-citizens share many cultural features in an exclusive way, as inherited from common ancestors, and this would make these fellow-citizens closer to each other than to any other human beings (see Simpson 1945: 17). Other human beings would in turn constitute other *taxa* (i.e. other nations) (see the concept of "noità/we-ness" in Thiesse 1999 among others). For Italy, this view is exemplified in the following statement by Giuseppe Mazzini:[49]

> We are a people […] known from time immemorial by the same name, as the people of Italy, enclosed by natural boundaries, the clearest ever marked out by the Deity – the sea and the highest mountains in Europe; speaking the same language […] having the same creeds, the same manners, the same habits".
>
> (quoted in Lipson 1921: 162; reported in English by Hull 1990: 154)

49. Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872), Genoese politician and journalist.

According to another philosophical component[50] of the complex Italian Risorgimento culture, the cultural unity of Italian people is more a desired goal to be achieved by educational means than a historical matter of fact, as the sentence attributed to the 19th century Piedmontese politician Massimo D'Azeglio shows: "Io pensavo […] che bisogna far gli Italiani se si vuol avere l'Italia" ('I thought […] that *we have to make the Italians if we want to have Italy*'. Gigante 2011 [my translation, emphasis added]). The acknowledgment of Gallo-"Italic" as part of a wider *taxon* (Gallo-Romance) from which Central and Southern Italy are excluded would collide with both that assumption and that aim. Indeed, Gallo-"Italic" speakers would as a result be grouped with populations that nationalist ideology defines as "foreigners", such as the French and the Swiss.

The comparative method expresses the relationship among languages in kinship terminology. If acknowledged as Gallo-Romance, Gallo-"Italic" would be said to be a "sister" language of French, Occitan, and so forth, and "second cousin" of Tuscan. However, according to nationalist rhetoric, the citizens of a nation are "brothers", namely bound together by the highest possible degree of "civil kinship" (see "laic brotherhood" in Thiesse 1999: 12). Indeed, Italians sing "Brothers of Italy" in their national anthem, and refer to French people as their "cousins over the Alps". Hence, the acknowledgment of Gallo-"Italic" as Gallo-Romance would collide with the rhetoric of national brotherhood.

Strengthening a sense of exclusive and privileged kinship among young fellow-citizens is traditionally one of the aims of national education (Thiesse 1999: 234). It could therefore be seen as pedagogically hazardous to write in school books statements such as "Gallo-'Italic' is not Italo-Romance, rather it is Gallo-Romance like French".

As we have seen, scholars agree that "[a]mong the European nations, Italy certainly enjoys the privilege of being *the most fragmented* country in its dialects" (see Section 2.3 for full quotes). However, rather than being a "privilege", such great diversity was often seen as an obstacle to the project of "making the Italians" (Manzoni 1868[51]; Gensini 2005; Tosco 2004, 2011: 227–8). Indeed, no effective institutional initiative has to date been put into action in Italy to support such enviable linguistic diversity (Coluzzi 2007, 2009; Tamburelli 2014; Coluzzi, Brasca and Scuri, this volume).[52] Furthermore, of the 36 languages that *Ethnologue* (Lewis,

50. See the concepts of "deductive" and "inductive" nationalism, in Hull (1990: 151).

51. "Una nazione dove siano in vigore vari idiomi e la quale aspiri ad avere una lingua in comune, trova naturalmente in questa varietà un primo e potente ostacolo al suo intento / A nation where various idioms are in place and aspiring to have a common language, naturally finds in this variety a first and powerful obstacle to its intent" (Manzoni 1868: 1 [my translation]).

52. For the regional law recently passed in Lombardy, see Coluzzi, Brasca & Scuri in this volume.

Simons and Fennig 2013) estimates are spoken in Italy, only 12 enjoy recognition and some institutional support. According to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (Moseley 2010; see also Soria 2015), 31 out of 36 are endangered to various degrees, among them all the Gallo-"Italic" languages: Emilian, Ligurian, Lombard, Piedmontese, Romagnol. Still today, except for sporadic cases,[53] Italian linguists seem at least insensitive to the alarm expressed by UNESCO (Coluzzi 2007: 297; 2009: 43; Coluzzi, Brasca and Scuri, this volume). Many of them unconditionally contest the idea that these varieties could be considered '*languages* distinct from Italian' and deny their right to institutional recognition and support (see Tamburelli, this volume), insisting on referring to them as "Italian dialects". This being the case, we have to note that if linguists openly recognised Gallo-"Italic" varieties as Gallo-Romance, they would implicitly and authoritatively disseminate among their speakers the idea that they are less closely related to Italian/Tuscan than to French, Occitan and Romansh.[54] Importantly, these are varieties that Italian institutions, these same linguists and public opinion universally acknowledge as '*languages* distinct from Italian'. Could this help Gallo-"Italic" speakers to become aware that their "vernaculars", officially acknowledged as "Italian dialects", are in fact '*languages* distinct from Italian'? Could this awareness, in turn, awaken or strengthen a movement in favour of their revitalisation? On the other hand, would the death of the Gallo-Romance varieties spoken in Italy (Gallo-"Italic") and their substitution by an Italo-Romance variety (Italian/Tuscan) be saluted by those who, still today, aspire to "make the Italians", that is, to transform the inhabitants of the various Italian regions into the exclusive members of a single taxonomic unit?

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53. An exception is represented by the members of the Scientific Committee of CSPL (Comitato per la Salvaguardia dei Patrimoni Linguistici) http://patrimonilinguistici.it/comitato-scientifico/

54. Implicitly also to Castilian, Catalan, Galego-Portuguese, etc., namely to all the Western Romance varieties.

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CHAPTER 5

The cost of ignoring degrees of *Abstand* in defining a regional language

Evidence from South Tyrol

Mara Maya Victoria Leonardi and Marco Tamburelli
Free University of Bozen-Bolzano / Bangor University

It is generally accepted that the concepts 'language' and 'dialect' are not entirely linguistic notions, but also involve social, cultural and political factors. Nonetheless, it is still nowadays difficult to agree upon a set of satisfying criteria by which 'languages' can be differentiated from 'dialects'. In this chapter, we analyse the linguistic context present in South Tyrol in order to highlight the consequences of these unsatisfying definitions. Using the intelligibility criterion, we demonstrate that there is a certain degree of *Abstand* between Standard German and the Bavarian variety spoken in South Tyrol. We then show how this degree of *Abstand* affects the early stages of acquisition and the linguistic performance of South Tyrolean children.

1. Introduction

The concept of "intelligibility" has sometimes been called upon as a criterion of demarcation between "languages" and "dialects" (e.g. Dixon 1997; Salminen 2007). While the potential shortcomings of relying solely on intelligibility are known (e.g. Chambers and Trudgill 1998), it has recently been argued that, from a purely structural linguistic perspective, low intelligibility can serve as a sufficient – albeit not necessary – condition for considering two varieties as separate languages (Hammarström 2008; Tamburelli 2014. See also Tamburelli this volume). Nevertheless, the current linguistic literature has a tendency to define "languages" from a purely socio-political perspective, favouring Kloss's (1967) languages by *Ausbau* over his languages by *Abstand*, particularly when it comes to the linguistic continua of Europe.[1]

1. Considerations of *Abstand* relations are typically limited to extreme cases, such as language isolates (also called "absolute *Abstand* languages", Trudgill 1992: 175) or cases that involve varieties that are genetically distantly related. See Tamburelli (2014) for an overview.

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This chapter investigates the potential effects of overlooking the intelligibility criterion and basing linguistic classification, and the classification of linguistic communities, solely on socio-political grounds. Specifically, we will show how relying solely on sociolinguistic criteria (e.g. Chambers and Trudgill 1998; Fasold 2005) can initially have a negative impact on the acquisition path, and how favouring socio-politically grounded classifications over linguistic ones can negatively affect the early stages of language acquisition in children acquiring two relatively different but socio-politically conflated varieties.

Looking at the linguistic situation in South Tyrol (north-east Italy), we will inquire whether the community of speakers is indeed a case of Italian-German bilingualism – as maintained by the government and according to sociolinguistically grounded classifications – or whether the Bavarian variety (the main code used by the Germanic-speaking community, and commonly referred to as a "dialect") is sufficiently distant from Standard German to warrant a case of trilingualism in the 'linguistic sense' (Dixon 1997: 7), namely from a purely structural communicative perspective. After demonstrating that an intelligibility-based analysis leads to the conclusion that the Germanic-speaking community of South Tyrol is in fact trilingual (Standard German, Italian, Bavarian), we will ask whether this disparity between the number of socio-politically recognised (i.e. *Ausbau*) languages (Italian and German) and the number of linguistically identifiable (i.e. *Abstand*) languages (Italian, German, and Bavarian) has an impact on the acquisition experience of the children growing up in South Tyrol. In particular, we will show that the acquisition of three 'linguistic languages' in a society that views itself as bilingual rather than trilingual, and whose administrative apparatus functions on the assumption of bilingualism rather than trilingualism, leads to tangible social and linguistic issues, such as endemic misestimating of children's linguistic skills, which consequently leads to unrealistic expectations from the educational establishment.

2. Sociolinguistic bilingualism: The South Tyrolean case

South Tyrol is situated in the north-east of Italy on the border with Austria and Switzerland. Having been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it has been part of Italy since 1919. Due to the *Gruber-Degasperi-Agreement* of 1946 (or *Treaty of Paris*) and especially the *Second Autonomy Statute* of 1972, today South Tyrol enjoys special political and linguistic protection within the Italian state, meaning that Standard German is the co-official language of the region,[2] together with Italian

2. In this chapter, the terms "South Tyrol" and "South Tyrol region" refer to the administrative area officially known as *Provincia autonoma di Bolzano – Alto Adige/Autonome Provinz Bozen – Südtirol.*

and Ladin.[3] According to the 2011 Census, 69.64% of the approximately 505,000 inhabitants of South Tyrol declared that they belonged to the German-speaking group, 25.84% to the Italian-speaking group and 4.52% to the Ladin-speaking group[4] (ASTAT 2019: 15). The three linguistic groups, however, are not equally distributed within South Tyrol. The majority of the Italian language group is restricted to the capital Bolzano/Bozen (73.80%) and to four smaller villages in the Bassa Atesina/Unterland, a geographical area close to Trentino. Merano/Meran is the only city with an equal distribution of both linguistic groups (Italian: 49.06%, German: 50.47%). In all other cities, towns and villages the German-speaking group is the predominant one (ASTAT 2019: 16–18).

The actual linguistic situation, however, is more complicated than the Census suggests. In standard analyses, South Tyrol is almost invariably described as an Italian-German bilingual, or an Italian-German-Ladin trilingual region, without taking into account that most Germanic-speaking inhabitants have knowledge of three linguistic systems: Italian, Bavarian and a regional variety of Standard German. Bavarian is acquired at home and is the most commonly used medium of interaction in everyday communication among Bavarian-speaking South Tyroleans. Standard German and Italian,[5] on the other hand, are mainly learned through formal education (e.g. Glück et al. 2019).

After having introduced the linguistic situation, we shall now turn to the educational system, which differs from the system found in the rest of Italy. South Tyrol has an Italian, German and Ladin[6] school system. In Italian-speaking schools, Italian is the main language of instruction while Standard German is taught as a second language (L2). In German-speaking schools, on the other hand, Standard German is the main language of instruction, while Italian is learned as an L2. Outside school, children's exposure to spoken Standard German (and Italian) is restricted to television programs, radio, storybooks, and contact with German tourists. Besides this

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3. Ladin, a Romance language which is still nowadays acquired as a first language in some valleys in northern Italy, is not part of this study and will therefore not be discussed in this chapter.

4. It should be noted, however, that bi- and multilingual South Tyroleans growing up with more than one variety from early on, do not have the opportunity to declare themselves as part of more than one or of a completely separate bi- or multilingual group (see Egger 1985; Leonardi 2020a).

5. Despite the need to speak Italian (e.g. for business), some Bavarian speakers have limited contact with native Italian speakers or the Italian language, mainly due to the heterogeneous distribution of the three language groups and to the separations within the school system (e.g. Leonardi 2020b).

6. Ladin schools are restricted to certain valleys in South Tyrol and are different from the Italian and German school system, as they are the only schools where all three languages (Italian, German and Ladin) are used as languages of instruction. However, since Ladin is not among the subjects of this study, it has been mentioned just for completeness, but will not be discussed any further.

functional specialisation (Ferguson 1959: 235) and although linguistically related, Standard German and Bavarian do differ to a certain extent in lexicon, grammar, phonology, and morphology (e.g. Egger 1982, 1994; Saxalber-Tetter 1994; Abfalterer 2007). However, these linguistic differences are routinely taken to be part and parcel of the diglossic situation (see Ferguson 1959), and little importance is given to them, with German considered to be the South Tyroleans' 'mother tongue'. Within the South Tyrolean literature, for instance, it is often claimed that "[c]hildren are educated in their mother tongue by mother tongue teachers" (Vettori et al. 2012: 438), namely German and Italian respectively, without defining what exactly is meant by 'German'. In those rare cases where a distinction is made between Standard German and Bavarian, it is not always clear what the authors have in mind. Eichinger (2002: 141), for instance, states that "German speaking children in South Tyrol […] have one of the local dialects as their mother tongue". Nonetheless, he further state that "[a]ll subjects are taught in the respective mother tongue of the children" (Eichinger 2002: 141), therefore leaving the reader with the uncertainty of what is meant by "mother tongue" (dialect vs. standard) as well as potentially misleading the reader since Standard German (and not the 'dialect') is the main language of instruction in German-language schools. Moreover, if we take into account the linguistic experiences of Bavarian-speaking South Tyrolean children, a question arises as to whether Standard German can indeed be categorised as their "mother tongue". This is part of a broader, long-standing question, namely how close or how far apart two varieties have to be in order to qualify as "two […] varieties of the same language […] used by some speakers under different conditions" (Ferguson 1959: 325) and, consequently, the question of whether South Tyrolean children are indeed educated in "their mother tongue". That the concept of "same language is problematic – not least within the concept of 'bilingualism' – will be discussed in the next section.

3. Bilingualism: Who is bilingual and when?

Bilingualism has often been defined as "the practice of alternately using two languages" by the same person (Weinreich 1953: 1; see also Baetens Beardsmore 1982; Mackey 2000). Generally speaking, "*bilingualism* is used in the literature for individuals and communities in which two languages are present" (Hoffmann 2014: 10), and to refer to "knowledge and command of two or more languages, albeit to different degrees" (Montrul 2008: 17). Definitions like these, however, beg the question of what counts as two "languages".

As often argued in the literature, whether two linguistic varieties are considered different "languages" often depends on social, cultural, political, and/or ideological

reasons rather than on linguistic considerations (Wardhaugh 2006: 25–57. But see Tamburelli and Tosco and Tamburelli, this volume, for issues that arise from this view). The process whereby two varieties are considered two languages, and thus their speakers are unarguably considered bilingual, is "never neutral in that any form could qualify to become a standard feature" (Langer and Davies 2005: 8). This tendency shows a heavy bias towards definitions of 'bilingualism' whereby the 'languages' involved are tacitly implied to be what Kloss (1967: 29) termed *Ausbau* languages (i.e. languages by development) rather than *Abstand* languages (i.e. languages by distance. See Tamburelli and Tosco, this volume). An *Ausbau* language is seen as a separate language for political, historical, cultural, and/or linguistic reasons, but it is primarily a social construct (see Kloss 1967; Trudgill 1992, 2002). By being standard languages, *Ausbau* languages are codified (development of standardised grammar and official dictionaries), and recognised as prestigious varieties (Holmes 2008; see also Ammon 1986). Having undergone this process of *Ausbau-isation* (Fishman 2008; Tosco 2008), they are socially regarded as 'languages'. Most minority varieties, however, reveal very low levels of *Ausbau-isation* largely because in the past "they have been socially subordinate to some other heavily *Ausbau*-ised variety" (Tamburelli 2014: 252). It therefore follows that speakers of minority or less politically dominant varieties are the ones most likely to be erroneously labelled as 'monolingual' despite the fact that they may be fluent in more than one lexical, morphological, phonological, and syntactic system, i.e. more than one *Abstand* language. The question of who speaks two 'languages' is therefore not a trivial one, and should be of particular interest to researchers who are concerned with regional and minority languages as well as with issues of socio-political dominance and linguistic hegemony. Nevertheless, discussions on the definition(s) of bilingualism often gloss over these issues, focussing primarily on questions of proficiency and age of acquisition (e.g. Mackey 2000; Montrul 2008; Wei 2000).

Some of these issues were acknowledged in Ferguson's later work, where he admitted that his original definition failed "to make clear how far apart (or how close together) the high and low varieties have to be for a language situation to be characterised as diglossia" (Ferguson 1991: 223). Indeed, it is notoriously difficult to identify members of the 'same' or 'different' language from an *Abstand* perspective, as measuring the extent of the linguistic distance between two varieties is not a straightforward matter (e.g. Ammon 1989; Hudson 2002). Nevertheless, recent research has seen renewed interest in the development of empirical techniques for the measurement of linguistic distance, with some considerable headway being made in the measurement of intelligibility rates (Van Bezooijen and Gooskens 2005; Gooskens 2007, 2013; Munro et al. 2006; Tamburelli 2014; Tang and van Heuven 2009, 2015) and phonetic distance (Beijering et al. 2008; Schepens et al. 2012). It is to the use of intelligibility measurements that we now turn.

4. Measuring bilingualism: An empirical approach

The degree of intelligibility between related varieties has been shown to be reliably measurable via a number of experimental techniques (for an overview see Gooskens 2013). One of these techniques involves the application of a sentence test – known as the 'SPIN' test ('Speech Perception in Noise') – which was originally developed for English by Kalikow, Stevens and Elliott (1977), and has been recently applied to the measurement of intelligibility rates between Chinese varieties (Tang and van Heuven 2009, 2015) and between some Romance varieties of Italy (Tamburelli 2014).

In this sentence test, participants are required to listen to a number of short spoken sentences in a variety related to their own and write down the final word of the sentence (the target word) in their native variety, thereby providing data on how well the participants understand the variety in question. While we do not suggest that intelligibility may be used as a final arbiter of language status (but see Hammarström 2008; Tamburelli 2014; and Tamburelli this volume for an overview of how an intelligibility-based approach could be implemented more generally), we would like to suggest that measuring intelligibility between two varieties can provide an insight into whether speakers of those varieties are bilingual in a purely linguistic sense (i.e. from an *Abstand* language perspective), in that they have knowledge of two sufficiently different and perhaps distinct structural linguistic systems, regardless of the sociolinguistic status of the varieties involved. Therefore, we take as our point of departure the view that applying intelligibility measurements between two varieties A and B will give us some indication of the linguistic gap that a speaker of A needs to fill when learning variety B with little or no previous exposure. Framing the question within the South Tyrolean situation, we address the following research questions:

1. What is the degree of intelligibility between the Bavarian variety of South Tyrol and the Standard German variety?
2. What impact might this degree of intelligibility have on the linguistic performance of children who are speakers of a Bavarian variety but are instructed in Standard German and assumed to be of 'German mother tongue'?

The first research question will be addressed by conducting an intelligibility test (section 5), while the second question will be addressed by testing preschoolers on their receptive language abilities (section 6).

5. First empirical study: Measuring intelligibility between Standard German and Bavarian

5.1 Design and procedure

An internet-based experiment was conducted using the online tool *Lime Service Survey*. Overall, it took the participants between 10 and 15 minutes to complete the whole task.

5.2 Materials and stimuli

The experiment was divided into two parts, both of which had to be completed online. The first part consisted of a background questionnaire, which was a variation of the one used by Tamburelli (2014), containing questions related to age, gender, place of residence, place of study, language usage at home, knowledge of and exposure to other languages, and language attitudes.

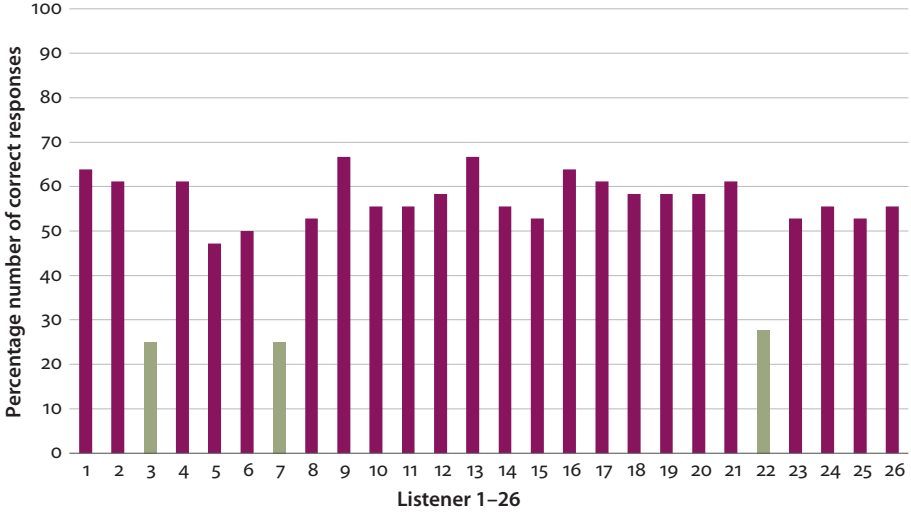
The second part of the experiment consisted of the actual task. From the original sentence list provided by Kalikow et al. (1977), 20 sentences (2 practice items and 18 test sentences) were selected for the current study (for an overview of how these sentences were selected, see Tamburelli 2014) and were translated from English into Bavarian. In order to prevent priming effects, each sentence was presented only once to the listener. A detailed description instructed the listener that after hearing a sentence, s/he had to write down the Standard German equivalent/translation of the final word, which was the target word. A maximum intelligibility score of 18 points was possible: correct translation of each target word was scored 1 point, partly correct translations were scored 0.5 points, and incorrect translations or blank responses 0 points. The percentage of target words correctly translated by the listener represents the degree of intelligibility. In other words, the higher the percentage of correctly translated target words, the higher is the intelligibility of Bavarian to German listeners.

5.3 Participants

Following ethical consent, a total of 26 Standard German listeners (20F and 6M), with a mean age of 24.92 years (range 19 to 35 years), participated in the intelligibility study. A more detailed description of the testing procedure, the participants, and the questionnaire used, as well as the full list of the twenty test sentences can be found in Leonardi (2016).

5.4 Results

Graph 1 provides the intelligibility scores for each participant individually. The scores are expressed as a percentage, which represents the intelligibility score between the two varieties (see also Tang and van Heuven 2009). The overall mean percentage score was 54.59% (9.827/18 = 0.5459). It can be seen that there are notable differences between participants with the lowest intelligibility scores (*Participant number 3, 7*, and *22*, coloured grey in Graph 1) being at less than 30%, while several other participants scored above 60%.



Graph 1. Intelligibility scores for each participant (%)

Recalculating the intelligibility score without performances which are at least one standard deviation (*SD* = 2.121, *n* = 23) below the mean – thus excluding *Participant 3, 7* and *22* – returns a percentage score of 58.33%. The recalculated score is 10.5 (*SD* = 1) with a percentage score of 58.33% (10.5/18 = 0.5833).

5.5 Discussion and summary

The current empirical study demonstrates that – based on the SPIN methodology – the intelligibility rate between Standard German and Bavarian is approximately 58%. Therefore, the assumption that South Tyrolean children are German speakers being schooled in their 'mother tongue' is not only misleading but also empirically unjustified. Being schooled in one's 'mother tongue' implies that one is already very familiar with the linguistic aspects and structures (i.e. phonology, vocabulary,

grammar) of the language of instruction. Our first empirical study has demonstrated that this is not the case in South Tyrol, where the home language and the language of instruction are only 58% intelligible. As a result, a South Tyrolean child will need to overcome some of the linguistic barriers involved in being instructed in a language that is not his/her own. Furthermore, South Tyrolean children are often expected to overcome those barriers in the absence of any linguistic support, as the *Ausbau* bias discussed in earlier sections (see also Tamburelli and Tosco and Tamburelli, this volume) means that these linguistic barriers (often) remain institutionally unacknowledged, with the language of instruction simply presumed to be the children's 'mother tongue'.

In fact, the acquisitional path that faces a South Tyrolean child is potentially very different from the path facing a child for whom (a variety of) Standard German is indeed his/her mother tongue. While the German-speaking child is exposed exclusively to Standard German at home as well as outside the home even before his/her schooling years (albeit with some inevitable but relatively minor changes in register and social variation), South Tyrolean children are exposed to Bavarian at home as well as in most everyday situations, and only hear some Standard German occasionally. As the two varieties are only 58% intelligible, the South Tyrolean child will inevitably have to fill the remaining linguistic gap before s/he can become a fully functional pupil. Even though new training/teaching material has recently been published in order to create greater language awareness among young South Tyrolean speakers (see Saxalber-Tetter 1994; Hofer 2013; and the European Language Portfolio, which can be used in primary/secondary school and high school) and also to help pupils from different linguistic backgrounds (specifically Italian or migrant background, see Knapp et al. 1996; Aliprandini 2000; Colleselli et al. 2009; Gurschler and Tscholl 2015)[7] to understand the local varieties of South Tyrol, there is still no guarantee that this material is actively used in South Tyrolean schools. As argued by Lanthaler (2012), the Bavarian varieties are still nowadays a rarely discussed topic in the classroom.

Our second empirical study investigates the impact that this linguistic gap, together with the *Ausbau*-centric view of language (Tamburelli 2014), might have on the linguistic experiences of South Tyrolean children. Specifically, we investigate whether treating these children as being of 'German mother tongue' leads to unrealistic expectations from the educational institutions.

7. Knapp et al. (1996); Aliprandini (2000) and Colleselli et al. (2009) are training materials, which have been developed for native Italian speakers in order to make Bavarian more accessible. Gurschler & Tscholl (2015) has been developed for adolescents with migrant background.

6. Second empirical study: South Tyroleans' receptive language comprehension in German

The following study compares linguistic performance across two groups of preschool children, namely German children acquiring (a variety of) Standard German as their native language and South Tyrolean children acquiring Bavarian at home and with limited exposure to Standard German, confined to specific contexts as described above.

6.1 Design and Procedure

Data collection took place in rural areas in South Tyrol and Germany. Several South Tyrolean preschools participated and data collection took place in 2013 and 2014 in Lana (11,530 inhabitants at the time of testing) and Cermes/Tscherms[8] (1,453 inhabitants at the time of testing; ASTAT 2014: 10–11). In Germany, more precisely in Wendeburg (10,697 inhabitants;[9] Southern Lower Saxony), data collection took place in 2014.

All preschool children were tested individually in a relatively quiet room at their preschools during regular preschool hours. Each testing session lasted approximately 5–25[10] minutes per child.

Testing was conducted in Standard German by local speakers in order to ensure that the stimuli were produced in the Standard German variety that the children were most familiar with. As a native speaker of the local variety, the first author herself conducted the test in South Tyrol, while a local German speaker was recruited to read the stimuli to the German cohort in Wendeburg.

8. Due to the fact that not enough participants could be found in Lana, participation was extended to the next small village.

9. http://www.wendeburg.de/p/dlhome.asp?artikel_id=&liste=202&tmpl_typ=Liste&lp=1000&L=0&area=100, accessed 12 May 2014.

10. The reason for such a large difference was that in some cases the test had to be finished quite early, e.g. due to the stop criterion suggested by Fox (2013), while other children managed to score quite highly and therefore the overall test took longer. Moreover, when testing small children one has to consider that some are very talkative and enjoy telling the researcher stories about pictures they see in the booklet.

6.2 Materials and stimuli

The study was divided into two parts. Firstly, a background questionnaire was completed by a parent. The questionnaire included sociodemographic information regarding the child and the parents, language use among family members, language exposure and input to the child, and parental language attitudes (a detailed description can be found in Leonardi 2016).

Secondly, in order to examine preschoolers' receptive German language skills, the *Test for the Reception of Grammar*, known as the TROG-D (Fox 2013), was used. The TROG was designed for speech and language therapists, researchers, and teachers in order to assess the understanding of grammatical structures/contrasts in a specific language. The TROG-D booklet consists of 84 items arranged in blocks of four sentences (21 blocks), each block containing the same grammatical construct. Each block is scored as 1 point, for a maximum total of 21 points. The sentence-picture matching task involves presenting the child with four pictures while the experimenter utters a word or sentence.

6.3 Participants

In order to match as much as possible the two home language groups, the participant selection process was set a priori and the following criteria were applied: (1) both parents had to be native speakers of Bavarian or Standard German respectively, (2) children had to be born in South Tyrol or Germany respectively, and (3) the children had no history of language impairment (according to parents' and/or educators' assessment).

A total of 54 (24F; 30M) typically developing South Tyrolean preschoolers and 44 (19F; 25M) typically developing German preschoolers were tested between 2013 and 2014 in South Tyrol and Germany respectively.[11] At the time of testing, South Tyrolean preschoolers had a mean age of 3;84 years (46.18 months, *SD* = 7.39) and the German control group had a mean age of 4;02 years (48.25 months, *SD* = 6.23).

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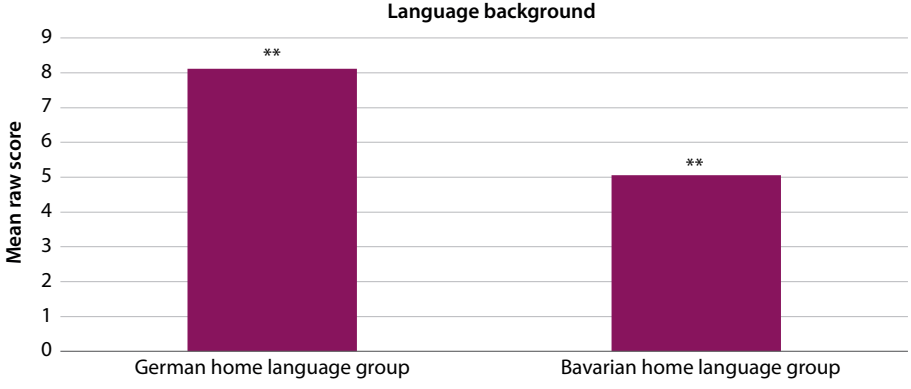
11. Although a total of 116 preschool children were initially recruited for the study, the actual number of participants dropped in both home language groups for different reasons, e.g. unwillingness to participate, illness during the data collection period, home language(s) other than Standard German or Bavarian. In the Bavarian home language group the numbers dropped from 65 to 54, and in the German home language group from 51 to 44.

6.4 Results

The German home language group achieved a mean score of 8.11 (*SD* = 3.46), while the Bavarian home language group achieved a mean score of 5.06 (*SD* = 2.72). An Independent-samples t-test showed that the performances of the two groups differed significantly ($t(80.721) = 4.771$, $p < .001$ two-tailed), with German-speaking children performing significantly better than the Bavarian-speaking group, as shown in Graph 2.



Graph 2. German and Bavarian home language group: Mean TROG-D Standard Scores for both home language groups of children. ** = significant at the .01 level

6.5 Discussion and Summary

It can be concluded from this second empirical study that it is certainly inaccurate to assume that South Tyrolean children are native speakers of German. On the one hand, the fact that these South Tyrolean preschoolers are actually speakers of a Germanic language rather than of Standard German explains their lower performance on the receptive language test. On the other hand, the assumption of being a "native speaker of German" underestimates South Tyrolean children's linguistic language skills, since they understand both Bavarian and Standard German – although at this early age they understand one language (namely Bavarian) still significantly better than the other. This, however, is not surprising if we consider research conducted among young bilinguals or multilinguals (e.g. Oller and Eilers 2002; Gathercole and Thomas 2009) showing that monolingual language development is unlike bilingual or second language development.

What emerged from our research is that the linguistic make-up of South Tyrolean children is more closely comparable to that of other multilinguals than

to that of children who have German as their (only) mother tongue. Consequently, and based on well-established research on bilingual and L2 learners, one should not treat young South Tyrolean children as being of German 'mother tongue'. Instead, these children should be educationally supported in their development from early on in the same manner suggested for other multilingual children. More specifically, South Tyrolean children would benefit from a curriculum that appropriately considers their true linguistic repertoire and that includes the new training material aimed at increasing awareness of their multilingual background (Saxalber-Tetter 1994; Hofer 2013). This would help South Tyrolean children to identify the existing linguistic differences between Bavarian and Standard German, as well as to build upon the linguistic knowledge they already have. Educators and teachers, therefore, should consider the specific linguistic situation present in South Tyrol and thus account more explicitly for pupils' needs and requirements.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter we investigated the potential effects of overlooking the intelligibility criterion and of basing linguistic classifications, and the classification of linguistic communities, solely on socio-political grounds. We tried to highlight the importance of identifying someone's native language through *Abstand* criteria, regardless of whether it qualifies as an official recognised language by *Ausbau*. This is particularly important within the educational context and specifically in relation to preschoolers who are in their early language learning process. Specifically, we have shown that even though the preschoolers' home language is genealogically related to their school language, it is inadequate to assume that the school language is their 'mother tongue'.

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CHAPTER 6

Deconstructing the idea of language

The effects of the *patoisation* of Occitan in France

Aurélie Joubert
University of Groningen

Patois is a term used to refer to some varieties of language of contested legitimacy. Close to *dialect*, it implies a nuance based on the diminished function and supposedly unpolished form of the language used. The application of the term *patois* to French linguistic communities is not accidental. It is a socio-historical process that can be analysed in parallel with the implementation of language policies made to promote French as the sole language of a nation-state. This chapter demonstrates that the application of this linguistic denomination is neither innocent nor objective. Indeed, the semantic evolution of the term itself indicates an increasingly disparaging connotation which has led to a submissive effect on the community of speakers of Occitan. Furthermore, a devaluing impact can be identified in the discourse of speakers when referring to their own language. Thus, this chapter will establish the link between the ideological notion of linguistic superiority of the national language and the micro-levelled declaration of speakers' attitudes, and will therefore highlight the connection between macro language policies and speakers' socio-psychological self-evaluation.

1. Introduction

When browsing the history of language studies, it is striking to note the difficulty in providing a single definition of the word *language*. This complexity stems from the existence of different traditions and aims in the work of language specialists, whether linguists, grammarians, teachers, writers or pedagogues. As explained in Ager (1999: 3), some elements of definition may include geolinguistic, psycholinguistic or sociolinguistic aspects which refer respectively to a spatial delimitation, a focus on the perception and acquisition of a linguistic code or a social function. These aspects may reveal information about speakers, their society and wider environment but they may also show the type of interaction between human beings and their individual cognitive abilities or impairment.

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Language reveals a plethora of information about human beings and highlights distinctions between them. Some approaches to *language* may envisage it in a fixed and uniform state; however the discipline of sociolinguistics has proven the extent of language variation and the myth of linguistic homogeneity (Milroy 2001). The variety of language which is accepted as the representation of a linguistic community over a certain territory is in most cases, in Europe at least, equivalent to the standard variety which has gone through the process of acceptance according to Haugen's model of standardisation (1972). In the case of non-acceptance of one variety as the standard form, a situation of co-existence of *contested* languages (which some would call dialects) arises, as can be observed in the chapters of this volume.

The process of standardisation not only seems to select a variety, elaborate the functions and codify usage; in practice, it also seems to establish a symbolic distinction between varieties and, subsequently, serves to promote the standard to the detriment of other varieties (but see Brasca, Coluzzi & Scuri, this volume, for an alternative approach). If the term language can be assigned more than one definition, the term *patois* is as difficult to define. The French linguist, Henriette Walter (2012: 26) states that "for a linguist, there is no doubt: a patois is a language but one whose area of geographical extension is limited and which has experienced a singular historical destiny".[1,2] Although Walter does not expand on the idea of a "singular destiny", this might be interpreted as an *unusual* destiny. In this chapter, I will elaborate on the premise of the conception of a *usual* destiny for a language. In the Collins English Dictionary, *patois* is described as "an unwritten regional dialect of a language, especially of French, usually considered substandard" or "the jargon of a particular group". The affiliation of the term with French affairs is appropriate here: the French language, dialects and patois will be the context under examination in the present chapter. In effect, the term is more widely used to refer to a linguistic system born out of some situations of contact between French and non-French speakers (Walter 2012: 26), although it is sometimes also used outside the French territory (e.g. Piedmontese) and also covers Creoles (Oakes 2013) and even English-based Creoles (see for instance Leith 1997: 44).

If the term *patois* can be applied to various linguistic varieties, we can infer that the elements of definition are not of an intrinsic linguistic nature but linked to an external dimension. Jaurès, a French politician from the early 20th century, defined *patois* as "an inferior language, stripped of elevated general ideas and great

1. All the translations from the French original text are my own.

2. In the original text: "Pour un linguiste, il n'y a aucun doute: un patois, c'est une langue, mais dont l'aire d'extension géographique est limitée et qui a connu un destin historique singulier".

human ambitions"[3] (cited in Brummert 1990: 174). The aim of this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive list of definitions of *language* and *patois* but to take a critical approach towards the semantic evolution of the term *patois* and examine the impact of its use on speakers of a regional language such as Occitan. In order to achieve this, I will start by analysing the rationale behind the use of the term which coincides with the rise of French as the national language before providing the details of the history of the word *patois* and its application to Occitan. Finally, I will analyse how the acquired negative undertones have affected speakers in their representation and use of their own language.

2. Establishment of a dominance

In order to understand fully the use of the term *patois*, it is necessary to consider France's external linguistic history and the circumstances that saw the emergence of language policies aimed at implementing linguistic unification throughout the French regions in the aftermath of the French Revolution (Martel 2003). Indeed, prejudice against the regional languages and dialects spoken in France grew after 1789 for geopolitical and philosophical reasons. The plan to promote a national identity through the use of a single language was designed not only to reduce communication in languages other than French in the royalist provinces, but also to spread the principles of Enlightenment (Martel 2004). A clear sense of distinction and opposition between the Enlightened centre (Paris) and the uncultivated periphery (provinces) has developed and focused more precisely on language issues since the Abbé Grégoire's 1794 investigation of this issue (Lodge 1993). The 1794 survey was originally a request for information on language uses by Grégoire, who intended to collect opinions and promulgate truth, reason and the patriotic project of the First Republic. Grégoire refers only to the eradication of *patois* ("l'anéantissement des patois") in the report outlining his conclusions from the survey. The survey consisted of 43 questions (see de Certeau et al. 2002: 13–16 for a full list) and was sent to erudite friends of Grégoire, often clergymen themselves. Questions included, for example, "Is the use of the French language universal in your province? Are there one or several patois spoken there? For what type of things, activities or passions is this patois most frequently used? What is the type of pronunciation: is it guttural, sibilant, soft, with a subtle or a strong stress pattern? What would be the religious and political significance of destroying this patois entirely? What

3. "une langue inférieure déchue des hautes idées générales et des grandes ambitions".

moral effects does the current revolution produce in them [country people]?".[4] These questions, which encompass different areas of investigation, such as the use of French, a description of linguistic features and details about the speakers themselves, were sent to different parts of the territory which were linguistically diverse (de Certeau et al. 2002: 59). The respondents were required to evaluate their own linguistic affiliation to French or patois, or in other words, to Enlightenment or Obscurantism. The survey and the subsequent communication with Grégoire projected the necessity of rejecting one's regional identity for the sake of the growing political entity of the nation (Certeau et al. 2002: 49). In contrast with Grégoire's conclusions, the provincial respondents did not sit neatly on either side of the fence (French or *patois*) which, empirically, was more of a continuum.

First of all, some linguistic varieties are described as *patois* due to their geographical position as they are present in the provinces and are opposed to *la langue* spoken in the capital. If geographical distance from Paris is one obvious type of criteria, typological closeness is another. Indeed, the varieties which have been designated as *patois* are structurally close to French. The reason for this is that there was a need for establishing an ideological difference, or a distinction (Bourdieu 1991), through the creation of metaphorical distancing and stigmatisation of some varieties which were very similar in linguistic form. Hence, whereas we can observe a very precise geographical grounding for the term *French* (Paris), there is a lack of precise geographical frame of reference for *patois* which can be found in several provinces. This sociolect resembles French but is spoken in rural areas. Therefore the first opposition established through linguistic terminology is a divide between the capital and the provinces, and also between urban and rural areas. *Patois* is typically used by labourers to talk to cattle and by shepherds to talk to their dog (de Certeau et al. 2002: 122).

As well as a geographical differentiation, the period after the Revolution established a distinction between French and other languages and dialects based on the type of users. The association between *patois* and farmers is particularly strong. Furthermore, discussions about Grégoire's survey also inform us of the infantilising treatment of the community of *patois* speakers (de Certeau et al. 2002: 46), who are seen as lacking maturity and knowledge. They cannot function in an autonomous manner and depend on Paris for guidance and development because the communities constitute "an objectified world which […] expects that its salvation

4. "L'usage de la langue française est-il universel dans votre contrée ? Y parle-t-on un ou plusieurs patois ? Pour quels genres de choses, d'occupations, de passions, ce patois est-il plus abondant ? Quel est le caractère de la prononciation ? Est-elle gutturale, sifflante, douce, peu ou fortement accentuée ? Quelle serait l'importance religieuse et politique de détruire entièrement ce patois ? Quels effets moraux produit chez eux [les gens de la campagne] la révolution actuelle ? "

can only come from outside"[5] (de Certeau et al. 2002: 158). The image conveyed is that speakers of *patois* were considered to be at a previous stage of intellectual evolution and needed to be shown the way to Truth and Reason through the medium of French. Peronnet (1985: 92) argues that "(…) Grégoire's thoughts are completely dominated by a system of ideas of Christianity based on globality, on the one hand, and human perfectibility, on the other hand".[6] *Patois* is therefore conceived as an obstacle to the spiritual development of country people, while French is viewed as the language of political liberation and intellectual advancement.

After the Revolution, the population living in the countryside also needed to be associated with the new Republican and revolutionary project which linked philosophical principles of Enlightenment to political ideals of equality amongst citizens. In other words, a drastic change was needed in order to break away from the feudal past of the provinces. By association, *patois* (whether in a singular or plural sense) became the symbol of a tyrannical and feudal past regime, contrary to the new egalitarian principles represented by the French language. Revolutionaries dreaded potential royalist insurgencies or outside threats to the Republic. Some royalists organised meetings which were conducted in regional languages and dialects. In this instance, fighting the Babel myth took a political tone (Certeau et al. 2002: 170) and gave birth to the long-lasting idea of linguistic 'civicism' which associates good citizenship with the use of the French language.

The imposition of the French language is undoubtedly based on political and humanist ambitions but it also touches upon the cultural domain. French was progressively used for most cultural productions, and *patois* was (or were) gradually relegated to a *de facto* position of foreign language and culture. The paradox, which echoes Lafont's idea of "interior colonialism" ("colonialisme interne" 1971), lies in the perception of a territorial language as a foreign code. Those corresponding with Grégoire described the process as "simultaneously gaining a culture but losing a mother tongue",[7] de Certeau et al. 2002: 62). *Patois* is therefore a variety of language devoid of culture since culture is associated with French. Much of the work done by Occitan activists in the 20th century was to reconnect the modern language with the past literary tradition to disprove Occitan as a *patois* and attribute a cultural referent to it. Indeed, considering that Occitan has had a literary tradition since the medieval period, the label *patois* was applied not because of a lack of cultural production but indeed on sociological and, above all, ideological grounds (Courouau 2008).

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5. "un monde-objet […] ne peut attendre de salut que de l'extérieur".

6. "(…) la pensée de Grégoire est totalement dominée par le système d'idées de la chrétienté fondé sur la globalité d'une part et sur la perfectibilité de l'homme d'autre part".

7. "[…] à la fois le gain d'une culture et la perte d'une langue maternelle".

The process by which a linguistic form becomes known as a *patois* is therefore an ideological process, with little linguistic reasoning. It aims mainly at labelling a group of people, a provincial area and a local culture, all in opposition to national identity which unites a people, an area and a culture centred on Paris. Even though the survey sent by Grégoire provided some empirical and descriptive indication of the spread of French (or an absence of French proficiency in some areas), it was nonetheless based on ideological work (de Certeau et al. 2002: 22). O'Rourke (2015: 65), commenting on Woolard (2008), draws a parallel between the view associated with Enlightenment universalism and the view of a language as "a neutral, objective object of expression, equally available to all users". Over time, French has been considered not only as the national language but also as the *normal* language in France. Hence, speakers of what can be coined as *internal foreign* languages have been perceived as non-civic and with a degree of abnormality. In the same manner, dialectalisation also includes a process of fragmentation (Walter 2012: 27) but *patois* has been despised over a long period of time (Walter 2012: 25).

When French was established as the *normal* language of the nation-state, the moral and linguistic spheres became combined. As a result, the various *patois* and French are situated at extreme ends of an ideological continuum even though they originate from the same ancestor language, Latin. As de Certeau (2002: 57) notes, "the uses of *patois* or *langue* etc. are not the preliminary conditions but the effects of an ongoing operation".[8] This operation consisted of a process of denigration of regional cultures and linguistic practices which were seen as inferior or even as the enemy of a new political and cultured order. Progress was associated with French, while *patois* were ideologically pushed into the domain of the uncultured and private communication, and were regarded as the preserve of peasants living in remote areas. Historically, *patois* have survived but have also undergone a process of folklorisation (Joubert 2011) and to some extent 'museification' (Choay 2011).

The study of the gradual acceptance of French as the only language representing the ideas of the new French political regime and its people has brought to light an ideological arsenal which was aimed at ensuring that the regions were subdued by the power of Paris. For example, Brunot (1927: 250) reports that Marseille's council banned the use of Provençal in plays in 1794 because "the unity of the French people had to exist even in their language".[9] Madonia (2006: 42) stresses that linguistic policies following the revolution carried out a "linguistic persecution". The possibility of having a dual system with individuals using a regional language as well as a national language was not embraced on a large scale because it did not fit the political agenda. For instance, Barère declared at the Committee for Public Health in

8. "les emplois de patois, langue etc. ne sont pas les préalables mais les effets et les symptômes d'une opération en cours".

9. "l'unité des Français devant exister jusque dans leur langue".

January 1795 that other languages would constitute a threat to the French Republic since "Federalism and superstition speak Low Breton, emigration and hatred of the Republic speak German, counter-revolution speaks Italian and fanaticism speaks Basque"[10] (in de Certeau et al. 2002: 12–13). The French Republic needed a monogamous relationship between language and nation, and bilingualism was considered an infidelity to the emerging system and a danger to enlightened minds. From this perspective, it is clear that linguistic diversity was purposefully dismantled, and that the term *patois* itself came to encapsulate the growing contempt felt towards the varieties which, with time, were assimilated to a version of bad French.

3. History of the word *patois* and its application to Occitan

In order to help raise French to the status of superior and enlightened language, the regional varieties which were structurally closer to French were the ones mainly described as *patois*. As Leith (1997: 44) states when discussing the establishment of an English standard form, "the prestige of one dialect triggers the disparagement of the others". Leith explains that other dialects of English were also described as "offensive", "disgusting", "barbarous" and "cant" and became "unwritten vehicles for informal, everyday conversation among equals." Even though some linguists have conceived of *patois* as a type of dialect (Brunot 1927: 196), the term contains some additional and mostly negative value. The word has undergone a rapid semantic change (Madonia 2006: 44) due to the historical and social circumstances that encouraged a large-scale switch to French.

As mentioned above, the word *patois* is difficult to define and has evolved from the idea of a hotchpotch of dialectal forms to a sociolinguistic marker (Courouau 2005). In its early use, *patois* referred to a maternal and natural language which had not developed enough to be classified as a language. Courouau (2005: 190) attests a first mention of *patois* in 1285 in *Le tournoi de Chauvency* by Jacques Bretel. It is opposed to a "pretty and beautiful French".[11] In the middle of the 15th century, *patois* is found to constitute a way of communicating with animals or referring to an anterior state of a language (Courouau 2005: 199–200). Jean Molinet in 1473 in *Poésie des Grands Rhetoriqueurs* expresses the view that "(…) which is reputed to be patois is simple, low and ignorant".[12] (Courouau 2005: 201). *L'éclaircissement de la langue Françoise* (1530) by the English scholar John Palsgrave mentions *patois* as the speech of young children. In 1572, Etienne Tabourot in *Les Bigarures du seigneur*

10. "Le fédéralisme et la superstition parlent bas Breton; l'émigration et la haine de la République parlent allemand; la contre-révolution parle l'italien et le fanastisme parle le basque".

11. "un françois bel et joli".

12. "(…) est reputé patois ce qui est simple, bas, ignorant".

des Accords describes Lombard as a *patois* because it was seen in opposition to the Florentine dialect, a more prestigious form spoken in Italy. In Randle Cotgrave's dictionary of 1611 (1634), he describes *patois* as *gibridge* (gibberish), "clownish language" and "rustic speech". In 1623, Charles Sorel refers to the coarseness and the rusticity of *patois* (Courouau 2005: 211). In his *Pensées* in 1662, Pascal uses *patois* as synonymous with non-conformity. *Patois* has also taken the meaning of a hybrid and sometimes unintelligible language (Courouau 2005: 217). This data shows that the meaning of *patois* is very often accompanied by the view that the linguistic variety does not qualify as a language because of the participants (animals or young children) and the limit in its expressiveness or refinement. An article in the *Encyclopédie* from 1740 defines *patois* as a linguistic code whose speakers are *bas-peuple*, the commoners or little people. Courourau (2005: 224) notes, in his investigation of the data, the triumph of this term in the 18th century and concludes on the semantic shift from a general and socially-anchored term, to one defining the speech of a category of people and finally a variety to which can be attached an area (e.g. *patois normand*). *Patois* is therefore a highly subjective and derogatory term, which can be grasped fully by opposing it in a systematic way to what French has become throughout the years: a prestigious, standardised, cultural and national language. *Patois* does not seem to fit any precise linguistic reality, nor does it contain patterns of evolution as it is perceived as unchanged and extemporal according to Fournet (2012: 74) when observing Haignéré (1901).

All in all, *patois* is, in sociological terms, a substitute for a "dominated language" (Brummert 1990: 171). Littré in 1868 (cited in Courouau 2005) also establishes a progression in the evolution of the linguistic varieties in which a *patois* is a dialect which has stopped being "cultivated" and is only used for conversation amongst people of the provinces, especially peasants and workers. The specific reference to the working class and the geographical differentiation between cities and villages has already been made in the previous section, but the idea of a lack of culture must be elaborated upon. In effect, some scholars working on school pedagogy, such as Michel Bréal (cited in Boutan 1995: 41), conceived of *patois* as languages but "which, due to the fact that they were not the language of the capital, have been abandoned to themselves and deprived of a literary culture".[13] Here, the association between language, culture and Paris is clear.

In addition to the perceived lack of culture of *patois*, Littré's definition above fits, in a somewhat anachronistic manner, the category of low variety in the concept of diglossia as coined by Ferguson (1959). Ferguson stated that there can be, in some sociolinguistic contexts, two superposed varieties of the same language which can

13. " (…) mais qui pour n'avoir pas été la langue de la capitale ont été abandonnés à eux-mêmes et privés de culture littéraire".

be differentiated according to their functions. The High variety is the "vehicle of a large and respected body of literature" and is "highly codified". In this configuration of functions, *patois* is the prototypical Low variety due to the context in which it is used. Charles Nodier (1834: 245) equates *patois* with a confused jargon, which has no rules, "abandoned to the arbitrariness of the speech, and which expresses certain ideas according to a habit, much rather than a convention". This lack of codification or convention echoes the theoretical framework of analysis devised by Auroux (1992) on the "technico-linguistic revolution" experienced by the major languages of the Western world thanks to a recognised grammar tradition and institutionalised normative rules. This external evolution can encompass Walter's *usual* destiny (2012: 26) discussed above. Hence, the lack of codification of *patois* portrays it as an erratic and barbaric type of language.

Due to the typological closeness of most *patois* to French (varieties of Oïl, Oc and Franco-provençal), most varieties would be described as a distortion of the French language, thus raising French to the ideological status of the normative source from which other varieties are derived (Madonia 2006: 45). A widely held belief in France is that *patois* are "corruptions" of standard French (see Brunot 1927: 202). Martinet (1967: 152–153) argues that *patois* is not linguistically perfect. With the famously strong prescriptive tradition in France (Osthus 2016; Lodge 1993 discussing Brunot 1927), internal features and rules of usage of the French language were also considered intrinsically superior (Boutan 1995). Since there was room for only one language at the top of the linguistic hierarchy, the French language went through a process of ideological melioration and *patois* underwent a process of semantic pejoration. Madonia (2006: 47) even refers to the perceived coarseness but also the "ugliness" linked to the "unachieved state of their lexical forms". What started as linguistic civicism, aimed at promoting the French language across an entire territory, has evolved into a sort of intolerance towards linguistic diversity and a set of value judgements deeply ingrained within French speakers' perception of linguistic variation (see the discussion on *Bon Usage* Ayres-Bennett 2013).

Whether we discuss regional languages, dialects or accents, an attempt at a precise geographical delimitation is difficult when it comes to the use of the term *patois* (Wartburg 1969). Essentially, *patois* is very often used with an element providing information about the place where it is spoken (see France's dictionary in 1907: *patois meusien, patois rémois, patois picard, patois béarnais, patois du Midi, patois lorrain, patois bourguignon, patois des Pyrénées, patois d'Oléron, patois de l'ouest)*. If we restrict our range of study to the language and community under scrutiny here, there is also some referential vagueness when *patois* is applied to the different varieties of Occitan which, some scholars would argue, are different languages themselves (Blanchet 2003).

So far, this chapter has highlighted the difficulty in providing a single linguistic definition of *patois*. If we consent to use the definition found in Littré which incorporates the lack of a literature and lack of norms of usage, Occitan does not fit the category. Occitan has had different names throughout the ages, including *lenga romana, lemosi* in the Middle Ages and *proensal* in 13th century. Dante used *lingua d'oco* which became *langue d'Oc* and was turned in recent times into the term Occitan (Swiggers 1998; Bec 1995: 62–63). If we consider the external history of the language, it is evident that Occitan has had a very prestigious literary tradition with the poetry of the Troubadours and was also codified by the use of a literary koine (Paterson 1995: 4). The start of the decline of Occitan occurred with the Crusade of the Albigeois from 1208 to 1229, which saw the northern kingdom's victory over the southern territories controlled by the Cathars. The treaty of Villers-Cotterêts in 1539 officially raised the status of French by imposing its use in all legal documents. This important landmark in the history of French was also meant to limit the use of Latin but caused a decline in the use of Occitan in local administrative documents (Bec 1995: 78). Gradually, Occitan became a predominantly oral language not used by the local aristocracy. The irony noted by Lodge (1993: 187) is that the revolutionaries chose the language of the king to spread Republican principles. In Vila i Moreno (2014: 59), Occitan has been conceptualised as a "bare language" (*lenga nusa*; Sauzet 2008: 118), denoting a language without political authority or official status, since it could rely on its literature only in order to be granted languageness after the process of *patoisation* or *patoisisation*. Hence, *patoisation* can be conceived as an extreme case of linguistic minoritisation, "the process whereby empires and nation-states had lowered the status of their autochthonous languages and made these minority languages" (Vila I Moreno 2014: 56). In other words, *patois* is the minority language *par excellence* since it is the lowest status of language possible associated with animal communication and corruption of morals.

Most of the qualities associated with *patois* so far are derogatory or pejorative. However, it would not be fair to omit some representations of *patois* which add a more positive light. Traver (1943: 55) studies the *patois* used by authors and noticed the borrowing of many colourful and expressive words from *patois* into French in the 16th century. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of 20th century, the hierarchisation of linguistic practices was in full swing but some politicians such as Jean Jaurès defended the use of local languages. For instance, Jaurès posited that the use of *patois* provided a greater sense of intimacy (cited in Brummert 1990: 173). Jaurès opposed the use of the term *patois* but used it to replicate the term used by the community itself (he used inverted commas in writing). What we can observe is the internalisation of the term which was adopted by speakers themselves. Jaurès also believed that by maintaining the use of the term, society maintained the inferior status of the language (Brummert 1990: 174). This idea is echoed in Lafont (1997:

21), who discusses the necessary activism of sociolinguists from what he calls the periphery who should fight the use of the term because "if the reality does not lift the burden which oppresses it, science perpetuates the oppression".[14] Using the term patois as a way of oppressing minorities constitutes an important debate in Occitan sociolinguistic studies and also language planning work.

Although *patois* underwent a process of semantic pejoration with its association with mostly negative representations, it is important to notice the existence of an affective relation to it with the use of the possessive adjective (67% in the data examined by Courouau 2005: 214) and in some of the data below. Since *patois* is a common word, speakers have adapted the term to express their private and personal relation to it and have managed to create group boundaries through the use of possessive adjectives and thus opposing "*my* patois" to "*his* patois" from the next village. The delimitation of in-group boundaries has therefore been affected by the vagueness of the term and also speakers' negotiation of their linguistic identities.

4. Socio-psychological effects on the Occitan community

For Walter (2012: 25), it is the word *patois* itself, rather than the linguistic variety it represents, that has suffered scorn. However, this view seems to naively separate the word from its community of speakers. This section of the chapter will highlight the ways in which speakers have been affected by the use of this term, through the analysis of excerpts from interviews collected during fieldwork in 2010. The information revealed by these interviews is still relevant to this day. Various reactions and consequences can be directly linked to the designation of Occitan varieties as *patois*. Specifically speakers have generally internalised its designation as an inferior language and one that is not worth keeping (Marouzeau 1951 cited in Grillet 1974: 197).

The first example illustrates the Academy's dictionary definition from 1740 (cited in Madonia 2006: 44) which describes *patois* as "certain ways of speaking which people from the Provinces let slip, sometimes despite their desire to get rid of it".[15] The desire to abandon *patois* can be attributed to the sense of humiliation felt by speakers who were ridiculed because of their linguistic practices. The comical effect of using regional varieties is also noted in the literature (Courouau 2008). This sense of ridicule was part of daily life for older speakers of Occitan, who suffered from this stigmatisation, as explained by this 75-year-old informant from Fronton:

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14. "(…) si la réalité ne soulève pas le couvercle qui l'opprime, la science perpétue le règne du couvercle".

15. " [on donne aussi quelquefois le nom de Patois] à certaines façons de parler qui échappent aux gens de Province souvent même quelque soin qu'ils prennent pour s'en défaire".

A: Was it difficult to speak French at first?
CC: Oh, yes, yes, yes, at school, yes. But because when I went to school when I was five years old, I couldn't speak French. I only spoke patois. But the other girls, they would surround me, make me speak and they would laugh.
A: It was forbidden to speak patois at school then?
CC: Yes, yes, absolutely. We couldn't speak patois, but well, we had to speak French at school. But for some time, I was the laughing stock because I spoke patois.[16]

The informant's testimony is loaded with emotions due to the level of humiliation she felt at a very young age. Walter (2012: 25) evokes the treatment of school children who would speak *patois* in the classroom and the famous example of the linguistic "sign" as a "humiliating punishment". It is clear from this informant's testimony that the pupils' cruel reaction also had an effect on the emotional welfare of *patois* speakers.

In the case of Occitan, the loss of a proper name and a sense of separate identity has been interpreted as a loss of linguistic conscience (Schlieben-Lange 1971). Other excerpts from the interview with this informant from Fronton displays the lack of a sense of unified community visible from the use of different names for the language:

A: And do you understand Occitan or other people speaking patois?
CC: Sometimes, but sometimes I don't even understand. (…) When she speaks with her neighbours, it's difficult to understand. It's not Lengadocien that they speak, it's the patois from Ariège. But even in the next village, it's not the same as the patois from here.[17]

As identified in the previous section, the term *patois* is referentially vague in the sense that it can cover a wide area but it can also be extremely specific when it refers to one region or sometimes one village. For this speaker, linguistic variation leads to some unintelligibility and the use of a different name (*Lengadocien* vs. *patois from Ariège*) and points to the absence of unity in the linguistic community.

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16. « Et ça a été dur pour vous de parler français au départ ?

CC : Oh oui, oui, oui à l'école, oui. Mais parce que moi je suis allée à l'école à cinq ans. Je parlais pas français, je parlais que patois. Mais les filles, elles m'entouraient pour me faire parler et elles riaient. Oui, oui absolument c'était interdit, il fallait pas parler patois. M'enfin, il fallait parler français quand même à l'école. Mais, là, pendant quelques temps j'étais la risée de l'école parce que je parlais patois. »

17. « Et vous comprenez l'occitan ou les autres qui parlent patois ?

"Des fois mais des fois même, je comprends pas. …) Quand elle [her friend] parle avec ses voisins, c'est dur de comprendre. C'est pas du languedocien qu'ils parlent, c'est du patois de l'Ariège. (…) mais même dans le village d'à côté, c'est pas le même patois qu'ici".

As speakers do not always recognise or understand the different possible variants, it is common to note a distance between localised forms and the newly established standard. O'Rourke (2015: 77) explains the fragmentation that can arise in a community in which "the divergent conceptions of authenticity versus anonymity represent a potential source of tension, generating friction between the dialectal variability characteristic of traditional native speakers (…) and the more standardised way of speaking." Another so-called traditional speaker who attended the early Occitan classes in the 1970's testifies to this source of tension:

CF: "I remember taking (…) ONE class, not two, one. (…) In the first class, the teacher started talking to us in Occitan and (…) asked me to read a text. I read it with my local accent and she said "ah that's not Occitan, that's patois, that's Béarnais".[18]

We see here the use of different terminology to refer to a different variety of the language. The multiplicity of terms demonstrates the difficulty in perceiving Occitan as one language. In this example, Occitan is portrayed as the High variety (used by the teacher) and *patois* relegated to a lower variety (after French and Occitan). This situation has led some Occitanists to refer to the double stigma for *patois* speakers. CF did not go back to the Occitan class, thus indicating a fragmentation in the community itself. The denigration of *patois* led to a particularly negative perception of its value, as illustrated by JL who discusses the decline in the use of the language and the interruption of intergenerational transmission:

JL: When someone does not speak a language to their kids because they are scared of transmitting a social disease… Let's say it like it is: it [patois] was like social AIDS, this is how it was presented. School has been the great provider of references. School rejected it and said [patois] is "bad".[19]

The image of "social AIDS" is a powerful one as it portrays patois as an infectious disease. Speakers from previous generations felt they had to avoid contaminating their offspring and opted to switch to French with the help of schooling. Madonia (2006: 51) claims such references allude to the category of the *monstrous*; as such, it is therefore understandable that speakers wanted to spare their children from similar traumatising experiences.

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18. « Je me souviens avoir pris (…) UN cours, pas deux, un cours. Et le premier jour, (…) la prof a commencé à nous parler en occitan (…) Et elle m'a demandé de lire un texte. Je l'ai lu avec mon accent local et elle me dit « mais c'est pas de l'occitan ça, c'est du patois, c'est du béarnais ».

19. Quand quelqu'un ne parle pas une langue à ses enfants parce qu'il a peur de leur transmettre une maladie sociale, il faut bien le dire, c'est comme un sida social, c'est comme ça que ça a été travaillé. l'école a été le grand donneur de références. C'est l'école qui a rejeté, qui a dit « c'est mal ».

Another example of language shift due to the devalorisation of patois can be spotted in this excerpt which recounts the impossibility of bilingual communication in patois and French:

A: What would you do if somebody who doesn't speak patois comes into the room, do you switch to French, even if they understand it?
CC: Yes, but no, even if I know that people understand it, we speak French. Because, because… it was degrading for us, you see. We feel inferior to others. We can speak French so the one who arrives, speaks French so automatically, we shut up.[20]

The effect reported by the presence of a French speaker is to silence the patois speakers, who not only switch codes but even "shut up" entirely. Courouau (2005: 218) explores this phenomenon, arguing that "to speak patois (badly) hurts the organised norm of the licit code. Therefore, it is more *socially acceptable*[21] that *patois* be replaced with silence".[22] Patois speakers lacked a voice to express themselves since their language had been made illegitimate.

In addition to the perception of a hierarchy where silence seems more valued than *patois*, the notion of culture also leads to a specific categorisation when applied to patois:

A: Do you support the initiatives to teach Béarnais in Pau?
CF: Yes but for me, it has to stay a sub-culture, that is obvious to me.[23]

French, as the dominant language, appears as the *normal* language of culture. Patois in CF's mind is clearly a language which cannot be associated with a "culture" but whose inferior status needs to be made salient with the expression "sub-culture". Similarly, Courouau (2005: 222) analyses Pierre Richelet's definition of *patois* in

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20. « que faites-vous si quelqu'un qui ne parle pas patois entre dans la pièce ? Vous passez au français ? Même si la personne comprend ?

CC : Oui, mais non même si je sais qu'on le comprend, on parle français. Parce que… Parce que c'est dévalorisant pour nous, voilà. On se trouve inférieurs aux autres. Voyez… On sait parler français, donc celui qui arrive il parle français, donc nous on se tait. »

21. Italics in the original text.

22. "Parler (faux) patois heurte la norme organisée de la parole licite. Aussi est-il plus *convenable* que le *patois* cède la place au silence. "

23. « Est-ce que vous soutenez les initiatives faites pour enseigner le béarnais à Pau ?

CF : Alors, oui, mais quoiqu'il en soit, ça ne doit rester qu'une sous-culture, ça c'est l'évidence, pour moi.

1680[24] in which he claimed that "patois is not a language, it is only a type of language, a sub-product, unfinished and imperfect linked to a place and not an individual".[25] Whether product or culture, patois does seem to qualify as a full category and needs to be assigned the restricting prefix "sub-".

The negative connotations of the inferior status of *patois* have certainly affected speakers, however, some speakers who do not associate with the more recent name *Occitan* have tried to challenge the semantic content of the word *patois*, as is demonstrated by this anecdote told by RB, who speaks of an occasion when he was out with friends:

RB: So we started talking about the region and [a person who joined them in the discussion] he told me how proud he was of his region, being a bit nostalgic, you know. Life used to be better in the countryside, etc. My friend asked him "do you speak Occitan?" and he said "no, I speak patois". My friend said that patois was pejorative but for the guy, it was pride. So it's funny because the stigma has been internalised and turned around into something prestigious.[26]

The change in the connotation of *patois* to indicate greater prestige can also be interpreted as signalling intragroup use and, in this way, opposing traditional speakers to the new generations of speakers who usually acquire a linguistic competence based on a standard in a classroom situation (O'Rourke, Pujolar & Ramallo 2015; Hornsby 2015 and others have pointed out the disunity between older traditional speakers and *new* speakers). The reversal of value attached to *patois* encapsulates a desire to be proud of what *patois* stands for: rural origins and local non-standardised practice.

From the analysis of speakers' attitudes, we can identify how *patois* speakers have internalised this perception of inferiority and how it has affected them: notably, feelings of humiliation and shame, interruption of language transmission, attitude of submissiveness and occasionally a rebellious act intended to claim some

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24. "a type of coarse language from a particular place and which is different from the one spoken by honest people" ("sorte de langage grossier d'un lieu particulier et qui est différent de celui dont parlent les honnêtes gens")

25. "patois n'est pas langue, il n'est qu'une sorte de langue, un sous-produit, inachevé et imparfait".

26. « Donc on a commencé à parler (…) du pays tout ça, et [nouvelle personne rencontrée ce soir-là] il me disait qu'il était fier de sa région, tu vois, un peu nostalgique, c'était mieux avant, dans les campagnes etc. Y'a mon ami qui lui a posé la question « est-ce que tu parles occitan ? » et lui il a dit « non, je parle patois ». Mon ami disait que « patois » c'était péjoratif, et pour l'autre c'était une fierté. Donc, c'est marrant parce que le stigmate, il a été intériorisé et retourné comme quelque chose de prestigieux. »

pride back for *patois* speakers. These are the effects of the hegemonic power of the dominant language. The downgrading of a linguistic community through the negative value attached to its spoken variety negatively impacts speakers' self-esteem and leads to feeling of self-hatred (or *auto-odi* in Catalan and Occitan sociolinguistics, Maurand 1981). This phenomenon highlights the importance of "desalienation" as explained by Lafont (1997) and other Occitan sociolinguists (Boyer & Gardy 2003) when dealing with language planning for Occitan. The detrimental impact on the speakers' appreciation of self-worth can be combatted by positive attitudes towards *patois*, which can also operate as a sign of friendship and fraternity (Grillet 1974: 199), but in an in-group context.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the generalisation of the use of *patois* to refer to a range of linguistic varieties was caused by the political and philosophical ideals of the post-revolution era and is a symbol of a key initiative in top-down language policy. The history of the word itself shows the intention to hierarchise linguistic practices in order to elevate and reinforce the power of the national language. This ideological machinery has had drastic consequences for the general conceptualisation of the linguistic varieties which has been internalised by speakers, as for instance in the Occitan community. A similar rejection and stigmatisation of linguistic variation can be observed for non-standard varieties of French. More generally, Blanchet (2016) uses the term 'glottophobie' which captures, in a very precise manner, the widespread culture of linguistic discrimination in France (Blanchet 2016). The process of *patoisation*, that is to say being denied the status of language, has encouraged the process of language shift. In comparison, Gulsoy (1982: 189) states that the Catalan revitalist movement intended to "save Catalan from the fate of *patoisation*" which is considered to be a stage in language evolution that can only lead to endangerment and eventually death.

Through the focus on the term *patois*, which is more reflective of a social practice than a linguistic one, this analysis highlights the problematic disunity or dislocation of speakers' sense of identity. Whilst revitalisation movements have been working on the revalorisation of linguistic varieties through emancipation from this stigmatising denomination with, for instance, the establishment of a standard with a proper name and reinstating the link between language and culture, micro-level approaches to language restoration struggle to gather community members under the name of *patois*, which is not a proper noun, or *Occitan*, with which they do not associate. In effect, Top-down approaches to language revitalisation have produced a discourse encouraging people to stop using the term *patois*, whilst bottom-up

approaches have encouraged *patois* speakers to start defending *their* patois. These two contradictory tendencies are a sign, as I have argued elsewhere, that Occitan language planning seems to be torn between two frames of reference: one that advocates unification and standardisation behind an established name, and one that celebrates the multiplicity of dialectal forms (Joubert 2015: 186). At the same time, efforts have also been directed towards a change of attitude from the French government with regard to the treatment of linguistic diversity. Whilst the ratification of the European Charter for Minority and Regional Languages remains a controversial issue in French governing bodies, the ideological battle to change the view of regional languages and dialects occurs at a moment when *patois* are disappearing (Hornsby 2010: 287). Promoting territorial multilingualism in France is not on the immediate political agenda and *patois* are absent from supranational linguistic rights documentation because of the vagueness of the term and the fact that it is mainly restricted to the French context. What French language policies have evidently operated and managed, with a certain degree of success, notably through the use of a derogatory term, is a legitimising process with the recognition of the symbolic power (Bourdieu 1991) of one specific variety of language over others. The type of disparaging values that are still associated with the term in the 21st century is a sign that macro-level policies have fostered a powerful system of indexical meanings (Blommaert 2005) and have also implemented an illegitimacy of practice, leading to linguicide and to differing levels of contestedness present even in revitalisation strategies.

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CHAPTER 7

Surveying the ethnolinguistic vitality of two contested languages

The case of Kashubian and Piedmontese

Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska and Claudia Soria
Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences / Institute for Computational Linguistics "A. Zampolli", National Research Council of Italy

In this chapter we present the results of a Polish-Italian research project aimed at evaluating and comparing the vitality of two contested languages: Kashubian in Poland and Piedmontese in Italy.

Despite their different institutional status (Kashubian is a language recognised under the Polish law while Piedmontese is a contested language that remains unrecognised under Italian law), they show similarities with regard to their range of uses and speakers' attitudes. The ethnolinguistic vitality of both communities is low, and so are the status and prestige of both languages in their respective countries. Consciousness about the importance of their maintenance is weakening, both within the communities and in wider social contexts. As they belong to the same language family as their respective dominant languages, they were/are treated as dialects of the state languages and thus not worthy of preservation. However, current accounts of language vitality for Kashubian and Piedmontese are rather optimistic. We believe that this optimism is mainly due to an over-estimation of the importance of number of speakers as a parameter for assessing vitality over others that address the ideology surrounding the language, such as speakers' attitudes, stigma, and the comparison between actual and perceived use of the language.

This chapter presents the preliminary results of a new survey addressing the vitality of these two languages. The survey makes use of a new combination of ethnolinguistic vitality parameters and is specifically focused on aspects related to language ideology.

1. Introduction

Assessing the vitality of a language is a popular exercise, and academic as well as public discourse around language endangerment and preservation is currently growing. Unfortunately, in many cases this exercise is limited to identifying the languages

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at risk of extinction, and to report sensationally about it. This is a rather rhetorical approach, which in the best cases is useful in raising awareness about the problem of language endangerment. Trying to go beyond this, a correct assessment of the vitality of a language is an important aspect for language planning: it is by pinpointing the most critical aspects concerning the use, transmission and psychological attitudes of speakers of a language that appropriate measures can eventually be taken for revitalisation purposes. The most influential diagnostic tools for assessing language vitality are the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS, Fishman 2001), updated by Lewis and Simons (2010) as EGIDS, and the UNESCO nine factors (Brenzinger et al. 2003). More recently, the European Language Vitality Barometer (EuLaViBar) was also introduced (Spiliopoulou Akermark et al. 2013).

The scales and indicators that are available for assessing the vitality of a language, however, do not appear to be entirely satisfactory. From the point of view of regional and minority languages in particular, current assessments tend to place them on quite a high level of the scale, which is not what would be expected when looking closely at the sociolinguistic situation of those languages. This is the case, for instance, for Kashubian and Piedmontese, two regional languages spoken in Poland and Italy, respectively. The status and prestige of these languages are low in their respective countries and consciousness about the importance of their maintenance is weakening both within the communities and in the wider social context. As will be further illustrated below (Section 2), current accounts of language vitality for Kashubian and Piedmontese are not entirely satisfactory in that they seem to overestimate the importance of the number of speakers – considerable in both cases – over other factors related to speakers' attitudes towards the languages, their actual use of it, and the stigma that over the years has been associated with them.

The survey we present in this chapter was carried out in order to reassess the vitality of Kashubian and Piedmontese by developing a set of parameters that are more sensitive to the ideology associated with the languages. Specifically, these parameters tap on the attitudes governing speakers' behaviour rather than relying on supposedly objective figures related to speakers' numbers. No matter how numerous, speakers may acutely feel that a language is deprived of prestige, or is stigmatised by other linguistic groups, especially the dominant one. In the case of languages that have been censored for years, it is likely that a submissive attitude has become pervasive among speakers and holds them back from using the language widely, even if the official status of the language has eventually changed.

We found comparison of these two languages justified also because they both belong to the category of contested languages. Despite their distance from the dominant language, and despite official recognition for Kashubian, both are still perceived by society as "dialects", which influences their prestige and their social valorisation. This lack of wide, pervasive and uncontested acceptance of their status

as languages has deep consequences on their social functioning and perception and represents an important challenge for future social and linguistic processes.

The chapter is structured as follows: after a brief introduction of the two languages in question (Section 2), we describe the criteria that were used to develop the survey and the methodology we followed to carry it out (Section 3). We then report the results for both languages (Section 4) and close the chapter with a comparative discussion (Section 5), with particular focus on what we have learned about the assessment of language vitality.

2. Kashubian and Piedmontese: The sociolinguistic situation

2.1 Kashubian

Kashubian (*kaszëbsczi jãzëk*, ISO 639-1 csb) belongs to the family of Western Slavonic languages and is closely related to Polish. Until the end of the 20th century it possessed no official status and was therefore perceived as a dialect of the Polish language. This resulted in its very low prestige. As is often the case with contested languages, it is difficult to establish the precise number of Kashubian language speakers. The results of sociological and sociolinguistic surveys carried out during the last three decades have revealed that approximately 80,000 people use Kashubian in everyday life and another 40,000 use it often. From about 350,000 people identifying themselves as Kashubs (or Kashubian descendants) half declare to be able to understand Kashubian (Synak 1998; Mordawski 2005; Porębska 2006). At the same time, these surveys point out that the intergenerational transmission of Kashubian was weakened during the second half of the 20th century and that the young generation (especially people born in the 21st century or at the end of the 20th century) do not know Kashubian (Mazurek 2010).

Until recently, Kashubian existed mainly in oral form and was used in many local variants (Treder 2011: 76). Despite the growing role of the Kashubian *intelligentsia* in the mid-19th century and the appearance of Kashubian language literary production, any organised attempts to standardise the language and to make of it a marker of the common, supra-local community failed. Moreover, at the beginning of the 20th century Kashubs found themselves in a difficult geographical and political situation, living on the border between the conflicting influences of Polish and German. After the Second World War and under the Communist regime Poland became a monocultural and monolingual country (Wicherkiewicz 2011). Any use of Kashubian in public life was forbidden. This resulted in a language stigma and, together with social and lifestyle changes, this was the cause of the Kashubian language shift.

The breakthrough in the Kashubian language situation is linked to the political changes in Poland in 1989. In 2005 the Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and on Regional Language was enacted by the Polish Parliament and gave official recognition to Kashubian as a regional language of Poland. In 2009 its status was confirmed with the ratification by Poland of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Kashubian is now being used in the public media, though mainly in radio, as there are very few programs in Kashubian on local television. It has a presence on the Internet, both as a language that is used in some official web sites of Kashubian associations or institutions (but not web sites of municipalities), and as a language used by some people in social media. It is possible for children and teenagers to attend Kashubian language lessons (optional, at parents' specific request), three hours per week plus one hour of Kashubian history and culture. In 2015/2016, approximately 19,000 children (mainly in primary and middle schools) were learning Kashubian and the number is growing steadily. Moreover, Kashubian can be used as an auxiliary language in public offices where the number of Kashubian inhabitants, according to the 2011 census, is higher than 20%. There is also a place for Kashubian-Polish bilingual signs in the region. The last few years have seen an increase in the role and position of the Kashubian language, with its presence in many cultural and art events. It would appear that Kashubian has started to be fashionable both as a language related to the local identity and as the symbol of the region (Dołowy-Rybińska 2015). While its passive and to a lesser extent active presence in the public sector is increasing, its use in private life is seen to be diminishing steadily.

2.2 Piedmontese

Piedmontese (*Piemontèis*, ISO 639–3 pms) is a Gallo-Italic language, placed amidst two big groups of Romance languages, the Italo-Romance and the Gallo-Romance groups. The language is spoken in the Piedmont administrative region, in the North-West of Italy. It presents phonetic, morphological and lexical features that are sufficiently distinct to set it out as a language separate from Italian and French from an *Abstand* perspective (Kloss 1967). Piedmontese has a *koine*, a standardised orthography, and a vast literary and artistic production (novels, theatre, poetry, press, and official documents), that can be traced back to the 12th century.[1] Piedmontese was the mother tongue of many of the politicians, intellectuals and officials who unified Italy, and until a few decades ago it was the only language widely used in the region. Although everybody was able to communicate in Italian as well, Italian was

1. For a detailed account of the Piedmontese language, see Clivio (2002) and Telmon (2001).

limited to written documents and official occasions, as it was only after the second half of the last century that Italian took over as spoken language.

From the point of view of its institutional recognition, Piedmontese is not recognised among the languages protected according to State law no. 482/99. Numerous attempts have been made to bring about its recognition, especially at the regional level. For example, on 15th December, 1999 the Regional Council of Piedmont officially recognised Piedmontese as Piedmont's regional language. In 2015, the same Council launched the Piedmontese version of its official website, and in 2016 regional law 11/2009 on the promotion of the linguistic heritage of Piedmont was updated after a 2010 judgment of the Constitutional Court had limited its efficacy.

According to *Ethnologue*, speakers of Piedmontese amount to 1,600,000 people;[2] the figure is higher according to UNESCO's World Atlas: 2,000,000; the same figure is reported by Wikipedia. The most recent survey on the subject, dating to 2007, reports about 2,000,000 adult speakers having an active competence of the language (Allasino et al. 2007). While Piedmontese has a relatively high number of speakers, its vitality level is rapidly decreasing, and according to UNESCO (Moseley 2010) it falls in the endangered red list. However, the assessment of the vitality of Piedmontese is not homogeneous across different sources: the language is rated as "Definitely Endangered" according to UNESCO, and "Developing" in the 17th edition of *Ethnologue*. The *Ethnologue* estimate, in particular, appears to be very optimistic: level 5 on the EGIDS scale implies that "the language is vigorous and is being used in written form in parts…"; this rating stands in sharp contrast with UNESCO's Definitely Endangered classification, which should correspond to a grade 7. This is a striking difference in the estimated vitality level of the language and calls for a closer analysis.

3. Survey objectives and methodology

The objective of the survey was to assess the vitality of Kashubian and Piedmontese by developing a new combination of parameters for evaluating language vitality. The survey, therefore, is the result of a study of currently available methods of language vitality assessment and their integration with additional parameters that in our opinion are better suited to capture the factors that hold back speakers from using those languages. The selected variables are the following:

2. The figure refers to year 2002.

1. **self-assessment** of language competence (oral and written production, understanding and comprehension); our goal was not to investigate our respondents' language competences but to get their opinion on what they think their proficiency in the regional language is; therefore, such results do not present the objective competences in using the language, but they provide evidence of how people feel about their abilities to speak and write it;
2. the language **use**, both actual and perceived, where "actual" means frequency of language use in different contexts, media, and with different interlocutors e.g. friends, parents, children etc. Perceived use, on the other hand, refers to the respondents' perception of how other people in different contexts are using the language; similarly as in the case of self-assessment, this variable also relies on people's own responses and, consequently, it is interesting to see what the interdependencies between these two categories are;
3. **intergenerational transmission**: the manner of language acquisition, the extent of language use with parents and grandparents, parental language transmission;
4. **desire and language attitudes**: towards a lack of intergenerational transmission, relation between language and regional identity, perceived attitudes of non-speakers from the region and from other regions within each country, perceived usefulness of the language, judgments about the suitability of language use in the main public context;
5. **awareness** of the language's institutional status and its effectiveness;
6. **stigma**: use of language prevented in childhood and at present.

Four additional questions concern respondents' background information (age, gender, level of education, place of birth).

The questionnaire contains a total of 25 questions. Some of them were close ended and some multiple-choice. Each question was attributed to one of the six identified variables or dimensions of the analysis. Each question was assessed on a 0 to 4 value scale where 0 is negative and 4 is a positive value (for all variables except "stigma" where 4 indicates no stigma and 0 high stigma).

We collected 60 questionnaires for each group. We are aware that this sample is small and therefore it cannot be considered to be entirely representative, although for this pilot study we can consider it adequate to present the basic directions of language vitality. It is important to underline here that the objective of our pilot study was not to assess the precise linguistic vitality of two regional languages, but to test if the new methodology works and dependencies between different variables can be seen.

For the sake of comparability, and to make the discussion with international experts about the questions and variables possible, we have prepared the first

version of the questionnaire in English. The final form was translated into Polish (for Kashubian) and Italian (for Piedmontese). We decided not to make the questionnaire available in the regional language because of the varying degrees of language competence of our (potential) respondents. In both groups, all respondents use the standard State language regularly, while not all of the regional language speakers obtained a formal education in this language and knew how to read it. The questions in both language versions were written in an easily understandable language accessible to all readers.

The other important aspect to be pointed out is that the structure of the two samples is not entirely comparable. This is due to the authors' social networks in the field. In Kashubia, we had well-established contacts in different places as well as volunteers willing to hand out the questionnaires among inhabitants of the region. In this way, we managed to obtain completed questionnaires representing different ages, gender, levels of education and social background, with a comparable number of men and women respondents who belong to different age groups. The Piedmontese respondents, on the other hand, were recruited by contacting cultural associations by e-mail and, as a result, those who replied were mainly males over 50 years of age. Although this impedes a strict comparison, it is still possible to investigate the internal dependencies between different variables within each language situation. From the viewpoint of research methodology, this also gives a valuable indication concerning different sources and informants. For all these reasons, in the preliminary study we decided to analyse only the correlations between men and women. Other background information (e.g., correlations/dependencies between age groups, level of education, place of birth) is not included in the measurement at this stage of the research. To score the data, we have chosen the median value that indicates the middle value of responses and is not so sensitive to extremes (as the average is) and therefore it is a more robust measurement for values such as those reported in this project. To present the amount of dispersion of data we also used the standard deviation measurement. A low standard deviation means that responses were similar and close to the mean, while a high standard deviation indicates that the responses were differentiated (Dodge 2003). The results for both Kashubian and Piedmontese are presented collectively for each variable, before being compared and discussed.

4. Survey results and discussion

Although this pilot study is based on the numerical results, more contextual information is necessary in order to gain a deeper understanding. As explained in the previous section, the scores presented here do not reflect the real vitality of Kashubian and Piedmontese – this could only be done if the sample were much larger and more differentiated. However, these numbers are informative with regard to interdependencies between different variables and are therefore important.

Tables 1 and 2 report the values for the parameters in each language.

Table 1. Average, median and standard deviation values – Kashubian sample

		Self-assessment	Use	Transmission	Attitudes	Awareness	Stigma
Kashubian							
Tot.	*Average*	2.36	1.88	2.25	3.28	2.61	3.04
	Median	2.28	1.85	2.30	3.50	2.85	4.00
	Standard deviation	.908	.776	1.263	.628	1.238	1.371
Female	*Average*	*2.41*	*1.73*	*1.97*	*3.27*	*2.66*	*3.12*
	Median	*2.50*	*1.70*	*2.00*	*3.50*	*3.30*	*4.00*
	Standard deviation	*1.125*	*.784*	*1.323*	*.680*	*1.252*	*1.317*
Male	*Average*	*2.29*	*2.10*	*2.70*	*3.31*	*2.52*	*2.89*
	Median	*2.25*	*2.35*	*3.00*	*3.40*	*2.70*	*4.00*
	Standard deviation	*.702*	*.721*	*1.035*	*.549*	*1.239*	*1.487*

Table 2. Average, median and standard deviation values – Piedmontese sample

		Self-assessment	Use	Transmission	Attitudes	Awareness	Stigma
Piedmontese							
Tot.	*Average*	3.04	1.98	3.01	2.73	1.31	2.41
	Median	3.25	1.95	3.69	2.78	1.33	3.00
	Standard deviation	.893	.790	1.1888	.616	.789	1.683
Female	*Average*	2.43	1.56	2.93	2.58	1.03	2.68
	Median	2.25	1.35	3.75	2.60	1.33	3.00
	Standard deviation	1.039	.941	1.375	.592	.930	1.565
Male	*Average*	3.36	2.18	3.06	2.80	1.45	2.27
	Median	3.25	1.95	3.69	2.78	1.33	3.00
	Standard deviation	.893	.790	1.188	.616	.789	1.683

4.1 Self-assessment

Respondents were asked to evaluate their language proficiency in four categories: speaking, understanding the oral language, writing and reading abilities. We did not use any other method to assess language competence of respondents. Therefore, this variable does not give the real picture of the respondents' language abilities and practices, but represents only the respondents' own assessment. Respondents could assess their abilities as "very well", "well", "fairly well", "poorly" or "not at all". The median value for self-assessment of Kashubian language competences is 2.28 and it is similar for both men and women (2.50 for females, 2.25 for males). Although the standard deviation of this score is not particularly low (being close to 1), we cannot identify it as high. This means that most of the respondents stated that they have an average knowledge of Kashubian, but there were also those declaring a good knowledge of Kashubian in each domain of use (oral, written, passive and active) and those stating no or only passive knowledge of the language.

Respondents declared a fairly strong self-assessment of competence in Piedmontese ($M = 3.25$), which appears higher for males than for females (3.25 and 2.25, respectively). Indeed, older male speakers represented the majority of respondents, which is related to the way the participants to the survey were recruited, i.e. mainly through cultural associations whose members are mostly elderly people. The standard deviation for the female group is 1.04 while for males it is 0.6, suggesting that answers may have been polarised in the first group. This suggests a situation where speakers of the language have strong and solid competence in it.

The higher score for Piedmontese compared to Kashubian indicates that Piedmontese speakers appear to be more confident about their language proficiency. It is interesting that in both cases the standard deviation for women was high and for men was low which means that females fluctuated between extremes while males gave more similar responses. The scores also suggest stronger self-confidence for the Piedmontese language, which is interesting when compared to the scores for attitudes and awareness, which are lower for Piedmontese than for Kashubian.

4.2 Use

Questions to evaluate the use of regional languages concerned its frequency, interlocutors with whom the language is used, official and private domains where the language is spoken. In addition, one question concerned respondents' perception and knowledge of the possibility of using the language in official contexts. Use represents the lowest score for Kashubian among all variables, being below average at 1.85. While the standard deviation is low, which means that all the answers are

quite similar, this score is the most interesting of all. In our survey the score for use consists of both the "actual use" of the language in different domains (both public and private, mediated and face-to-face) and the "perceived use". This last category shows a respondent's feeling about the language practices and use by people around him/her. Consequently, Kashubs declare a lower use of the language than their self-assessment of language knowledge. The score for language use was also observed as slightly lower for women than men (the Medians were 1.35 and 1.95 respectively).

For Piedmontese, the results for use are directly comparable with those for Kashubian (1.95 for Piedmontese, 1.85 for Kashubian), revealing that the language is used sparsely. There appears to be a difference between males (median 1.95) and females (median 1.35) which may suggest that males reported a more intensive use of language. This difference between the two genders, while on the one hand must be further investigated with a bigger sample and a different administration method for the questionnaire, on the other hand it confirms the common observation that females are more conservative in their language choices by largely preferring the dominant language over the local one.

Use, therefore, represents the most similar value for both languages (1.85 and 1.95). Moreover, in both cases the standard deviation was low which means that the answers of all responders were quite similar. In light of other variables that were measured, especially self-assessment, we can see that Kashubs assessed their language proficiency similarly to the declared use of the language (2.28 to 1.85). This may indicate that those who assessed their language proficiencies in Kashubian are actually using the language. Similarly with the (backward) transmission (2.30): those who acquired the language during family transmission are able now to use the language and actually do so. This is not the same in the case of Piedmontese language where the self-assessment of language competences (3.25) and (backward) transmission (3.69) is much higher than the actual use. This can be read as a sign of the banishment of the language by those who are able to use it. In this case it is a very negative sign for the ethnolinguistic vitality of this language.

4.3 Transmission

The questions we asked concerned the language that was first acquired, the way of achieving language competence (home, relatives, friends, school, other), and the language used by parents and grandparents of the respondents. In the context described for use of Kashubian, the result of 2.30 for transmission is not surprising. However, the standard deviation for this variable is 1.263, which may suggest polarised answers: in some cases the intergenerational transmission was maintained while others declared it to be broken. We should also mention that because of the

structure of the two samples and in order to preserve comparability between the two samples, we decided to take into consideration only what can be called the "backward transmission": if a person was exposed to the language at home but not if he/she transmitted this language to the next generation. What is potentially important here is the gap between the median value registered for men (3.00) and women (2.00). This could be explained by the fact that in a rural community the land was transmitted from father to son (and not daughter): men worked together and used the language while women could marry someone from outside the speech community and move away easily. The second explanation is a reference to the fact that in the middle and young generation in Poland, women are better educated than men and this education is associated with the use of the dominant language and lifestyle change. Looking at the data, we can assume that intergenerational transmission of the Kashubian language was broken and that this tendency has not been reversed yet. This is to be verified by further research regarding the desire/will to use the language and actual transmission to the next generation.

On the other hand, transmission is reported as relatively high (M = 3.69 on a 4 point scale) for Piedmontese, the highest of all values for Piedmontese and with very similar results for males and females. This is particularly significant if we consider that the majority of respondents declared no transmission to their children. Should this be confirmed, it could suggest that the generation represented by the majority of survey respondents has a critical role in the transmission of the language, and we are looking at the very moment when the language that the speakers had received from their parents stopped being passed on to the younger generation. There is no strong difference between the two genders: 3.5 for men and 3.75 for females. In particular, transmission from the past (backward transmission) was especially strong. The standard deviation is 1.2, suggesting that answers were polarised. This is not surprising.

Although the difference between Kashubian and Piedmontese can be explained in terms of the way the two samples were composed, it remains true that this represents the second most important difference in the results for the two languages. Unfortunately, the data do not allow us to make any statement about the transmission to younger generations, and whether those who acquired their language during childhood would transmit it to the next generation. We can only assume some possible answers by comparing different variables: language self-assessment and use. In this case, the results for Piedmontese, where the self-assessment is much higher than its use, is revealing. In the case of the Kashubian language where the transmission is average this result is important for assessing the ethnolinguistic vitality of the language. It tells us that the intergenerational transmission has been weakened and that an important number of Kashubian people do not feel comfortable when using it. On the other hand, when taking into consideration the higher

results for language attitudes and the general change in the language status and its awareness during the last two decades we can assume that the role of non-familial language transmission (e.g. school, media, and communities of practice) may play a decisive role here.

4.4 Attitudes

The questions concerning attitudes towards the language considered the following factors: the willingness to make the regional language the language of familial transmission, the aspiration that a person's child will speak it, the relations between language knowledge and relations/bonding with the inhabitants of the region, the perception of the language by the inhabitants of the region and by the people from outside of the region where it is spoken, and, finally, the role of the language in the labour market and the willingness to use the language in different domains of life. Attitudes towards the Kashubian language are represented by the highest score among all variables, namely 3.5. The standard deviation is 0.628, and the median values between the two groups are relatively similar (3.50 for men and 3.40 for women), suggesting that all respondents evaluated their language attitudes highly. This score can be interpreted as a result of the significant change in the prestige and status of the Kashubian language over the last 20 years. From a rejected form of speech it became an officially recognised language (i.e. it moved from the status of a contested language to that of a regional language) which is present during most regional public events. There is also a noteworthy presence in the public discourse of Kashubian both as a tool of communication and as a subject of debates concerning the local/ethnic identity of Kashubs. This is how people have become familiar with this language and perceive it as an important aspect of regional life.

The attitudinal results for Piedmontese suggest a fairly positive attitude overall: the Median is 2.78 in total and no important distinctions are observable between the male and female groups ($M = 2.6$ and $F = 2.9$). Standard deviation is 0.6161, suggesting that replies were broadly similar. This is the third highest score after transmission and self-assessment.

In both cases, therefore, we have to consider the respondents' attitudes toward their languages as positive. When comparing both scores against the background of other variables we see that in the case of Kashubian the attitudes constitute the highest score while in the case of Piedmontese it is third (after transmission and self-assessment). The high score for Kashubian, as seen in paragraph 4.1., can be explained by the general change in the status of the Kashubian language and its access to different domains of life (especially the school system) during the last fifteen years or so. Kashubs have not only become used to the presence of the language in

the media and on bilingual signs; they have also realised that there are real profits to be made from the promotion of the language (for example in tourism). The most important question to be asked here is whether and how these very positive attitudes towards the language translate into actual language use and transmission. This aspect must be further explored in future research.

4.5 Awareness

The questions regarding awareness concerned language status, respondents' opinion about the adequacy of the current legislation for language maintenance and their perception of the change in their language situation during the last fifteen years. The total score for people's awareness of the legal situation of the language and its status is 2.85 in Kashubia. The result for females is 3.3 while for men it is 2.7. At the same time the standard deviation here is 1.238, which suggests that there may have been respondents who declared having no knowledge of the Kashubian language status while others reported good knowledge on this matter. This result can be inferred by the existence of public discussions about the change in the status of the Kashubian language and its consequences on the one hand, and by the growing presence of Kashubian in different domains of life (including most of all, media and education) on the other hand. The fact that a number of people declared a lack of interest in the Kashubian language situation can also be explained by the growing indifference towards the language by those who are not directly involved in the Kashubian cultural and/or linguistic life.

For Piedmontese, the Awareness parameter registers the lowest score: 1.33 – exactly the same for males and females. This clearly indicates a low awareness of the status of the language. This lack of awareness can be interpreted both in terms of lack of knowledge and also lack of self-confidence in that knowledge (i.e., people could feel they don't know exactly what the status is simply because there is no wide public discourse on the matter).

In the case of Kashubian, people's awareness was assessed as high (second highest result). Moreover, the respondents declared that they observed changes in the status of the language. This aspect should be taken into consideration in future research, although we cannot note explicitly that this change is perceived as only positive. While we see that respondents are satisfied about the status of the language and the protection offered by the state, the change in the Kashubian language situation as perceived by Kashubs can be explained in two ways: (1) at the official level; (2) at the language use level. Our data on Kashubian shows this contradiction: when the language status and position increases, its use and language competences remain low.

4.6 Stigma

The result for stigma is the most surprising result of all. The median of 4.00 (where 4 represents no stigma and 0 the highest stigma) would indicate that Kashubian people do not declare experiencing language stigma in their childhood and were not prevented from using language. The score is the same for males and females. What is interesting in such a situation is to consider the score average (the arithmetic mean) also. This method gives only slightly different results (3.1 for women and 2.9 for men). The other important factor is the standard deviation which is the highest of all the variables (1.371). Comparing the surveys' results with the research on language shift in Kashubia and of Kashubian complex and negative identity connected with language trauma (Obracht-Prondzyński 2007; Dołowy-Rybińska 2011) it is evident that these results are not representative of the language reality but rather a subjective perception of the respondents or their unwillingness to mention their negative experiences.

Quite similarly, Piedmontese speakers report little or no stigma associated with their experience as speakers of a contested language. The median value is higher than it is for Kashubian, though it must be noted that standard deviation is very large, meaning that responses varied widely across respondents. In any case, we would have expected speakers to have reported a history of having been stigmatised for using the language in the past.

Some possible explanations of these results can be the following: (1) we could be asking the wrong questions concerning stigma (one question concerned people preventing respondents from using the language with parents in childhood and another the possible restrictions and unwillingness to use the language today); (2) we might have adopted the wrong methodology of research in this domain. We have to take into consideration that talking about stigma is difficult and that it is easy for people to gloss it over; (3) the fact that some people declared a strong stigma can be an indication that such a phenomenon existed but it was either less important than indicated in other research or it must be investigated by using different questions/methodology. Perhaps a different approach will give us different results concerning language stigma.

Our results contrast with a wide range of research on regional languages that has revealed the existence of a resilient stigma. One question considered the respondents' negative experiences with regional language use in their childhood (when the language was highly contested) and the other considered the present situation, when regional language use is not approved by people or institutions. To our great surprise in both cases people declared that there was almost no stigma at all. We decided not to consider this result as objective as it is contrary to other research and our personal experience as researchers. Such variable as stigma needs

further investigation, additional questions and/or a different research methodology. We think that in the case of sensitive and in many cases negative experiences a questionnaire is not the best solution. A face-to-face biographical interview could probably give more in-depth knowledge about language stigma.

4.7 General comments

Although the results from our preliminary research cannot describe the exact situation and vitality of Kashubian and Piedmontese, the intersecting results of this study provide us with interesting dependencies and contribute to understanding the meaning of different variables. Therefore, looking at the total values of the variables, we can form an approximate picture of the two languages. According to our findings, both languages have similar usage patterns. However, we can observe at least two types of important differences between them: (1) language transmission and self-assessment which favors Piedmontese over Kashubian, and (2) attitudes and awareness indicating a stronger position of Kashubian. Both results are in line with our expectations. The more positive attitudes and awareness of Kashubian can be explained by the institutional recognition and wider public discourse about the language, especially over recent decades, which diminishes its contestedness. In addition, the higher values for Piedmontese self-assessment and transmission are not surprising. They can be explained by more private use of this language and stronger backward transmission due to its ongoing contestedness. All these factors should be further investigated as should their relation with the transmission of a language to the next generation.

Overall, the two languages appear to be little used, and transmission was strong in the past, but less so at present. Discourse on language status and recognition does not seem to have reached or involved Piedmontese speakers, who tend to perpetuate a private and familiar use of the language, and express concern about its fate. Their reported disillusion about a revival of the language stands in sharp contrast with their pride about their competence. Kashubian speakers appear to be better informed and aware of the status of their language, but nevertheless these positive attitudes towards the Kashubian language have not (yet) resulted in a change in linguistic practices.

This said, current available vitality assessments of the two languages appear optimistic to say the least, and biased for Piedmontese, by the high number of supposed speakers, and for Kashubian, by its recent change in status, from contested to recognised regional language. A more careful assessment of vitality cannot avoid taking into account actual linguistic practices, contexts of use and psychological and behavioural attitudes.

5. Conclusion

Ethnolinguistic vitality represents an ability to maintain and protect the existence of a given community as a group which has a distinctive linguistic and cultural identity. Assessing ethnolinguistic vitality serves thus not only to show the state of a language but a whole spectrum of conditions that influence a group's willingness and capacity to use this language and to identify with it. Surveying ethnolinguistic vitality of contested languages is important because it can help both a speech community to understand their language situation and decision-makers to establish the convenient strategies for language maintenance and revitalisation. Evaluating ethnolinguistic vitality is, however, a very complicated process and the results of such a survey should not be simplified and should not serve to forecast the moment of language death. Such prognosis is dangerous for the future of languages as it can discourage people from using and protecting a language that is under threat.

The aim of our survey was thus twofold: (1) to identify variables which, in our opinion, give the best picture of a language condition; (2) to show that the results of such a survey must not be interpreted in isolation from all the cultural, societal, historical, and economical context. We also want to stress that the results of an ethnolinguistic vitality survey should not be presented as a numerical score but in discussion between scores for different variables. A general picture of a language's ethnolinguistic vitality can be described only as a complicated network of social conditions and people's language and cultural practices.

What we presented in this chapter is a preliminary result of a pilot study. It was intended more to help us to develop an appropriate methodology to study the ethnolinguistic vitality of contested and regional languages in the future than to give an exact answer about the condition of these two languages. Therefore, it may appear that the results of our research are negative: we cannot present the ethnolinguistic vitality score for Kashubian and Piedmontese. And yet, in our opinion, it is a milestone for upcoming research as it has shown the strong and weak sides of the existing ethnolinguistic vitality scales and helped us to define how to proceed with such a survey in the future.

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CHAPTER 8

Contested orthographies

Taking a closer look at spontaneous writing in Piedmontese

Emanuele Miola
University of Bologna

Piedmontese (today mainly spoken in Italy and Argentina) is one of the non-standardized languages of Italy with the most highly normalized orthographies. Nonetheless, new orthographic reforms and revisions were proposed in the early 2000s, allegedly in order to reflect the habitual choices of the speech community/ies, which are fully literate, but only in Italian or in Spanish.

This chapter examines the graphic choices of Piedmontese speakers with no command of the written language, when posting to Facebook groups in which the use of Piedmontese is possible and/or prescribed.

The data suggests that naïve writers of Piedmontese adhere closely to Standard Italian orthographic choices when writing Piedmontese, and use a highly restricted range of allographs to represent the more distinctive phonemes in the Piedmontese sound inventory. Interestingly, these allographs generally diverge from both a strictly phonemic orthography, and the various orthographies proposed from a 'top-down' perspective for Piedmontese. They seem rather to be consistent with the way in which writers of other non-standardised languages of Italy naïvely represent phonemes that are not part of the Italian inventory.

1. Introduction

A Romance variety that developed out of Latin, Piedmontese has been spoken uninterruptedly in north-western Italy up to the present day. Nonetheless, it may be defined as a contested language from at least two points of view.

First, Piedmontese is affected by broader ambiguities surrounding the terms "language" and "dialect", ambiguities argued by Haugen (1966) to hamper the development of a taxonomy of languages. More specifically, not only do the labels "language" and "dialect" "represent a simple dichotomy in a situation that is almost infinitely complex", but "they have come to be used to distinguish phenomena in

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several different dimensions, with resultant confusion and overlapping" (Haugen 1966: 66). "Language" and "dialect" also overlap in the case of Piedmontese because, when invoked to describe the varieties spoken in Italy, they are not used following scientific or (socio)linguistic parameters, but – it would seem – according to how the legislation of a single nation-state defines "language" and "dialect". Piedmontese is not mutually intelligible with Italian (and with most other varieties spoken throughout Italy, including, among others, Sardinian and Friulian), and its sociolinguistic status is the same as that of Sardinian, or Friulian (Berruto 2009: 342–343). Thus, from a theoretical point of view, it should be labelled as a "language", on the grounds that two linguistic varieties must be considered as separate languages if their untrained and monolingual speakers cannot understand one other (Trudgill 2002).[1] Alternatively, if one adopts a sociolinguistic perspective, Piedmontese should be regarded as a "dialect", as should Sardinian and Friulian for the sake of consistency. However, neither of these two viewpoints are rigorously applied in the scientific literature, or rarely so. For example, Wanner (1987: 419–420) consistently discusses cliticisation in Piedmontese using the label "Piedmontese dialect", in the context of a work devoted to clitic pronouns in *Italian*. In contrast, Sardinian is placed on a par with Italian (and Corsican!) in the subtitle of the fourth volume of the *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik* (Holtus, Metzeltin, and Schmitt 1988), while Piedmontese is treated as a mere dialect of Italian. It would seem that the rationale for these choices is neither theoretical nor sociolinguistic, but lies in the fact that Law 482/1999 of the Italian state enforces the protection of linguistic minorities that speak, among other varieties, Sardinian (which is therefore seen as "a language"), but not of the minority that speaks Piedmontese, which seemingly even linguists view as no more than a "dialect". Clearly, this attitude has implications for the way in which laypeople perceive Piedmontese and the other varieties mentioned above.

Second, not only is the linguistic status of Piedmontese contested, but recently scholars, activists and naïve speakers have also come to contest Piedmontese orthography.

In Section 1.1, I briefly assess the first of these issues. Then, in Section 2, I discuss the second theme at length, outlining the orthography/ies proposed for Piedmontese by scholars and comparing them, in Section 3, to those adopted by laypeople writing spontaneously online in Piedmontese. Finally, I draw some conclusions concerning the approach of those who are only literate in Italian to spelling the non-standardised varieties they speak, seeking for consistent patterns

1. With the corollary that even mutually comprehensible varieties may be regarded as different languages for political reasons. Such a corollary resolves longstanding debates, such as that on Portuguese and Spanish (see Jensen 1989).

in speakers' spontaneous writings both diachronically within Piedmontese, and synchronically among Piedmontese and other languages spoken on the Italian peninsula. This analysis may inform the design, or revision, of an orthography for Piedmontese and similar varieties.

1.1 Piedmontese: A brief linguistic profile

Piedmontese is today spoken by some 700,000 people (Regis 2012a) in Piedmont (a region of Northern Italy), and, residually, as the result of a late 19th-/early 20th-century wave of migration from Piedmont, in certain towns and cities in Argentina (Giolitto 2010).

It is classified as belonging to the so-called Gallo-Italic continuum, a branch of the Western Romance family that also includes Lombard, Emilian and Romagnol.[2] Besides not being mutually intelligible with French, Occitan and Italian, Piedmontese is also typologically distant from the three aforementioned languages and from Eastern Romance (i.e., Italo-Romance) varieties (cf. Ricca 2016; Miola 2017).

Even if we do not take into account the 12th-century *Sermons subalpins*, which some consider to be written in a Gallo-Romance koine and not in Old Piedmontese *per se*, Piedmontese has an independent literature that dates back to the 16th-century poetry of Alione, and a grammatical tradition initiated during the 18th century (Pipino 1783). It also has a literary standard, usually referred to as the *koine*, which is based on the variety spoken in Piedmont's main city of Turin, and, since the 1930s, a defined orthography (Pacòt 1930), which is based on rules that have remained fairly consistent from at least the 16th-century onwards and are used in the majority of books and publications in Piedmontese, and in content published on Wikipedia (Miola 2013). Piedmontese is thus not a spoken-only variety, as is frequently the case for 'dialects' in a sociolinguistic sense, and therefore enjoys a moderate degree of *Ausbau* (Tosco 2011; Ricca 2016).

All these characteristics clearly favour defining Piedmontese as a 'language'.

With regard to language vitality, Piedmontese has been defined as definitely endangered by Salminen (2007: 224) and Moseley's (2012) *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, given that most children no longer learn it in the home as their mother tongue. Similarly, Berruto (2007: 139) rated Piedmontese as displaying medium vitality, giving it a score of 2.4/2.8 out of 5, that of an endangered, but not severely endangered, language. In any case, the survival of the Piedmontese language beyond the end, or even the middle, of the current century is by no means guaranteed.

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2. On this issue, see Brasca, this volume.

For the sake of clarity, in the remainder of this chapter I consistently use the label "(regional or minor) language" to refer to Piedmontese and other varieties with similar characteristics.

However, the misleading tendency to define Piedmontese as "a dialect" persists. In addition to the issues mentioned in the introduction, it should be noted that this tendency has been reinforced by the presence, in Italian, of the false friend *dialetto* (used to describe a local variety that is a full-blown language but generally enjoys low prestige, as opposed to a mere diatopic variety of a language), but also by three further factors. First, Piedmontese never enjoyed official status under any nation-state, although it was the only language known to virtually all the inhabitants of Piedmont prior to the Unification of Italy (1861). Second, Piedmontese and its orthography have never been taught as part of compulsory education programmes, aside from a short period during which Piedmont had a regional law (now repealed) protecting indigenous languages by making them an extra-curricular subject (Regis 2012b). Finally, Piedmontese nowadays coexists with Italian in a sociolinguistic situation that has been termed "subset bilingualism" whereby "everybody who speaks the minority language also speaks the majority language, but not everybody who speaks the majority language speaks the minority language" (Connor 2015). This scenario, in the Italian sociolinguistic tradition, is described using the term "dilalia", which specifically refers to the case in which a high variety is used in all linguistic domains, while a low variety, i.e. a dialect/*dialetto*, is only used in informal domains and/or in the home (Berruto 1987).

2. Orthographies for Piedmontese

As stated above, Piedmontese has a standardised orthography based on recommendations issued in 1930 by Pinin Pacòt and Andrea Viglòngo, editors of *Tutte le poesie piemontesi* of Edoardo Ignazio Calvo. This orthography is mainly phonemic and was adopted, among others, by the greatest Piedmontese poet of 20th century, Nino Costa, albeit with some reluctance (Spagarino Viglongo 2011: 398). Today it is known as the Pacòt-Viglòngo orthography or *ortografia moderna* ('modern orthography'). This is the orthography that has been consistently used since the 1930s in all or nearly all cultured, official and semi-official publications in Piedmontese, that is to say, in all books and journals written in the language, and – since late 2015 – on the Piedmontese language webpages of the Regione Piemonte's official website (http://www.cr.piemonte.it/web/lingue-top/pie). The Piedmontese Wikipedia – the largest Wikipedia of any Italian regional language– also enforces the use of the *ortografia moderna* (Miola 2013).

Nonetheless, as discussed by Regis 2012b and Miola 2015, in the early 2000s this orthography began to be contested, and proposals for minor or major reforms

have been put forward by scholars and language activists. The most radical of these proposals came from Villata 2001 and Eandi 2008, who worked together and whose reformed orthography will henceforth be referred to as the Villata-Eandi. Their proposed changes mainly concern the graphisation of vowels. In this regard, (1) illustrates the differences between the modern orthography and the Villata-Eandi.

(1)

Phoneme	Modern orthography	Villata-Eandi	Meaning
/o/	c**ò**sa	c**o**sa	'thing'
/ø/	n**eu**it	n**ö**it	'night'
/u/	b**o**n	b**u**n	'good, m.'
/y/	m**u**t	m**ü**t	'mute, m.'

Villata and Eandi proposed their reform based on two main criteria. First, "a minca son a dovrìa corësponde sò sègn particular" ("each sound should have its own particular symbol", Villata 2001: 8, my translation). In other words, the Villata-Eandi orthography is intended to be strictly phonemic, with a one-to-one correlation between phonemes and graphemes. Secondly, the graphisation of Piedmontese vowel sounds should become more similar to that of the same sounds in the Italian and Spanish scripts. In Villata's 2001: 10 view, these changes would make the Piedmontese orthography "pì fássila e a la portà 'd tuti coj ch'a son alfabetisà an italian ò an ëspagneul" ("easier and more accessible for all those who are literate in Italian or Spanish", my translation), given that all present-day speakers of Piedmontese live in either Italy or Argentina. Nonetheless, when it comes to phonemes that are not part of the Italian and Spanish scripts, Villata and Eandi advocate the use of diereses. This is true for /ø/ and /y/, but also for the mid central vowel /ə/, for which the Villata-Eandi maintains the grapheme <ë> prescribed by the modern orthography (see (2)), although in contemporary Piedmontese the realisation of /ə/ varies between [a], [ə] and [e] (see Clivio 2002: 160fn).

(2)

Phoneme	Modern orth.	Villata-Eandi	Meaning
/ə/	s**ë**cca	s**ë**cca	'dry, f.'

All the other peculiarities of the Pacòt-Viglòngo are maintained in Villata-Eandi's script: by way of example, let us consider the digrams <ch>, <cc> and <gg>.

The digram <ch> always stands for [k]. This is based on a convention used in Italian orthography, but which in Piedmontese is extended to graphic contexts that do not arise in Italian. In Italian, <ch> stands for [k] when the digraph is followed by a palatal vowel. In Piedmontese, <ch> may also occur at the end of a word, which does not happen in Italian (cf. (3)).

(3)

Phoneme	Modern orth.	Villata-Eandi	Meaning
/k/, _ #	ma**ch**	ma**ch**	'only, just'

Note however that the correlation <ch> ↔ [k] does not hold in Spanish, in which <ch> is read [tʃ], cf. <chica>; nor in French, cf. <chagrin>, [ʃaɡˈʁɛ̃]; nor in English.

Palatal /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are also represented word-finally by the digraphs <cc> and <gg>, respectively (see (4)); however, this correspondence appears to have originated with the Pacòt-Viglòngo orthography, because it has no parallel in the scripts of the other languages with which Piedmontese has been and is in contact, e.g., Italian, French and Spanish:

(4)

Phoneme	Modern orth.	Villata-Eandi	Meaning
/tʃ/, _ #	bari**cc**	bari**cc**	'squint, m.'
/dʒ/, _ #	ma**gg**	ma**gg**	'May'

Although it has been around for some 80 years, and despite having been designed with the aim of making it easy for Piedmontese speakers to learn and use, mastery of the Pacòt-Viglòngo has always been confined to a small elite. So is the Villata-Eandi.

3. Spontaneous writings in Piedmontese

In this section, I give an account of spontaneous writings in Piedmontese, primarily by examining the online productions of naïve writers.[3] Today's "online" era is characterised by so-called linguistic whateverism, that is to say, the attitude that – as far as spelling, register, and language in general are concerned – anything goes (Baron 2008). This attitude may have favoured the emergence, or maintenance, of language diversity even in domains where it would not have been expected. Thus, minor languages have come to be used in products for young people such as comics, literature, pop music and television shows, although in these domains they are usually mixed with the official/national language, featuring only in fragments, typically in the form of stereotypical set phrases. On the other hand, smaller languages have also begun to feature in a more lively fashion – without, or with limited, code-switching – on social networks, and especially, as far as Italy is concerned, on Facebook. As regards Piedmontese, those who use it online generally lack proper mastery of any orthography, or at most are (partly) competent in Italian orthography.

3. I define as naïve writers of Piedmontese those who speak Piedmontese because they have learned it naturally as their L1 or L2, but do not know how to write it properly, mainly because they have never been taught Piedmontese orthography.

3.1 The corpus

The analysis offered in this chapter is focused on the graphisation of vowels in spontaneous writings in Piedmontese that appeared on three Facebook groups: *Noi i parloma piemonteis, Nui parluma piemunteis* and *A't ses piemonteis se*.[4]

At the time of writing, the social network Facebook does not allow the automatic download of contents posted on the Facebook pages of groups, even when the group selects "public" as its privacy setting; this restriction applies to all, including group moderators and administrators. Thus, the corpus for this work consists of a random collection of posts, comments, and cartoons published on the aforementioned groups between January and March 2016. The posts, cartoons and comments that I rated as offering suitable material for analysing (ortho)graphy were manually downloaded and saved as .pdf documents. Given the nature of the corpus, the data presented here is merely qualitative, and not quantitative. Nonetheless, although I lay no claim to exhaustiveness, the data are highly representative of the way in which naïve writers of Piedmontese write their language online.

While personal names and Facebook profile images have been withheld to protect contributors' privacy, the contents and messages cited here have not been modified in any way. In the following examples, for the sake of clarity, after reporting the original graphisation of the comment/caption (in which relevant graphemes are highlighted in bold), I provide an orthographic transcription (using the modern orthography, in italics) and an English translation (in inverted commas). When a Facebook comment is cited, the user is classified by sex (M or F). Males and females are then identified using a list of increasing numbers that correspond to their order of appearance in this chapter. The date and the group to which each comment was posted are also given (*A = A't ses piemonteis se; B = Noi i parloma piemonteis*; *C = Nui parluma piemunteis*).

The cartoons and some of the comments that I discuss below are humorous in nature. However, this is not because Piedmontese is *only* used playfully online, in order to make people laugh with the language, and/or laugh at the language – which would reflect a disparaging attitude towards their language on the part of the speakers. Piedmontese, at least on the Facebook groups investigated here and as far as I can tell, is used playfully *amongst other ways*, because playfulness and humour are an important part of human life and communication (suffice it to cite Bakhtin's 1984 work), especially in computer-mediated communication (Danet 2001). In other words, the online content and comments cited and discussed below should provide a reasonable reflection of the way Piedmontese is used offline, in everyday life.

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4. On the related issue of Piedmontese (orthographies) in the linguistic landscape of Turin, see Goria (2012).

Given that all Piedmontese speakers cited here are literate in Italian, the spelling choices of greatest interest for the purposes of the current analysis concern the graphisation of Piedmontese sounds or phonemes that do not exist in Standard Italian. I therefore focus on these particular sounds and phonemes. Phonemes that are present in both the Piedmontese and the Italian inventory are generally graphised in the same way, both by naïve writers, and in the modern orthography of Piedmontese.[5]

3.1.1 *Low vowels*

While Standard Italian has one low vowel [a], Piedmontese has two, namely a low back unrounded [ɑ] and a low front unrounded [a]. In the Piedmontese koine, both of these low vowels are positional variants of the phoneme /a/. More precisely, /a/ is generally realised as [ɑ] when in a stressed position, and as [a] when in a non-stressed position (Clivio 1976: 110; Parry 1997: 239).[6] This also holds true for the Piedmontese regional variety of Italian (Canepari 1980), but is rarely pointed out in schools, so that bilingual Piedmontese-Italian speakers from Piedmont are unaware of this allophonic variation in their variety of Italian.

Naïve Piedmontese writers always represent [a] by <a>. [ɑ], on the other hand, may be graphised using <a>, or, more frequently and especially in final-word position, as <ò> or <ô>.

(5) Image 1.

Nuvit**ò** | Finalment ije sortie u liber "Capì le fumne" | Cust sì alè
Novità | *Finalment a-i é surtije o liber* Capì le fomne | *Cost-sì a l'é* mac l'indice
mach l'indice
'New | the book *Understanding Women* is finally out | This is just the table of contents'

5. For a brief account of Italian orthography, see Job, Peressotti & Mulatti 2016: 105–107.

6. In Southern Piedmontese varieties, /ɑ/ and /a/ are different phonemes.

(6) Image 2.

Furmag sensa lait | Vin sensa ûva | Ciculôta sensa cacaö | Matrimôni *Formagg sensa lait* | *Vin sensa uva* | *Cicolata sensa cacao* | *Matrimòni* sensa ciôrnia | Ma sevi annì fôi | No a ciamamlù l'Europa | A Bhe *sensa ciòrgna* | *Ma seve vnù fòj?* | *Nò, a l'ha ciamamlo l'Euròpa* | *Ah beh!*
'Cheese without milk | Wine without grapes | Chocolate without cocoa | Marriages without pussy | Have you gone crazy? | No, the UE is calling for it | Ah, OK then…'

The writers of (5) and (6) are likely to be speakers of a Southern, or Monferrato, Piedmontese dialect, given that they perceive stressed [ɑ] as different from Italian [a] (and from unstressed Piedmontese [a]). This is clearly easier for a speaker of a dialect in which /ɑ/ and /a/ enjoy phonemic status (see fn 6). The provenance of the naïve writers is confirmed by the form of the definite article used before <liber>, <o> (Piedmontese koine <ël>), the dummy pronoun in all-new sentences [i], as in <**i**je sortie>, vs the koine <a> (see (5)), and the develarisation of [y], typical of the Monferrato area (see, in (6), <annì>, which probably represents [əŋˈni], vs the koine <vnù>, [vny]/[mny]). The use of the grapheme [ô] with the same diacritic used in both <matrimôni>, [matriˈmoni]/[matriˈmɔni], and <ciôrnia>, [ˈtʃorɲa]/[ˈtʃɔrɲa], shows that [ɑ] is perceived as falling within the range and timbre of mid-high velar vowels.

3.1.2 *Front unrounded vowels*

The graphisation of palatal vowels, [ɛ], [e] and [i], is consistently similar to what is prescribed in both the Pacòt-Viglòngo and the Villata-Eandi. The high vowel is generally written <i>,[7] whereas the other two vowels are always written <e>. Although /ɛ/ and /e/ are phonemically opposed in Piedmontese, they are not perceived as two different sounds. This is because in Italian the standard pronunciation of [ɛ] and [e] is not signaled orthographically (except in word-final position, in which it

7. In rare instances, [i] is graphized <j>, arguably in order to differentiate written Piedmontese from Italian.

is flagged by means of an acute or grave accent, but only in printed writing), and laypeople tend to believe that they are the same sound.[8]

3.1.3 *[ø]*

As stated above, [ø] is not part of the Italian phonemic inventory, and is one of the sounds whose graphic representation differs between Pacòt-Viglòngo and Villata-Eandi. Naïve Piedmontese writers do not align themselves with either of these suggested orthographies. Their graphic representations of [ø] range from simple <o> (see (7)) to the use of diacritics (e.g. <ô>, see (8)), but may also involve more than one grapheme (9).

(7) a. Facebook user F1 (A, 13.02.2016)
Che bun, an insalada con **o**v!!!
Che bon, na salada con euv!
'How delicious, a salad with eggs!'

b. Facebook user F2 (C, 18.02.2016)
Bun-a n**o**jt a tute jamise e amis del grup
Bon-a neuit a tute j'amise e j'amis dël grup
'Good night to all the gals and guys in the group'

c. Facebook user F3 (C, 18.02.2016, reply to (7b))
Buna n**o**it Malibel
Bon-a neuit, Malibel
'Good night, Malibel'

(8) a. Image 3.

8. Furthermore, the phonemic load of /ɛ/ vs /e/ in Piedmontese Regional Italian is very low, meaning that in practical terms there is very little use in differentiating between their pronunciation.

- Et p**ô**ri nen deme an basin, mè mama a v**ô** nen.
- Gniûn problema. Dame ti an basin, mè mama a dis gnente.
- *It peule nen deme un basin, mè mama a veul nen.*
- *Gnun problema. Dame ti un basin, mè mama a dis gnente.*

'- Stop, my mother doesn't want you to kiss me.
- That's no problem. YOU kiss me, my mother doesn't care.'

b. Facebook user M1 (B, 17.02.3016)
A le mej ïn paria ed braje rute an ter cû che en cû rut an tein
A l'é mej un paira ëd braje rote ant ël cul che un cul rot ant un
paria ed braje n**oe**ve
paira ëd braje neuve
'It's better to have your ass in a ripped pair of trousers than to have a ripped ass in a new pair of trousers.'

(9) a. Facebook user M2 (A, 13.02.2016, reply to 7a)
a moncalè a saria l'**eu**v dur
A Moncalé a saria l'euv dur
'In Moncalieri, it would be hard-boiled egg'

b. Facebook user M3 (B, 08.01.2016)
montagne d'la mia cita Patria, c'as veuddo da cà mia- e col bel
Montagne dla mia cita Patria, ch'as vëddo da ca mia – e col bel
temp d'cò 'l Viso –, là a jè la mia gioventù… ciao Gipo, che t'
temp ëdcò 'l Viso –, là a-i è la mia gioventù… ciao Gipo, che it
lass scrivù la canson con tut 'l to c**oue**r e adess 't cante lassù,
l'has scrivù la canson con tut ël tò cheur e adess it cante lassù,
'tal Paradis, per San Pero e tuti i beà e per i mè Alpin ca son
ant ël Paradis, për San Pero e tuti ij beà e për ij mè Alpin ch'a son
andà avanti http://youtu.be/6HLxD_gRygs..
andà avanti http://youtu.be/6HLxD_gRygs
'Mountains of my little Homeland that I can view from my house – and in fine weather the Monviso too – my youth is there… farewell Gipo, you wrote a song with all your heart and now you are singing up there in Heaven, for Saint Peter and all the saints and for my Alpine soldiers who have gone before us [YouTube link]'

In (7a–c), the adstratum influence of Italian orthography is evident: the first graphemes of the Piedmontese words are often copied onto those of the Italian cognate, when the latter may be easily available to the user's competence, cf. Italian <(u)ovo> vs Piedmontese <ov> in (7a), and Italian <notte> vs Piedmontese <nojt>/<noit>in (7b–c). Further evidence of this influence is the spelling of <con> in (7a). The vowel in <con> is obviously pronounced [u], just like the one in [buŋ], which in the same example is written <bun>. Here, again, the preposition <con> is graphised with <o> because this is the orthography of its Italian counterpart: <con>. See also,

under (8a), <problema>, pronounced [prub'lema] but written identically to Italian <problema>, [prob'lema].

In the cartoon in (8a), contributed by the author of (5), the close-mid front rounded vowel is (twice) graphised as <ô>. The diacritic is adopted here to mark a sound difference, yet in general this symbol appears to be used very inconsistently by naïve writers (see also (6), where <ô> stands for [u]: this is consistent with the so-called *grafia virigliana*, in use for Piedmontese until the early-20th century, Ronco 2016: LVIII). In (8b), [ø] is graphised as <oe> (see <noeve>, ['nøve]) possibly due to the influence of German: <oe> is how those typing in German on non-German keyboards usually write <ö>.

In contrast, <eu>, used in (9a), is the digraph proposed by Pacòt-Viglòngo for [ø]. The <eu> is generally only adopted by writers with a good mastery of Piedmontese orthography, i.e. by those who have studied or been taught it at least to some extent.[9]

On the other hand, the trigraph <oeu> in (9b) might be due to an (ortho) graphic adstratum influence of French, in which [ø] may be written as <eu> or <oeu>. In (9b), note also that <eu> does not stand for [ø], but is the digraph used by M3 to graphise the central unrounded [ə] in the word <veuddo> ['vəddu].

3.1.4 *[ə]*

Examples (10a–d) show other ways in which Piedmontese speakers write the central unrounded [ə]:

(10) a. Facebook user M1 (B, 17.02.3016) = (8b)
A le mej ïn paria **e**d braje rute an ter cû che **e**n cû rut an tein
A l'é mej un paira ëd braje rote ant ël cul che un cul rot ant un
paria **e**d braje noeve
paira ëd braje neuve
'It's better to have your ass in a ripped pair of trousers than to have a ripped ass in a new pair of trousers.'

b. Image 4.

9. In my corpus, these represent under 5% of online users writing in Piedmontese.

- Adès basta! I n'ai doe bale parej ad tuti 'sti progràma c'a fan mac v'dde 'd roba da mangè!
- Pinòt, guarda che col lì a l'è al MICROONDE!
- Adess basta! I n'hai doe bale parej ëd tuti sti programa ch'a fan mach vëdde ëd ròba da mangé!
- Pinòt, guarda che col-lì a l'é ël MICROONDE!
'- To hell with this! I'm fed up to the back teeth with all these food programs!
- Bob, that's the micro-wave.'

c. Facebook user F4 (A, 18.02.2016)
Arvzze n'gamba
Arvëddse, an gamba!
'See you, take care!'

d. Facebook user M4 (A, 27.02.2016)
E cule vrde al pino?
E cole verde al pin?
'And what about the green, pine-flavoured ones?'

Apart from the low proportion of users who have some command of the Pacòt-Viglòngo and consistently use <ë> to write [ə], spelling inconsistencies are the norm. Overall, naïve Piedmontese speakers seem to have two preferred graphemes for writing central rounded vowels, namely, <e> and <'>. In (10a), the use of <e> might reflect difficulty on the part of naïve speakers of Piedmontese in finding a suitable diacritic for marking the difference between [e] and [ɛ], or the perception that these vowels are similar or identical to [ə] given that there is no phonemic difference between [e], [ɛ] and [ə] in the other language that Piedmontese speakers can speak (and write) properly, Italian.

In (10b) and (10c), <'> stands for an elided or supressed vowel, as is the case for all apostrophes in the Piedmontese, and Italian, orthographies. It is worth noting that <'> may be used to write [ə] in the Pacòt-Viglòngo, but in specific cases – e.g. when [ə] is at the beginning of a new word and immediately follows a word ending with another vowel, e.g. <mica 'd pan>, [ˌmika(ə)dˈpɑŋ], 'loaf of bread'.

Interestingly, however, Piedmontese naïve writers seem to perceive [ə] as a 'mute' vowel, to the extent that they sometimes suppress it in their spontaneous writings: cf., in (10c), <arvzze>, pronounced [arˈvəttse]; and, in (10d), <vrde>, [ˈvərde].

As may be observed, alternative graphisations (or non-graphisations) of [ə] can even appear within the same comment by the same writer: in (10c), it is first elided <arvzze> and then graphised using an apostrophe, albeit placed after the consonant following the articulation of [ə], <n'gamba> [əŋˈgɑŋba].

3.1.5 *[u]* and *[y]*

Piedmontese speakers write both [u] and [y] as <u> (see (11)) virtually all the time. This is obviously due to the fact that in Italian [u] and [y] are allophones of the same phoneme /u/, so the difference of these two sounds goes unnoticed, although /u/ and /y/ bear phonemic status in Piedmontese:

(11) Facebook user F5 (B, 27.02.2016)
Che b**u**n i s**u**caj…. t**u**ta la vita….
Che bon ij sucaj… tuta la vita…
'Sucaj candies are so good… I'd eat them forever…'

There are very few instances of allographies such as <û> (cf. <cû>, [ky], in (10a) above) or <ü> (see (12)).

(12) Facebook user M5 (B, 28.01.2016)
Grascie at**ü**ti
Grassie a tuti
'Thank you, everybody'

4. What we can learn from spontaneous Piedmontese spelling choices

The data reported and analysed in the previous sections may help language activists and planners to choose one of the orthographies proposed for Piedmontese, or to develop a new written standard. Given that the speakers of a minority language play a crucial part in the acceptance of an orthography for that language, the discussion that follows is informed by a user-centered approach. More specifically, in the remainder of this chapter, revisions to the orthography will not be proposed from a top-down perspective, but rather with a view to aligning spellings with language speakers' habits and needs. This should reduce the number of those who resist, oppose or object to orthographic standardisation, which, in turn, should lead to a wider acceptance of the (written) standard language by the speakers – a crucial step in corpus planning (Dell'Aquila & Iannàccaro 2004: 74–77; Tosco 2008: 5–7) and in the maintenance of a minority language (Lane 2015). Furthermore, I focus on language speakers' graphic habits and needs in relation to the process of writing, rather than on their needs for reading, because minority language speakers can easily read and understand a text written in a variety of their language, regardless of the (ortho)graphic conventions utilised, by matching what they see on the page with what they are used to hearing or saying in the course of everyday communication (Iannàccaro 1994: 77–79; Regis 2012b: 268 on Piedmontese).

In term of outcomes, first, the data presented above confirms that, in computer-mediated communication, users generally do not use graphemes that do not appear or are not easily accessible on their keyboards (Miola 2015: 140). Indeed, graphemes such as <ë>, <ö>, <ô>, <ü>, and <û> appear to be less used in the present corpus, because they require more skill (i.e., knowing how to find the right key or combination of keys on the keyboard) and/or more effort (i.e., requiring more than one single tap) to be typed. This means that the spontaneous online spelling choices of Piedmontese speakers almost never correspond to the rules prescribed by Pacòt-Viglòngo, but *neither* do they correspond to Villata-Eandi's spelling rules, although the latter have been proposed to make Piedmontese easier to write for naïve speakers. Moreover, Pacòt-Viglogh and Villata-Eandi are mainly phonemic orthographies, that is to say, they pursue a perfect one-to-one correspondence between graphemes and phonemes. However, this correspondence seems to be far less pivotal in the minds of those posting messages in Piedmontese in online contexts such as Facebook. To limit ourselves to the vowel system, we have seen that <u> usually stands for both rounded high palatal [y] and non-rounded high velar [u]; <o> usually stands for [o]/[ɔ] but may occasionally represent [œ]/[ø], as well as [ɑ]; <e> stands for [ɛ] and [e] but may also stand for [ə]; and so on.

In other words, naïve writers of Piedmontese generally only use graphemes from the Italian graphic repertoire. Some effort is made to represent distinctive features of Piedmontese via the use of diacritics or allographs, but these are mostly used inconsistently. Indeed, phonemic consistency does not seem important to Piedmontese speakers attempting to write in their language without having mastering its orthography. Furthermore, the data show that potential flag-characters, such as <ò> or <ë> for the modern orthography, or <ö> and <ü> for the Villata-Eandi, rarely or never feature in the linguistic landscape of spontaneously written Piedmontese.

4.1 Synchronic and diachronic consistencies

Interestingly, the spontaneous (ortho)graphies of minority languages spoken in Italy display similar patterns to one another when it comes to the graphisation of phonemes that do not belong to the Italian sound repertoire. This seems to hold true not only synchronically, but also diachronically. To support this claim, I now briefly discuss the graphisation of [ə], comparing the Piedmontese data from the present corpus synchronically, with data from contemporary spontaneous writings in Neapolitan; and diachronically, with data from older Piedmontese documents.

4.1.1 *Synchrony*

Neapolitan is a minor Romance language spoken in Campania (South Central Italy), in diglossia with the more prestigious Italian.[10] Currently, it is not listed as an endangered language because virtually all Campanians (approximately six million people) speak Neapolitan as well as Italian. Spontaneous writing in Neapolitan is frequent in the Campanian linguistic landscape, often taking the form of urban graffiti.

Based on a corpus of death notices, obituaries, and graffiti collected in Naples, Campania's capital city, Albano Leoni (2015: 58–70) has claimed that the Neapolitan phoneme [ə] is represented by <'>, especially in word-final position, such as in <Totonno o' bell'>, [toˌtonnᵒbˈbɛllᵊ],[11] 'Tony the Handsome' and <stevm'> [ˈʃtævᵊmə], '(we) were'. Internal non-tonic [ə]s, on the other hand, are most often represented by <e>, although it can also happen that "lo scrivente ingenuo, non riuscendo (giustamente) a identificare la vocale centrale con nessuna delle vocali per le quali dispone di una lettera […], o magari addirittura non percependola, preferisce non scrivere niente" ("naïve writers [of Neapolitan] prefer not to write anything, because they cannot equate the central vowel with any of the vowels they have a letter for (and indeed this is a phonetically accurate judgement), or perhaps because they do not even perceive the central vowel", Albano Leoni 2015: 70, my translation), such as in <puppnella>, [puppəˈnɛlla], "variante meno usuale di *Peppenella*" ("a less common variant of the proper name *Peppenella*", Albano Leoni 2015: 72, my translation), or in <srngar>, [sᵊrᵊŋˈgɑːrᵊ], 'syringe-seller'. Clearly, naïve writers of Neapolitan graphise [ə] with <'> or <e>, or do not represent [ə] at all, i.e., they graphise [ə] in the same way that spontaneous writers of Piedmontese do (cf. § 3.5).

4.1.2 *Diachrony*

From a diachronic perspective, Rossebastiano and Papa (2011) investigated several 14th- and 15th-century documents written in Piedmontese. In their corpus, the spelling choices for the vocalic system seem fairly consistent overall with those presented in Section 3. For example, no diacritic is used to distinguish between front rounded and back rounded vowels (i.e., <u> stands for both [u] and [y]; <o> stands for [o], [œ]/[ø], and sometimes even for [y]). Concerning the graphisation of the mid-central vowel, <e> is used. It is unclear whether <e> stands for [ə] in the

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10. I use the glottonym Neapolitan here to refer to the variety elsewhere (e.g. on ethnologue.com) denominated Neapolitan-Calabrese. Neapolitan includes at least three mutually comprehensible dialects, namely Campano, Northern Calabrese-Lucano, and Pugliese. For an overview, see De Blasi & Fanciullo 2002.

11. The final vowels of proper names, such as <Totonno>, are more frequently retained in writing (Albano Leoni 2015: 66fn).

14th-century documents in which the article <gle> precedes a noun beginning with a vowel, such as in <gle univers>, likely pronounced [ʎəyni'vɛrs], 'the universes'. However, <e> unambiguously stands for [ə] in the so-called *Recomendaciones del Laudari 'd Salusse* (late-14th/early-15th century), as illustrated by the demonstratives <chest> [kəst] and <chesta> ['kəsta], 'this (masculine)' and 'this (feminine)' respectively. Nonetheless, in the same documents <e> can also stand for [e] and [ɛ]. Again, this is precisely what we find in today's online comments. Moreover, the orthographic choices of Old Piedmontese do not differ much from those contained in other Northern Italian documents of the same period (Rossebastiano & Papa 2011: 64).

5. Conclusions

In this chapter I have described and discussed data from spontaneous writings in Piedmontese posted in Facebook groups, focussing on spelling choices for the vowel system, and comparing them with those of 14th/15th-century documents in Piedmontese, and with the spelling choices of contemporary spontaneous writers of Neapolitan. The findings of this chapter are threefold.

First, the investigation has shown that naïve speakers of minor languages of Italy who are literate only, or mainly, in Italian (or, in the case of the 14th/15th century writers, only in Latin) follow a highly consistent pattern in writing the vowels in their languages, even when it comes to phonemes that are not part of the Italian inventory, for which some metalinguistic reflection is required. Such reflection, however, rarely leads writers to use graphemes from outside the inventory of the language they are literate in.

Second, speakers of minor languages in Italy do not apply a one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds when writing in their languages. Thus – even though some relaxed phonemic correspondences might still hold – a strictly phonemic orthography may not be what minor languages need, if they are to be maintained and revitalised.

Last not least, if we take into consideration the key role of naïve speakers/writers in the acceptance and use of an orthography for a minor language, on the basis of what is claimed above, "è ragionevole pensare che una grafia viciniore alla grafia della lingua della socializzazione primaria (l'italiano) sia la più indicata" ("it is reasonable to believe that an orthography more similar to that of the language of primary socialisation (i.e., Italian) would be more advisable", Regis 2012b: 268, my translation). In the case of Piedmontese, however, this "user-friendly" orthography, would not seem to be either the Villata-Eandi (as Regis 2012b: 268 has proposed) or the Pacòt-Viglòngo (as proposed e.g. by Miola 2015: 150). Rather it should be a

revised combination of the two, in which for example – in relation to the graphisation of vowels – <u> should stand for both [y] and [u]; <o> for [o] and, possibly, [ø]; and <e> for [e], [ɛ] and [ə]. In this manner, phonological differences between Piedmontese and Italian would also be strengthened graphically. By adopting <u> for [u] and [y], Piedmontese words such as [ekunu'mia], "economics", [filuzu'fia], "philosophy", and [fakul'ta] "power", but also "University department", would be written differently from their Italian counterpart, namely Piedm. <ecunumia> vs It. <economia>; Piedm. <filusufia> vs It. <filosofia>, Piedm. <facultà> vs It. <facoltà>, whereas in such cases Piedmontese modern orthography perfectly corresponds to Italian orthography. In our society, "where the visual aspects of language are of paramount importance" (Tosco 2008: 6), increasing visual distinctiveness might foster the perception of the minor language's *Abstand*-ization from the major language(s) in the territory, as well as its *Ausbauization*.

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CHAPTER 9

Revitalising contested languages

The case of Lombard

Paolo Coluzzi, Lissander Brasca and Simona Scuri
University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur / Bangor University /
Committee for the Safeguarding of Linguistic Heritage (CSPL), Italy

This chapter opens with an introduction to the Lombard language and its institutional and sociolinguistic situation, including the reasons why the term "language" is used and not the commonly used "dialect". The second and main part of the chapter looks at what has been done to date and what is currently being done to try to reverse the ongoing language shift that is constantly reducing the number of speakers and the domains where the language is used. This includes a detailed account of corpus planning, particularly the phase known as 'graphisation' (writing systems, including the latest polynomic system for all Lombard varieties), status planning and acquisition planning, all of which have been carried out by committed individuals and private associations. The chapter closes with a short discussion on the present status of Lombard with reference to the recent regional law for the protection and promotion of the Lombard language.

1. Introduction

Italy is a multi-ethnic and multilingual country, boasting over 40 historical languages spoken on its territory (Coluzzi 2009a), most of which are not recognised by the Italian State as minority or regional languages (Coluzzi 2008, 2009a).[1] The sociolinguistic situation of Italy has been summarised in Table 1.

It is not an easy task to assess the level of prestige that a language enjoys, also considering that different languages may enjoy different degrees of prestige among different individuals and social groups. Based on our own research and observations, however, we have attempted to rank these languages according to the prestige they seem to enjoy among the majority of their speakers (from most to least). The

1. *Ethnologue*'s (Lewis, Simons and Fennig 2013) estimate for the number of distinct languages spoken in Italy is 36. According to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (Moseley 2010; see also Soria 2015), 31 of these are endangered to different degrees.

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Table 1. The Italian linguistic repertoire

The Italian linguistic repertoire	**Notes**
Standard Italian	Mostly used in written form and in the mass media
English	Spoken mostly by young educated people, but often not fluently
Regional Italian	Spoken by the majority of Italians, even though with different registers. Different in every region for phonetic, lexical and sometimes even grammatical traits
Minority languages	*Both Romance and non-Romance (Germanic, Slavic, Greek and Albanian families). Law 482/1999 recognises twelve of them.*
Regional languages	*All Romance. As is often the case with contested languages, these are usually called "dialects" by their speakers and by the Italian public in general, as well as by most Italian linguists working in Italy.*
Immigrant languages	*Belonging to several families from Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, spoken by the large number of immigrants living in Italy, some Italian citizens by now*

most prestigious varieties also tend to be the ones that enjoy more official support. The languages in Italics occupy the low position in a diglossic relationship with Italian (in Fasold's 2001 sense of "broad diglossia") and are used mostly in non-official/family settings (however, some of the recognised minority languages and even a few of the unrecognised ones have begun to be used in a limited number of "high" domains). In Italy the phenomena of code-mixing and code-switching are quite common among the speakers of the "low" varieties marked in Italics, especially among older speakers.

2. Italian regional languages

Two different terms are normally used in English (with parallel translation in many different languages) to refer to "small" languages spoken only by a minority of the population of a country: minority languages and regional languages.[2] Different interpretations of the two terms have been offered, but we will call "minority languages" those language varieties normally very different from Italian, in most cases belonging to different language families, whose speakers tend to have a strong ethnic/national identity as being different from other Italians, in ethnic and cultural terms. On the other hand, regional languages, which – as is often the case with contested languages – are confusingly termed "dialects" by most people and

2. Other terms do exist, like 'dominated' or 'minoritised languages', but their use seems to be more restricted and our discussion will focus only on "minority languages" and "regional languages".

institutions (including academia) in Italy, tend to have historically a stronger relationship with Italian, and their speakers on the whole do not object to being seen as "Italians" (at the same time as "Lombards", "Sicilians", etc.). In short, speakers of regional languages tend to have a weaker distinct ethnic identity. However, from a strictly linguistic point of view, there is no difference between these two categories.[3] Tomasz Wicherkiewicz (2001: 3) listed the following features for "regional languages", which he calls "regiolects" in this quotation:

- close genetic relationship to the corresponding majority language of the state; regiolects are often regarded as being "only" dialects of a majority/state language;
- relatively long history of common development, especially sociopolitical, of the regional and the corresponding majority language;
- lacking or not fully shaped feeling of national separateness within the group of speakers; however, strong regional and/or ethnic identity, with the language constituting the main constituent of the identity/regional ethnicity;
- high dialectal differentiation within the regiolects, which, hence, can be often classified as dialect clusters or L-complexes;
- lacking an adopted uniform literary standard or literary norm, or the standard being in *statu nascendi*;
- rich, often very ancient literary tradition of dialectal/regional literature;
- relatively low social prestige of a regiolect, often lower than in the past;
- underdeveloped status language planning methods;
- sometimes a confessional separateness of the regiolect speakers;
- opposition within the group against being perceived and officially treated as [a] national minority group, often a paradoxical resistance against being seen as minority group at all; an "embedded" national/linguistic identity.

All or most of these features apply to Italian regional languages. To return to the term "dialects" ('dialetti'), which is still in common use in Italy to refer to its regional languages (see also Tamburelli and Tosco, this volume): even though we are aware that the term is sometimes used to refer to non-recognised local languages, we strongly oppose its use as being not precise on the one hand, and having negative connotations on the other, as it refers to a language variety that is spoken only in low domains by less educated people, and which is seen as not having any economic

3. For instance, Lombard itself, which we refer to as a "regional language" of Italy, is structurally very different from its corresponding majority language (Italian) (Pellegrini 1973: 57–86; De Mauro 2014: 37–41). Hierarchical clusterings resulting from dialectrometric studies show that Lombard and the other so-called Gallo-Italic varieties are more appropriately classified as Gallo-Romance than as Italo-Romance (Goebl 2008; Tamburelli and Brasca 2017).

value. In Chambers and Trudgill's words (1998: 3), "a substandard, low status, often rustic form of language, generically associated with peasantry, the working class, or other groups lacking in prestige". The status of Lombard as a language is therefore highly contested in the Italian context, with many linguists of the old school and the general public insisting that Lombard and in fact all other regional languages cannot be called anything other than "dialects" (see also Tamburelli, this volume). This viewpoint has been sustained by nationalist myths, among which the idea that Italy could and should only have one language: Italian. One of the problems, we believe, is that a language variety considered as a "dialect" has much lower chances to be maintained and revitalised.

We could therefore state that there are at least twelve minority languages spoken in Italy, those protected by Law 482 enacted in 1999,[4] and a number of regional languages that varies according to political considerations and the isoglosses considered, but that most scholars would agree as being in the range of fifteen (see Lepschy 1994: 9). Obviously, such a distinction between minority and regional languages is blurred, with some saying that Friulian and Sardinian (which are included in Law 482/1999) should be considered regional languages, and others of the opinion that varieties like Sicilian, Venetan or Piedmontese, just to name a few, should gain the status of minority languages. We consider this distinction to be rather flexible and accept the possibility that a regional language may become a minority language whenever the conditions arise.

3. Lombard

Lombard is one of the languages of the Gallo-Italic group or, perhaps more precisely, of the Cisalpine Gallo-Romance group (see Brasca this volume) belonging to the Western Romance family of Indo-European languages, linguistically closer to French and Occitan varieties than to Italian (see for example Tamburelli and Brasca 2017). According to the latest 2006 ISTAT survey, about 3.5 million people in the Lombardy region can speak Lombard, i.e. 35.7% of the regional population. However, the ISTAT figures do not include the speakers of related varieties in bordering areas such as Eastern Piedmont, Canton Ticino and the southern valleys of Chantun Grischun in Switzerland and most areas in Western Trentino

4. In reality the number of minority languages spoken in Italy may be higher. For example, under "German", we find the standard as well as Alemannic, Bavarian and Carinthian varieties – that is, at least four languages instead of one – and similar considerations apply to other minority languages, particularly Slovene, Romany and Sardinian. Moreover, some (see for example Orioles 2003 and Toso 2004) argue that the Gallo-Italian dialects spoken in some areas in the South of Italy and Tabarchino spoken on the Sulcis Islands in Southern Sardinia would need to be added.

(see Figure 1). In any case, these 3.5 million speakers (and we don't know how proficient in Lombard they may be) are on the decrease. Looking at the results of the ISTAT survey carried out only six years before, we can see a decrease of almost 3 percentage points, from 38.6% in 2000 to 35.7% in 2006. We could reasonably conclude that Lombard, in the same way as other Italian regional languages, is losing at least a quarter of its speakers with every succeeding generation, which clearly places it among endangered languages.[5] In fact, according to EGIDS (Extended Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale), one of the most well-known scales for the assessment of language vitality, developed by Lewis and Simons in 2010, Lombard, like many other Italian regional languages, may score, depending on the area, between 6b and 8a. A score of 6b corresponds to "threatened": "The language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generation are transmitting it to their children". A score of 8a corresponds to "moribund": "The only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation" (Lewis & Simons 2010: 8). Only two more grades separate 8a from the final grade on the scale, 10 "extinct", and this is another clear sign of the predicament Lombard finds itself in. This means that if nothing is done, Lombard is bound to disappear in the not-so-distant future. Luckily there are some signs of a resurgence in interest for Italian regional languages in general and for Lombard in particular, as will be shown in this chapter.

4. Lombard: One language? Many dialects?

In most books and articles on the subject (see for example Merlo 1960–61; Maiden and Parry 1997; Lurati 2002), Lombardy is said to feature three or four varieties:

- western Lombard (spoken in the provinces of Varese, Como, Lecco, Sondrio, Milan, Monza, Pavia and Lodi, in addition to Novara and Verbania in Piedmont and Canton Ticino in Switzerland),
- eastern Lombard (spoken in the provinces of Bergamo, Brescia, northern Cremona and northern Mantua),
- alpine Lombard (spoken in the provinces of Sondrio, Trento and Verbania, in Canton Ticino and Canton Grischun in Switzerland) and
- the so-called peripheral varieties of the lower lands (spoken in the provinces of Pavia, Lodi, Cremona and Mantua).[6]

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5. "Definitely endangered" according to the Unesco Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (Moseley 2010).

6. The last two varieties are sometimes referred to as "peripheral areas" (see for example Sanga 1997: 253–259).

Figure 1. Area where Lombard is spoken (map kindly provided by Fulvio Baravalle)

However, even though there are some phonetic and lexical differences, and even a few grammatical ones, they have many more features in common and they can definitely be considered varieties of the same language, having common origins and having shared most linguistic innovations, though historical developments and lack of official status and standardisation have led to some divergence. As Glauco Sanga wrote (1997: 253): "There was a time when a basically Milanese type extended from Novara up to Trento and across to Verona;[7] and it is this common base that constitutes the unity of the Lombard dialect group, whereas differences are due to later more superficial developments". These "more superficial developments" consist of some innovations that were already underway in the older "Milanese type"

7. The area referred to includes all the Lombard varieties mentioned above.

common Lombard (see also Bonfadini 2010), but were realised to a more advanced degree in the eastern varieties. Their effects show up in various degrees also in the present day western varieties. Indeed, as Glauco Sanga points out (1997: 257): "the main differences between Western and Eastern Lombard appear to derive from the fact that the latter adopted and generalised popular and rural developments, kept in check and limited in Milanese, the dominant Lombard variety". Moreover, some traits that were maintained in western Lombard, are also found in several isolated areas of the eastern territory (Sanga 1984; 1997; Bonfadini 2010).

Whereas there are minority languages that happen to be quite uniform in the territory where they are spoken, many others find themselves in the same situation as Lombard. These are "communities of dialects" whose many varieties may be somewhat different from each other, but still share most structural and lexical features, in addition to an historical territory (which is sometimes reflected in the present day regional subdivision, although imperfectly as in the case of Lombardy) and a culture. Basque, Occitan and Welsh, just to name a few, are all languages that are not particularly uniform, perhaps even less than Lombard is. On the other hand, based on our own experience and observations, all varieties of Lombard seem to be highly mutually intelligible provided that speakers have "tuned in" to the phonetic differences mentioned above, though there may be a few lexical items that are entirely different and thus need to be learnt.

So, we may still refer to three or four main varieties of the Lombard language if needed, or even to Milanese, Bergamasco, Bresciano[8] or other varieties, but always bearing in mind they are varieties of the same contested language. Referring to it as "Lombard" is the only possibility, we feel, that this language has of surviving, because concurrent language planning for a large number of "dialects" has scant chance of being effective and of keeping them all alive.

5. Language planning

Language planning is the discipline whose aim is to influence the use of languages in a given region, either in a positive or negative way. In most cases, particularly when the targeted language is a minority or regional language, the main aim of language planning becomes reversing language shift and increasing the number of speakers and, if at all possible, the domains these languages are used in. When its object is a dominant language, language planning may just try to consolidate its position, e.g. in public institutions or the education system. Language planning is

8. These are the Italian forms, as they are commonly found in the literature. In Lombard they could be spelled: milanes, bergamasc, bressan.

carried out through three main phases, normally known as corpus planning, status planning and acquisition planning. Corpus planning deals with the language itself, trying to come up with a standardised version or at least with a common writing system. The aim of status planning, on the other hand, is specifically to raise the prestige of a language by increasing its domains of use, particularly written domains, whereas the purpose of acquisition planning is to increase the number of speakers through the teaching of the language (see Coluzzi 2007). Let us now look at each of these three phases to see what has been done so far with regards to Lombard. Note that few promotion efforts have been carried out so far by public institutions, even though this may change in the future owing to the new regional law for the promotion of Lombard recently passed (see Conclusions).

5.1 Corpus planning

Some form of standardisation has been carried out for some of the Lombard varieties, and various grammars can be found in book format and even online. However, a standard form of Lombard does not exist. Perhaps if the language acquires some degree of official status within the region the need for a standard variety for the whole region may arise one day, but for the time being each Lombard variety is carrying on with its own grammatical, phonetic and lexical features. One way to give a sense of unity to these varieties may be through the introduction of a common writing system that could be employed for all varieties. A prototype of such writing system is described briefly below. So far, each Lombard variety is written using different writing systems, some more phonetic, some more etymological. For example, the western variety of Lombard, and more specifically Milanese, is written using two main systems: the classical one, more etymological, and the modern one, more phonetic, also used in Switzerland. The two systems differ mainly in the way vowels are represented.

Table 2. The main differences between the traditional Milanese orthography and the modern system as far as vowels are concerned

IPA	Classical	Modern
ɔ	ò	o
u	ó (or 'o' if unstressed)	u
ø	oeu	ö
y	u	ü

However, a new writing system was devised by one of the authors about fourteen years ago, and published in 2011 (Brasca 2011), which is currently being used

by a dozen activists and "freely" interpreted or adapted by others. The system is called "Scriver Lombard" ('write Lombard') and it is defined as a local-polynomic orthography. Its aim is to allow speakers of all Lombard varieties to write every word of their own local variety in a graphic form that is very similar or even identical to the form in which the speakers of any other Lombard variety would write it. This allows the identity and meaning of the words to be easily recognised by speakers of other varieties. Consequently, this system cannot reflect directly all the phonetic features of any variety, and it is therefore the most etymological (deep) and least phonetic (shallow) among the ones in use.[9] In spite of the widespread idea that phonetic/phonemic systems are inherently better,[10] few writing systems in the world are in fact completely phonetic/phonemic, and some may diverge considerably from the actual pronunciation, however without creating particular problems for the readers who are used to those systems. English comes up as a notable example, with speakers of different varieties of English (e.g. American, Australian, Scottish) using the same orthography while pronouncing some items differently. A great disadvantage of shallow systems is that they can only be used in a restricted area, or need a standardised pronunciation, whereas deep systems are more transparent, flexible and allow for local pronunciations of the language. The local-polynomic system for Lombard offers all these advantages. This means that, if on the one hand new speakers may find it difficult to learn how to read and write the language at the initial stages, the great advantage will be that they will be able to read and understand all Lombard varieties, and a sense of unity of the language will be enhanced. This also means that it will be possible to publish more copies of any written document, from poetry to novels to scientific books, expanding the audience and reducing costs. Therefore, the local-polynomic system challenges the three main arguments with which Italian academics, politicians and local dialect activists contest the language status of Lombard (see also Tamburelli, this volume), and the right to enjoy some degree of official support. These are: 1. Lombard is not a language because it has no common standard; 2. Lombard is not a language

9. 'A *shallow* orthography is one where the relationship between sounds and characters is close to one-to-one, so that the written word closely corresponds to the pronunciation of the word in the context where it occurs. Fully phonemic orthographies are therefore shallow. A *deep* orthography is one where the relationship between sounds and letters is more complex. In deep orthographies words may sound the same but be spelt differently (*sole* and *soul*) or sound different but have the same spelling (*row, lead*). English and Hebrew are often cited as examples of languages with deep orthographies, and Spanish, Italian and Finnish as examples of languages with shallow ones' (Sebba 2007: 19).

10. 'Philologists, linguists and educators have insisted for several centuries that the ideal orthography has a one-to-one correspondence between grapheme and phoneme' (Lüpke 2011: 329).

because it shows dialectal variation: how can we write different dialects using one system?; 3. Protecting *one* common Lombard variety implies discriminating against all other Lombard dialects.

An example of the same sentence in the Milanese variety written using the classical, the modern and the local-polynomic system can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. The same sentence written with the different writing systems

English	The little boy heard a clap of thunder coming down from the sky
Italian	Il bambino ha sentito un tuono scendere dal cielo
Classical system	El fioeu l'ha sentuu on tron vegnì giò del ciel
Modern system	El fiöö l'ha sentüü un trun vegnì giò del cel
Local-polynomic system	El fiœl l'ha sentud un tron vegnir jo del ciel

Whereas the last sentence would be read like the two previous ones by a Milanese speaker, it could easily be read by a speaker of, for example, Bergamasco, and understood simply by knowing that *fiœl* is the word used in western Lombard for the Bergamasco word *s'ciet* ('little boy'). Indeed, the same sentence in the Bergamasco variety would be written as: *Ol s'ciet l'ha sentid un tron vegnir jo del ciel*, a sentence that is very similar to the one above and perfectly understandable by a Milanese, for instance. The list of frequent words that are completely different in the different varieties is short and they could all be learnt relatively quickly.[11] However, in spite of its clear advantages, we are aware that new speakers, i.e. the small but growing number of people who grew up speaking Italian and at some point decided to learn a Lombard variety as a second language (see Coluzzi 2019), may find a polynomic system daunting at first. We are also aware of the fact that many of those native speakers who do read and write their own variety using the traditional orthographies are attached to them for various reasons, including the fact that a vast literature has been written in them (this applies particularly to the Milanese variety). As Sebba (2007: 133) explains: "Once established, orthographies are extremely difficult to change, as a variety of conservative forces come into play to resist *any* tampering with the norm […]." Even though good audio material (which is at present scarce) for language learning would make the shallower and more phonetic orthographies unnecessary, for the reasons just outlined, we envisage the possibility of the establishment of a digraphic system for Lombard, at least on a transitional basis. A polynomic system and the traditional writing systems could be used in parallel, allowing both new speakers and fluent speakers who are used to traditional orthographies to

11. Many lexical items that speakers and especially semi-speakers today intuitively judge as "typical of some other Lombard areas", are in fact also found in the idiolects of their elderly fellow-villagers, as well as in the historical literature and dictionaries of their own local variety.

become acquainted with the polynomic system without the need to break abruptly with tradition. In a way, this is already happening on the Lombard Wikipedia, for example, which allows for different writing systems to be employed.

In addition, we should mention three other writing systems developed for the Lombard varieties, thought as a unitary linguistic system. Jørgen Giorgio Bosoni (2003) proposes a "unified writing system for the Lombard linguistic varieties" (*grafia unificata per le varietà linguistiche lombarde*), a phonemic/phonetic system whose aim appears to be different from the one of Scriver Lombard: "once the correct pronunciation is known, there should be no uncertainties about the correct orthography. On the other hand, a written text – even a single word – should not leave any doubts about how to read it, in order to reproduce the local speakers' actual pronunciation in a relatively reliable way" (Bosoni 2003: 206). Claudi Meneghin (2006), on the other hand, proposes a "synthetic literary orthography for the Lombard language (ISO 639–3)" mixing etymological and phonemic criteria, based on the conservative forms of alpine Lombard varieties and taking some written forms from the tradition of other Western Romance languages. In his 2007 article, the same author proposes an "orthography […] for the Rhaeto-Cisalpine written language" that can be "localised" and "used even for each Rhaeto-Cisalpine variety (Piedmontese, Ligurian, Lombard, Emilian-Romagnol, Venetan, Istriot, Ladin, Romansh, Friulian) separately" (Meneghin 2007: 39).

As far as the modernisation of the language is concerned, a number of initiatives are now helping to add modern terminology to the Lombard lexicon. In addition to the pioneering work of dictionary compilers and the Circolo Filologico Milanese, there are initiatives such as the Lombard Wikipedia, and the conferences organised by Simona Scuri of CSPL Italy ('Committee for the Protection of the Linguistic Heritage', a non-profit association established in 2010 that is now at the forefront for the protection and promotion of Italian regional languages and dialects) in collaboration with Lissander Brasca.

5.2 Status planning

Many strategies are common in status planning to expand the scope of one language and to increase the number of domains where it is used. They include specific legislation (e.g. as to which languages are to be used in public offices, local government bodies, place names), language requirements for public posts, advertising (promotional campaigns), economic support to individuals, institutions and publishers, literary and musical competitions, radio and TV programmes, CDs, DVDs, films, modern and appealing newspapers, magazines, literary, scientific and technical works and translations from high-status languages, mini-courses on popular periodicals, public signs, stickers, posters, t-shirts, summer camps for children, holidays

for children in countries or areas where the minority or regional language is also spoken, festivals centred around the local language and culture, and many more. Another strategy pertaining to status planning is showing people that the given language is used by the elites, whether they are politicians in power, actors, or singers. In short, anything that can make the language prestigious and useful. Of particular importance is material targeting young adults and children, as they will be responsible for passing the language on to the next generation.

On the musical front, quite a lot has been done for the revitalisation of Lombard (see Table 4), but at the moment the production of children's stories, cartoons, comics and the like is very scarce (see below for a couple of examples). More generally, very few status planning strategies have been put into practice for Lombard so far, which is not surprising considering the lack of official status and the limited financial resources (though some financial support is now provided by the recent regional law, see 'Conclusions'). However, in the last decade or so we have witnessed a revival of Italian regional languages, Lombard included, which is still small and marginal in a way, but growing steadily. Before that, only a few books, dictionaries, magazines, radio programmes and language courses were available for some of the Lombard varieties, particularly for western Lombard, partly due to the work carried out in Canton Ticino in Switzerland and by associations like the *Circolo Filologico Milanese* ('Milanese Philological Circle'). Lombard even has its own Wikipedia since 2005, which currently has 34,782 entries (as of February 2017). It must also be pointed out here that some Lombard varieties have been used for centuries for literary purposes, particularly from the 15th century onwards, mostly for poetry and theatre, but with some examples of fiction as well. Authors such as Carlo Maria Maggi (1630–1699), Carlo Porta (1775–1821) and, to mention a more recent one, Franco Loi (born in 1930) are known by anybody with a good knowledge of Italian literature (in the sense of literature "written in territories that would become Italy").[12] Another strategy of status planning that we deem very important for the visibility of Lombard is the linguistic landscape, including place names. Even though the use of Lombard for shop signs or street advertising is scarce at present (see Coluzzi 2009b), new scripts in Lombard can be seen appearing all the time, and a few towns in Lombardy have even set up bilingual signs at the entrance of their territory, and/or street signs in their original linguistic form (see Figures 2 and 3).

12. In his overview on Italian regional ("dialect") literature, Hermann Haller (2002) includes as many as 56 Lombard writers, among whom: Fabio Varese (Varese 1570/75–1630), Domenico Balestrieri (Milan 1714–1780), Carlo Antonio Tanzi (Milan 1710–1762), Tommaso Grossi (Bellano (Como) – Milan 1790–1853), Emilio de Marchi (Milan 1851–1901), Carlo Bertolazzi (Rivolta d'Adda (Cremona) 1870–1916), Delio Tessa (Milan 1886–1939), Giovanni Bianconi (Minusio (Switzerland) 1891–1981), Franca Grisone (Sirmione 1945-).

Figure 2. Advertisement for the Milan Northern Railway

Figure 3. Traditional Lombard name of a farm courtyard in Cesate (Milan)

Nowadays much more is available in Lombard. Table 4 shows some of the recent initiatives that have been taken by activists and artists to promote Lombard.

Table 4. Recent status planning strategies for the Lombard language[13]

Music	**Singer song writers, pop/rock:** Ornella Fiorini (MN), La Cantina di Ermete (BS), Davide van de Sfroos (CO), Diana Ceriani (VA), Enzo Iannacci (MI), Francesco Magni (MB), Gianluca Gennari (CR), Gio Desfaa (VA), Luciano Ravasio (BG), Piergiorgio Cinelli (BS), Roberto Sironi (MI), Trenincorsa (VA), Bepi and the Prismas (BG), I Luf (BS), Vad Vuc (Ticino), Charlie Cinelli (BS), Lissander Brasca (MI), Teka-p (MI), Mario Burghiner (VCO), Sulutumana (CO), Marco Zappa (Ticino), Piero Cucchi (SO), Fapo (LO), Paolo Nissotti (NO), Selvaggi Band (BS), Ticìnn Cänntàl (PV), Tantapaja (MI), I fio dla nebia (PV), Paolo Tomamichel (Ticino)
	Folk: Aghi di Pino (BG), Baraban (MI), Dindelon (MI), Malghesetti (BS), Rataplan (BG), Samadùr (BG), Smorfiàcc (BG), Vent Negru (Ticino), Vox Bleni (Ticino), Elsa Albonico (VA)
	Rap: Dellino Farmer (BS)
	Blues: Fulvia Consuelo (MI)
	Heavy Metal: Ul Mik Longobardeath (MI)
	Others, mixed: Nanni Svampa (MI), Cantamilano (MI), Ciaparatt (MI), Scarp da Tennis (Ticino), Stramilano (MI), Walter di Gemma (MI), I Saltamartin (MB).
Books	**Short stories/articles:** *Fiur d'urtiga* (Enrico Portalupi) (NO), *El Casciaball* (Simone Milesi) (MB), *An bris d'argot* (Clelia Letterini) (CR), *Cumè na pastòcia* (Clelia Letterini) (CR), *Stori da Très* (Romano Tinelli) (MI), *Milàn passaa present fantasii* (AAVV) (MI), *A Milan parla anch i sass* (AAVV) (MI), *La vita è una schiscetta* (Giorgio Guaiti, parallel texts Italian-Milanese) (MI)
	Poetry: *Gazaboi: Poesie in dialetto cremonese* (Giovanni Lonati) (CR), *Sarà sü… N la libertà* (Paolo Cominotti) (TN), *Sogn de carta* (Giuliana Bernasconi) (BS), *Gira girasul* (Velise Bonfante) (BS)
	Non-fiction: *Scriver Lombard, un'ortografia polinomeg-local per la lengua lombarda* (Lissander Brasca) (MI), *Pavia e la so' storia* (Ugo Bensi) (PV)
	Translations: *The Four Gospels, The Divine Comedy* (Dante Alighieri), *Le petit Prince* (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry), *Just So Stories* (Rudyard Kipling), *Amleto e compagni all'ombra del Duomo* (William Shakespeare), *Dracula* (Bram Stocker), *The prophet* (Kahlil Gibran), *Le avventure di Pinocchio* (Carlo Collodi), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Lewis Carroll), *I promessi sposi* (Alessandro Manzoni), *Andersen Grimm Perrault in lengua lombarda* (CD), *101 Favole di Esopo* (CD).

13. The abbreviations refer to the following provinces, here written in Lombard and Italian: Lombardy: BS (Bressa/Brescia), CO (Com/Como), VA (Vares/Varese), MI (Milan/Milano), MB (Monça e Brianza/Monza e Brianza), CR (Cremona), BG (Bergem/Bergamo), MN (Mantova), LC (Lec/Lecco), SO (Sondri/Sondrio), LO (Lod/Lodi), PV (Pavia); Piedmont: NO (Novara), VCO (Verban Cusi Ossola/Verbano Cusio Ossola); Trentino: TN (Trent/Trento).

Table 4. (*continued*)

Magazines	*Terra Insubre. Cultura del territorio e identità* (quarterly, about nine pages in the western Lombard variety), *Giopì* (fortnightly, about two pages in the Bergamasco variety), *El Nost Paes* (available at: http://elnostpaes.eu, Milanese variety), *El Sciroeu de Milan* (available at: http://www.sciroeu.it/ultimo-numero-1.html, Milanese variety).
Radio programmes	RSI Radiotelevisione Svizzera: *Dialett in sacocia* (Ticinese variety), Radio Meneghina (Milanese variety), Radio Padania.
TV programmes	Teleticino: *Dimalami* (Ticinese variety), *A vivi dapermi* (Sitcom Teleticino and Youtube, Ticinese variety).
Films	**Lombard dubbing/revoicing by Yor Milano/TEPSI (Ticino):** *Se ta cati ta copi* (The Searchers), *Duu testimoni scomod* (Some Like It Hot), *Scapa ti che scapi anca mi* (La Grande Vadrouille) **Original productions:** *Ona strada bagnada* by Lamberto Caimi (MI), *Desmentegass* by Lamberto Caimi (MI), *El prét nöf* by Ettore Bonetti (BS), *Matrioskar* by Ettore Bonetti (BS), *La palmira ul film* by Alberto Meroni (Ticino), *Frontaliers* by Commissione Cinema Giovani (Ticino), *A duu pass da l'eternità* by Yor Milano (Ticino), *Na bela tosa par tri dotor* by Yor Milano (Ticino), *Do tosan e tré valiis* by Yor Milano (Ticino), *Il mattino sorge a Est* by Stefano Tagliaferri (LC), *Panasce* by Stendhal Syndrome (Ticino), *Elvira* by Ornella Fiorini (MN), *La Pimpa: na giurnada fòra du solit* by Altan/Smallcodes (Ticino).
Theatre companies	Compagnia Teatrale Germignaghese from Germignaga (VA), Compagnia dialettale Scaldasole (PV), Nuovi Giovani alla Ribalta from Pegognaga (MN), Compagnia Isempergiuvin from San Giuliano Milanese (MI), Compagnia I Trainsema de bardell from Cuveglio (VA), Compagnia Teatro Nodo (MI), La Compagnia from Vimercate (MI), Compagnia La Ringhiera from Rovello Porro (CO), Compagnia La Maschera from Abbiategrasso (MI), Compagnia Diego Fabbri from Veduggio (MB), Gruppo Teatro 2000 from Torre Boldone (BG), Compagnia I gamber from Pognano (BG), Compagnia teatrale Costa Imagna (BG), Amici del Teatro di Bottanuco (BG), Compagnia Teatrale Isolabella from Villongo (BG), La Combricola Gino Gervasono from Gazzaniga (BG), Compagnia Teatrale Ideal from Sant'Omobono Terme (BG), Quei del Pascal (BS), TEPSI (Ticino).
Conferences	Parla ti inscì parli anca mi – el lombard ind i social media, Lej ti inscì leji anca mi – la traduzion de 'El Profeta' del Khalil Gibran, Pess e pivion, El restaur del teater, La ballada europea, El camin lombard de Sant Gustin vers Expo 2015, I sits arqeolojeg ind l'Est Milanes, L'orijin segreta dei noste piante, La moda in Lombardia: dal coaçon sforzesc a la sperada, Una mimosa per ti, Ansia e depression, La preistoria de la Pianura padana, Un viaj intra stelle galassie bœgg neger, Zani e 'l teater ën bergamasc, La mader tera.
Advertising	Cademartori (advert: La bòca l'è minga stràca se la sa nò de vaca), Nutella (labels: bun di, uèla, taaac!, 'nem !, ficœù, alùra?, Cum te stet?), MiTo Festival (Con Brahms, Musorgskij e Ravel al Palasport tutt cos l'è bell!), FNM-Milan Northern Railway (advert: L'è propri bel!).

(*continued*)

Table 4. (*continued*)

Blogs/ websites	Inlombard, Academia dal Rison, Lengua lombarda, La vox lombarda, Al blogh dal Bardùgh, Brugh e Birlinghitt, La canzon milanesa, Bruno Pezzini, Milanesiabella, S'ciena fregia, Ul batacc, LinguaLombarda.it, Proverbi, Poesia by Davide Ferrari.
Youtube	TGPota (press reports with interviews in the Bresciano variety), Parlar Lombard, Neque Tamen, Parlà lombard incoeu, Teleticino, Concorso Tira fuori la lingua, Il Bepi quiss, Sota el ciel de Lombardia, Favole di Esopo e Iliade, Favole di Esopo in Lombardo, A vivi dapermi.
Facebook	Per quei che parla lombard, Lombard incœ, Mi sun minga un barlafus, Per la difesa del bergamasco, Fiero di parlare il dialetto ticinese, Parlà e scriv in milanes per minga fa sparì el noster dialett, Salviamo il dialetto brianzolo, La cumpagnia El Meneghin, Dialett ticines, Esclamazioni in dialetto mantovano, Dialet dal Cason e oltar, Ul grup del dialet lisunes, Cume parlavan i noster vecc… Tradate, Salviamo il dialetto vailatese, Cumasch, Lengua lombarda: idee per una standardizazion, Salviamo il dialetto del Garda, Il dialetto mantovano, Lombard: lengua co-uficial, La nœuva canzon lombarda, I amis del giuedì, Fans del Dracula in milanes, Dialetto milanese, Se te parlet no in dialet, Parliamo in dialetto milanese?, Impariamo la lingua lombarda, Lezion de lengua lombarda, Corso online di dialetto milanese, La vus de l'Insubria, El noster grupp.

5.3 Acquisition planning

Acquisition planning is the phase of language planning concerned with maintaining or enlarging the pool of speakers of a threatened language through its teaching. Very little has been done so far in Lombardy to teach Lombard, and most of the initiatives have targeted adults who can already speak some Lombard variety but want to improve their reading and writing skills in their heritage language. For example, the *Circolo Filologico Milanese* has run courses for a number of years, including Milanese literature. Other associations that have organised courses of some Lombard varieties are the *Accademia del Dialetto Milanese* ('Academy of the Milanese Dialect'), Il G.A.T.a.L. (Amateur Group for Theatrical Activities, in Milanese), the *Antica Credenza di Sant'Ambrogio* ('The Ancient Faith of Saint Ambrose', in Milanese), the *Ducato di Piazza Pontida* ('Duchy of Pontida Square', in Bergamasco), the *Academia dal Rison* ('Academy of Rice' in Novarese), *la Famiglia Comasca* ('The Family of Como', in Comasco), the *Compagnia dij Pastor* ('Company of Shepherds', in Verbano Cusio Ossola and Novarese), among many others. As remarked above, most of these courses have targeted people who could already speak the local variety. For beginners, self-learning is an option, but teaching material is at present very scarce. There is some material available online, including two courses

on Youtube: *Lezion de lengua lombarda* ('Lombard Language Lessons') and *Corso online di dialetto Milanese* ('online Course of Milanese dialect'). There is a course on the radio (Radio Meneghina), and grammars and dictionaries can be found for some varieties but not others, including two phrasebooks in Milanese: *A Milano si dice così* ('In Milan we say it like this', Buccini & Comoletti 2001) and *Viaggio nel dialetto Milanese* ('Journey in the Milanese dialect', Caprotti 2013).[14] However, two recent publications may show a change in trend: for the first time two publications are available for children. One introduces a basic Milanese vocabulary: *Il Milanese per tutti/El milanés per tùcc* ('Milanese for everyone'), edited by Fabio Mauri (2014). The second one, on the other hand, is an out-and-out textbook for kindergarten and primary school children divided into three volumes: *La nòsta lèngua* ('our language'), a Lombard course (Bergamasco variety) written by Giancarlo Giaàs and published by ALP (Padanian Linguistic Association) (Giavazzi 2008, 2009, 2010). In short, Lombard cannot easily acquire new speakers (particularly children) if the language is not taught properly by trained teachers using good language material similar to that available for other "small" languages like Friulian or Piedmontese in Italy or Galician and Basque in Spain, so that it can become a modern instrument of literacy for the new generations. This necessarily requires good financial support and official recognition of the language. It goes without saying that any of the status planning strategies listed in Table 4 can be an important aid to the acquisition or consolidation of the language at any level.

6. Conclusions

As we have seen, Lombard is an endangered language with a highly contested status. Even though initiatives aimed at its maintenance (but sometimes only with artistic and expressionist purposes in mind) are not lacking, these are clearly insufficient to stop or reverse language shift towards Italian. Obviously lack of resources and institutional interest are important obstacles that could only be overcome, we believe, if Lombard and in fact all Italian regional languages could become co-official with Italian in the regions where they are spoken, along similar lines as Friulian is protected by State Law 482/1999. If not added to this Law, at least a new and adequately

14. The number of grammars and dictionaries for the Lombard varieties is really vast. For the Milanese variety, for example, Claudio Beretta's *Grammatica del dialetto milanese* (1998) is worth mentioning, whereas as far as recent dictionaries are concerned, at least the *Dizionario milanese* edited by the Circolo Filologico Milanese should be mentioned. The first monolingual dictionary for Lombard, using the polynomic orthography 'Scriver Lombard', on the other hand, is now available on the web at: http://dizionarilombard.eu5.net/ [last accessed on the 18th January 2019].

funded law for the protection and promotion of Italian regional languages should be considered, and this should be a bi-partisan law sustained by open minded politicians of all political backgrounds, without any manipulation and politicisation, but with only pure concern for the linguistic rights of the people who still speak these languages and for Italy's diversity and cultural heritage. In fact, at present the political arena seems to be divided between the right-wing *Lega Nord* (Northern League) that has so far shown more interest towards the promotion of local languages, and basically all other parties, including those of the Left, which seem to favour an attitude of 'benign neglect' towards the local languages, partly because they do not want to support any initiatives coming from the *Lega*, even those that could be beneficial to local languages. This is quite ironic considering that in most other European countries the promotion of minority and regional languages tends to receive more support from the Left rather than the Right.

At the regional level, a new Law for the protection and promotion of Lombard (Regional Law no. 130/2016) has recently been approved, and we believe that in spite of its limitations it is a good document that will hopefully help the maintenance and promotion of the Lombard language.[15] Welcomed by many Lombard speakers and activists, this Law has attracted some criticism from the Italian national media, some politicians and even some linguists, who persist with their idea that "Lombard is not a language but many different albeit related dialects". Evidently the nationalist tenet of "one country, one culture, one language" is deeply entrenched in Italy. Without legal and financial support the chances that Lombard and other regional languages have to survive are slim, and if these languages die, a very important part of Italian and the world's cultural heritage will be lost forever, and a healthy trilingualism with the local variety, Italian and English will never be achieved.

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15. Heading IV ('Protection of the Lombard language through its local varieties') of the Law of the Regional Council no. 130 'Regional policies in the cultural area – regulatory reorganisation', passed on the 27 October 2016 and available at: https://www.regione.lombardia.it/wps/wcm/connect/ef1e697f-b71f-43b4-809f-d81129ae5f72/LR+Riordino+Cultura.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&-ContentCache=NONE&CACHEID=ef1e697f-b71f-43b4-809f-d81129ae5f72 [last accessed on the 18th September 2020].

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SECTION 3

Working with contestedness

Experiences from the field

CHAPTER 10

Community-based language planning

Bringing Sicilian folktales back to life

Andrea Musumeci
City University of Hong Kong

In an attempt to design a proposal for sustainable language policies in peripheral communities, this chapter provides ground for applying a sustainable network of activities related to interdisciplinary, community-based language planning. Aiming beyond mere language description and documentation, the proposal revolves around the concepts of community strengthening, land valorisation, and peripheral language use. The discussion is set in the context of the Italian region of Sicily, though the format could be applicable to other communities around the world. Considering macro-dynamics such as globalisation and historical change, I provide a description of the region's profile from a social and historical perspective, describing a plausible language planning strategy that may also bear economic impact for the area. Revolving around theatre, local resources, and community involvement, the proposal embraces social activities and local demands already present in Sicily, with the aim of making the local language less peripheral within the community itself.

Ma in quali lingua putìa megghiu fari principiu chi in chidda,
ca primu non sulamenti imparai, ma sucai cu lu latti?[1]
Antonio Veneziano (Sicilian poet), 1579

1. Introduction

A solid regional identity is not only given by a local language, but also by social, historical, and financial factors. The aim of this chapter is to open a discussion about the importance of regional and contested languages as factors that contribute to the overall perception, by the so-called "peripheral communities", of their own regional identity. *Peripheral* is intended not only in terms of spatial collocation, but also of

1. "Yet, in what language should I better commence, than in the one I not only learnt first, but also on which I was breastfed?" See the Manuscript Room at the Centro di Studi Filologici Siciliani for Antonio Veneziano's collections of love poems.

https://doi.org/10.1075/wlp.8.10mus

marginal economic output and quality of life[2] with respect to other areas in a given state. Elements of locality such as arts and crafts, language and culture, or even natural resources, may be deployed by means of strategic investments and sustainable language planning. This chapter focuses on the current reality found in Sicily, Italy, and on its "insular idiom"[3] – namely Sicilian (ISO code SCN). However, similar initiatives may be applicable to any "peripheral area" in the world where community revalorisation could be oriented towards language policies and investments that focus on land and culture. In Europe, such initiatives involve finding matching counterparts to those set by unified policies: from the array of funds dedicated to cultural heritage to the preservation of local cultures and languages.[4] Within today's social and cultural imbalance, the issue of local identity in peripheral communities may be partly addressed by appropriate language planning. To this respect, the valorisation of territory as a common resource and the consolidation of local cultural domains may benefit such communities. In the case of the European zone, such imbalance is also fuelled by the current economic scenario faced notably by Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain, which has also caused migration waves from these countries to more economically stable ones within the same macro-area. Therefore, the effects of macroeconomic and socio-political dynamics may have created fertile ground for discussion on "minority-cultures", their resources and their heritage.

In Section 2 of the chapter, a brief account of Sicily from a historical, socio-political, and linguistic perspective is provided. Section 3 focuses on the "language hierarchy market", i.e. the presence of dominant languages, and on language planning for community strengthening. Section 4 describes current initiatives of social development taking place in Sicily, while Section 5 outlines the present proposal in detail. A final discussion is provided in Section 6, with concluding remarks.

2. A reality called Sicilian

Among the twenty Italian regions, there are five, all located at the borders of the Italian state, which are considered "autonomous", or "special statute" regions: Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sardinia, Sicily, Trentino-Alto Adige and Valle d'Aosta. This

2. Quality of life is intended here as the result of indicators such as work-environment, infrastructures, purchasing power or overall crime rates in a given area.

3. Term used by the Sicilian scholar Marco Trizzino during his presentation at the CLOW2 conference in Turin, June 2016.

4. For more details about cultural heritage funds www.ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/culture-policies/cultural-heritage_en

autonomy involves having separate regional constitutions and parliaments, which allow for various aspects of government to be addressed with relative independence from national regulations. Setting aside the tensions arising not only linguistically but also politically[5] from such difference in status among regions, it may be useful to point out that sociolinguistic policies are one of the realms where the five regions have been granted autonomy. However, not every autonomous region applies such policies to the same extent. While Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Trentino-Alto Adige, located in the far North-east of the country, are renowned nationally both for their high productivity and quality of infrastructures as well as for adamantly valorising their local linguistic heritage through sociolinguistic policies, other regions have not accomplished as much. Sicily, for instance, figures at the other end of the spectrum. The concern here is that lack of socio-political action to value the island's (not merely linguistic) regional identity, may also have repercussions on the region's overall development. It may be befitting at this juncture to take a closer look at the context of Sicily and Sicilian.

Sicilian belongs to the Romance language family, it is indigenous to the Sicilian Islands, located in the Mediterranean Sea, and spoken today in migration countries such as, Australia, Canada, UK and the US. Sicily alone, not including emigrants, constitutes a linguistic community of 3.5 million speakers,[6] and the island has been the hub of a long-standing and intricate semiotic trajectory. In its most ancient form, before the arrival of the Greeks in the 8th century BC, the linguistic scenario of Sicily can be described as a triadic system, i.e. a linguistic system where three distinct ethnic groups, the Elymians, the Sicels and the Sikanos, co-existed in the same territory (Marchesini 2012). Over the course of its history, different conquerors left their mark on Sicily: from being a strategically important Roman province for the African campaigns, part of what the Romans had called *Magna Graecia*, the island also witnessed the Byzantine occupation; from the 9th to the 11th century under the Tunisians, Sicily was a unified emirate with Malta, and then became a kingdom with the Normans and the Bourbons of Spain (Di Matteo 2006). One characteristic was common during these eras and governments: the region's political and economic position may be described as central, or prominent, mostly due to its natural resources and strategic position at the centre of the Mediterranean Sea. Consequently, Sicilian too experienced periods of prominence as a language before its decay began in the 17th century. Despite becoming *illustre* 'illustrious' under the Norman court and having a florid literary tradition, by the early 1600s Sicilian had already ceased

5. In 2017, the Lega party notably acted in this respect by means of a regional referendum for autonomy in Lombary and Veneto. See http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2017/10/23/news/referendum_salvini_conferma_linea_nazionale_lega-179095119/?refresh_ce

6. 2006 ISTAT national survey

to be written for official purposes (Cipolla 2004), surviving only as a cluster of spoken vernaculars. With the unification of Italy in 1861, Sicily's position became even more peripheral. Nevertheless, numerous ethnic groups and civilisations have all left their mark on Sicilian, including distinctive systemic elements such as the presence of numerous Arabic lexical items,[7] tense-system features (e.g. the lack of a discrete future tense), and a group of phonemes absent in Italian.[8] Today, "standard" Sicilian may be defined in terms of a diglossic system (Ferguson 1959) with Italian. The two are used in a specific set of contexts, with speakers being acutely aware that the wrong variety in the wrong context is inappropriate. Sicilians seem to use Italian in a specific set of situations or domains, and Sicilian in another, with cases such as the community of Santa Cristina in Sicily, switching between Arberesh, Italian and Sicilian. Giovanna Alfonzetti (2013) brings forth an insightful article on Sicilian codeswitching, corroborating the thesis of a diglossic system. In speakers of more than one language or language variety, codeswitching entails the favouring of one variety over another, as it is deemed more appropriate in certain situations. Politics, for example, is not a domain where -formally- Sicilians speak Sicilian. Considering the tendency for speakers to prefer languages indicating status rather than those indicating location (Mühlhäusler 1996), Italian policies, which have been increasingly reduced the status of Sicilian in the community, become more "understandable". In a similar fashion to the cases of Sardinian, Corsican, Occitan, or even more so the Breton situation in France, pressure to learn Italian at school has been exerted onto Sicily at least since 1700,[9] with Sicilian being side-lined as a "dialect". As it is common in the history of minority languages worldwide, Sicilian pupils were admonished and felt uncouth whenever using Sicilian at school. With time, language use has been "corrected" in favour of Italian. Such developments may have contributed to increase the distance between the people and local politics and a lack of identification with authorities, which are not seen as protectors and role models, but rather as distant entities. Giuseppe Doria (2009) identifies this hopelessness in his research in film studies *Il "principio" della rassegnazione siciliana*.[10] Where he describes Sicilian people as having exerted a sort of self-prophylaxis by finding

7. An example of Arabic lexical item in Sicilian, *carùsa (*girl) [ka'rusa]

Italian	Sicilian	Maltese	Arabic	English
ragazza/sposina	*carùsa*	*gharusa*	عروس /ʕaruːs/,	*girl/bride*

8. Literature covering the 'Boasian triad' in Sicilian abounds. As regards the concept of Sicilian autochthonous phonemes, such as the retroflex voiceless plosive [ɖ], see http://www.terralab.it/sishilianu/index.htm.

9. Although at the time, the rate of educated people was low.

10. The 'principle' of Sicilian gloom. My translation.

refuge in their own regional language, which becomes more of an internal prison rather than a relief, for it has no voice in the higher public spheres. Such condition is directly relatable to the phenomenon of divergent change in language endangerment, as described by Kathryn A. Woolard, whereby "the indigenous system is *reshaped through the eyes of the dominant system*" (in Dorian 1989: 363, italics in the original). Though currently still spoken, critical signs of endangerment are evident in the low degrees of intergenerational transmission and narrowing domains of use (Alfonzetti 2013; Grinevald 2007; Dorian 1994), and in the contemporary wave of youth emigration (Pizzino 2012). With these premises, the data obtained for Sicilian within the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) classify it as being in imminent danger, between grades 6a and 6b (Simons 2017), depending on which area of the region one chooses to analyse. Among the indicators of endangerment level for Sicilian are verbal mood loss as well as the gradual loss of the honorifics system.

Although a regional law specifically aimed at the valorisation of the linguistic heritage in Sicilian schools was issued in 2011,[11] it was followed up only in 2018 with the approval of a relative project (due to start in 2019). Consistent actions of language strengthening are not only useful and welcome, but also necessary to meet present community demand in terms of regional identity.

3. The language hierarchy market and language planning

If language change is community change, what can linguists do to actively engage and promote such change, and to avoid acting merely as bookkeepers and data collectors? Languages do not become peripheral in a vacuum, but rather with respect to other languages or varieties. In fact, one variety acquires prestige over another by means of language policies, among other things (de Swaan 2001). Such dynamics may be exemplified by the case of English, which has occupied a position of international prominence with respect to other languages in recent human history, for historical and financial reasons as well as for reasons related to language policy. Therefore, the concept of a linguistic hierarchy is not new, nor are its effects on the economy. In his definition of cultural capital, Pierre Bordieu (1986: 243) mentions that it "is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalised in the forms of educational qualifications". Historically, such has been the case for a small number of dominant languages, which have been given prominence as areal *lingua francas*, as well as within business and education (de Swaan

11. http://www.gurs.regione.sicilia.it/Gazzette/g11-24/g11-24.pdf.

2001). In the literature on language description and documentation, Sallabank reports that in Seychelle, "after the implementation of the national creole as the language of instruction, and the subsequent improvement of pupils, parents were unhappy that their children were acquiring knowledge in a low variety language and reverted to English and French" (2010: 146). Moreover, Mehmedbegovich (2008, 2017) raised awareness of the existence of a language hierarchy in today's educational system, calling for engagement rather than rejection of the concept, to obtain an educational system free of language hierarchies, as well as change in the general public's attitude towards languages, their status, and their prestige. If one were to accept such invitation, it would also be possible to conceive languages, for better or for worse, at least within Europe, as commodities[12] on a socio-political level. Two properties of commodities are the following: first, commodities are situated in a market, and a market is a place where offer and demand of goods changes. Therefore, languages experience upward or downward mobility according to demand. Second, although "it costs no more to be talkative than to be sparse with words" (de Swaan 2001: 27), commodities can produce either income or losses. In the European sociolinguistic scenario, which is also the result of globalisation-led policies, few of these commodities (notably English, French and German) have been dominating the market, becoming what de Swaan (2001: 147) poetically defined in terms of "central constellations". Inevitably, others became peripheral.

> Unequal levels of power often result in members of the minority community (or better, perhaps, local community, as the relevant factor is not population size but rather sociopolitical status) being socially disadvantaged in a number of ways with respect to the majority population. In concrete terms, this frequently means that compared to the majority/dominant population, local community members are relatively powerless politically, and are less educated, less wealthy […]. One common result is that this socially disadvantaged position becomes associated with, or even equated to, the local language and culture, and so knowledge of the local language is seen as an impediment to social and economic development. Socioeconomic improvement thus comes to be perceived as tied to knowledge of the language of wider communication, coupled with renunciation of the local language and culture; for this reason, the situation has been called SOCIAL DISLOCATION. Social dislocation stemming from lack of prestige and power is one of the most powerful motivating factors in language shift. (Grenoble 2011: 34, capitalisation in the original)

The cultural capital formed by local languages may be treated as economic capital by the local population, by linguists, and by language policy makers to provide fairer access to a wider variety of goods. What may be the necessary conditions for engaging in such activity, and how may they be implemented?

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12. De Swan (2001) speaks of "hypercollective" goods.

Analysing the perception of the local language by the peripheral community itself may be a starting point. Richard Ruíz (1984 in Sallabank 2011: 283) posits three language policy orientations: language as a problem, language as a right, and language as a resource. In order to enhance the prestige and status connected to a local language, management of the belief about the language is required. Several approaches to this aspect have been proposed in the literature: Mühlhäusler (2003) asserts that rather than languages themselves, preserving "the domains of language use and the more complex language ecologies in which language use is situated" (in Grenoble 2011: 31) should acquire importance. Such ecologies are the results of geographical, historical, social, and political change. Haarman also points out that it is "necessary on methodological grounds to specify a network of ecological factors as potential sources of language variation" such as "interactional variables" (1990: 109–110), for language planning to be functional. Among these variables, also in relation to status planning, restriction in domains of use is a major cause of language endangerment "with the net result that it is increasingly important, and usual, for people to learn only a national language of wider communication" (Mühlhäusler 2003 in Grenoble 2011: 31). Grenoble provides examples of trilingual education models, where "the regional language, the national language, and an international or global language" are learnt, such as Finland, Greenland, Luxembourg, Malta, Germany, and northern Italy (Grenoble 2011: 34). To the extent that the community shows interest, and "perceptions of prospective language learners" (de Swaan 2001: 32) towards the regional language signalling positive attitudes are present, steps towards teaching may be taken. Furthermore, the introduction of the regional language in the educational system may be crucial in shaping community self-perception. Rather than perceiving languages as being of a lower rank than the national language, the community may start to perceive itself as multilingual. Sallabank also stresses the importance of promoting multilingualism insofar as it "increases the skills of society as a whole, enhances the status of subordinate groups, promotes local economies and cultures, encourages awareness of other points of view and mutual respect rather than dominance". She adds that members of the peripheral community "are seen as sources of expertise" (2011: 284). Moreover, as explained by de Swaan

> The "centrality", c_i of a language $ג_i$ is accordingly defined by the proportion of *multilingual* speakers that are also competent in $ג_i$. Language students will choose the language which appears to be most useful, the one which offers greatest possibilities of communication, either directly, or *indirectly*, through the mediation of interpreters or translators. A language is more likely to be selected the more prevalent or the more central it is in the relevant language constellation. The prevalence of a language is an indicator of the opportunities it has to offer for direct communication with other persons in the constellation. […] The communicative value or "Q-value" of a language is the product of its prevalence and its centrality.
>
> (de Swaan 2001: 32–33, italics in the original)

To increase the number of prospective learners of a regional language, i.e. for the regional language to increase its Q-value, it may be beneficial to create "new socioeconomic domains" which may include devising new terminology for those domains of use that necessitate it (Wayne Harbert 2011: 416). Harbert cites the example of Namibia brought forth by Pütz (1996), "where focus was given to the task of 'technicalizing' the lexicons of minority languages". He further suggests that to create new exclusive domains for the language, "new cultural institutions, such as language societies, can be established" (2011: 416). In turn, by means of a more positive identification with the language, speakers may envisage new social and economic dimensions. The creation of local employment in relation to the language could be a relevant consequence. On the one hand, linguists, or language service providers such as translators or interpreters, may be employed in the more technical aspects of lexicon expansion or analysis. On the other hand, local citizens may find opportunity to work in the production of pedagogical texts, "cultural tourism, in the production of literary, musical, theatrical and cinematic materials" (Harbert 2011: 418). The human capital, i.e. the overall economic development, as described by Chalmers and Danson (2006: 239 in Harbert 2011: 418) could be boosted, not only the linguistic and cultural capital of the region.

4. Current initiatives of social development and linguistic documentation

As mentioned in the previous section, the presence of resources such as societies, groups, and festivals dedicated to the regional language is a parameter to consider with respect to language planning in terms of methodological framework (Haarman 1990; Mühlhäusler 2003; Grenoble 2011), status, and prestige (Ruiz 1984; Pütz 1996; Harbert 2011; Sallabank 2011). Several activities of this type are present in Sicily, as described below. The list below is certainly not exhaustive; the initiatives included were chosen for their bottom-up approach that starts from the people, and because they are idiosyncratic of community demand for more activities in the regional language. Perhaps, the most iconic is the *Opera dei pupi siciliani*[13] 'Sicilian puppet theatre', a centenary tradition, and an art form protected by UNESCO. Puppeteers and craftsmen of the region work together to stage the knights' adventures at the time of the crusades. The tradition acquires linguistic importance because it exemplifies a public domain of use where Sicilian is still spoken and attracts crowds of children and adults alike. Other initiatives focusing mainly on land-revalorisation, but also on regional linguistic identity are *Timpaviva, The Farm Cultural Park*, and *Progetto Sicilia*.

13. https://www.comune.catania.it/la-citta/tradizioni/pupisiciliani/storia-dei-pupi-siciliani/

Timpaviva is a yearly festival dedicated to local music, arts, and comedy, organised by the *Associazione Culturale Barock*, a group of young people who voluntarily set out to "rediscover territorial, social, and environmental resources".[14] The festival has been running since 2006, set on what was an abandoned natural reserve, *La Timpa*, which has been reclaimed by the festival.

The Farm Cultural Park of Favara[15] was created in 2010 with the aim of reviving the old and almost dilapidated city centre of Favara, in the South-central coast of Sicily, by introducing organic farms and exhibitions. Locals work together to protect their history and identity, whilst generating jobs and revenue by salvaging old houses. The Park has obtained notable results, transforming the whole area around Favara into a new tourist attraction.

Progetto Sicilia[16] is an association for social development that came to life in 2012. Among its objectives, the association aims to revive ethics and regional awareness in Sicily, also by implementing a social currency and social income. The association is centred on the valorisation of the land's natural resources and products such as agriculture, viticulture and cotton production, and to discourage, among other things, the ongoing youth-diaspora in Sicily.

Worthy of mention are also initiatives[17] that are taking shape outside of Sicily's geographical borders but should nevertheless be considered part of the same peripheral community. These include a course on Sicilian Language and Culture at the University of Pennsylvania,[18] the Organisation *Arba Sicula*,[19] based in New York, which publishes a dedicated bi-annual journal bilingually in English and Sicilian, and numerous other online resources available to maintain and learn Sicilian.

Finally, there is *Cademia Siciliana*[20] 'Sicilian Academy', a non-profit organisation which constitutes mainly of students, researchers, and language teachers. Founded in 2016, *Cademia* sets out to document Sicilian in as much detail as possible through projects such as the *Progetto Mappatura* 'mapping project', aimed at mapping the characteristics of all Sicilian varieties. The transnational[21] Sicilian

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14. Translated by the author from Timpaviva's webpage http://timpaviva.blogspot.com/ www.Timpaviva.blogspot.it

15. http://www.farmculturalpark.com

16. http://progettosiciliagrano.blogspot.com/

17. such as business branding in the regional language.

18. https://www.sas.upenn.edu/lpscourses/courses/term/2017C/program/655/course/ITAL105601

19. http://arbasicula.org/

20. www.cademiasiciliana.org

21. Term used by Paul Rausch, founding member of the Cademia Siciliana, to define the nature of the community (personal communication).

community has found in *Cademia* a great venue to address questions, organise local projects and initiatives, and above all, express themselves in Sicilian. In fact, the organisation has been well received by the community, reaching 10,000 supporters for their activities in 2018. Among its activities, *Cademia* also teaches Sicilian to those who wish to learn how to speak to the Sicilian community worldwide and to second/third generation diaspora members wanting to learn the language to speak to their older relatives. Other points that may have contributed to the positive response from the public are the engaging spirit of their programme, and the attention dedicated to the technological and social-media spheres. In fact, the organisation has succeeded in having Sicilian included into the input options available for YouTube captions and Unicode and is working on a collective orthography with a participatory, bottom-up approach that involves the community and all the variants of the regional language.

Each of these social and linguistic movements focuses on the valorisation of natural resources, reviving Sicilian traditions, and the creation of events that respond to the local demand for community action towards regional identity. Following the recent interest by the regional government in questions of *regional identity*, e.g. the regional bill dated 15th May 2018, the format outlined in the next section may be a novelty for the application of language planning, and a response to the new demand for activities involving Sicilian from a pedagogical and social point of view, given the growing interest from both communities and local government. As outlined in the introduction, this format may also be of interest to other peripheral communities where movements and initiatives like the ones described above are already taking place.

5. Bringing Sicilian folktales back to life

This section describes the proposal for an interdisciplinary language strengthening project. Starting from a well-established written text belonging to Sicilian folk literary tradition, the aim is to create theatrical representations in order to widen the domains of language use and increase community involvement (Grinevald 2007). The corpus is a collection of *cunti* ('tales' or 'stories'), entirely written in Sicilian, resulting from the fieldwork conducted by the eclectic intellectual Giuseppe Pitrè in the mid-1800s. The title of the collection in Italian is *Canti popolari siciliani* 'Sicilian folktales' (1871).

The proposal consists of two parallel and interdependent domains, carried out by means of obstrusive and unobstrusive techniques (Sakel and Everett 2012). The first domain is interdisciplinary, while the other is purely linguistic, in the empirical sense of the term. This configuration is intended to maintain a scientifically solid

basis, while at the same time providing an attractive proposal to the community at large. The integrative nature resides in the collaboration with musicians, creative writers, dancers, actors, and local support by associations such as those described in the previous section. It will be important to create dialogues that allow the local language to stand out, to be the centre of attention, and to stimulate the audience to learn new linguistic items while the plot unfolds on stage. The second domain is the documentation of the linguistic material arisen from the modern theatrical adaptation. Phonetic and graphemic transcription, deployed for comparative examination of oral and written material starting from the time of collection of the *cunti*, can be used to produce archival data, aimed at diachronic investigation of language vitality.

The genre, settings, themes, and characters within the stories lend themselves only too well to theatrical representation. Titles such as *La grasta di lu basilicò* 'The basil plant', *Lu furasteri e lu Tratturi* 'The stranger and the host', *Li tri belli curuni mei* 'Those nice three crowns of mine', and *Bianca comu nivi russa comu focu* 'White as snow, red as fire', give an indication of the adventures that start from common, daily life settings such as the kitchen, the countryside or a castle, with love as a recurring theme. The audience can identify with these topics, since for many locals, Sicilian remains the language of home, the language of childhood, the language of intense feelings. The *cunti* may serve as extensive linguistic corpora containing information related to Sicilian toponymy, anthroponomy, fishery and cookery related terms, as well as utensils for crafts and agriculture. In this sense, the footnotes to the stories are a particularly precious source of information. Furthermore, the tales are a window into Sicily's folkloric heritage, with their Middle Eastern and Troubadour narratives. In the introduction, Pitrè opens with a linguistic essay containing a grammar of Sicilian, as well as comments on the different orthographic representations chosen during the transcription operated from the spoken versions uttered by village storytellers.[22] His work as a linguist can be valorised through theatre, given that plays and comedies in Sicilian are also part of the region's literary tradition.[23] Together with puppetry and folk-music, Sicilian theatre remains a lively domain in which Sicilian is valued as regional language by the community. Professional collaborators may contribute to direct the focus of the representations on the local language from their specific areas of expertise (dancers, linguists, musicians) and community members may be invited to participate in the initial phases of planning, (Landweer 1998). One specific way to attain civic participation can take

22. The role of the canta cunti, or storyteller, in Sicilian villages at the time, could also be an enriching field of enquiry.

23. Notably with Angelo Musco, who in 1903 founded the first *Compagnia Drammatica Dialettale Siciliana*, staging plays by authors such as Luigi Pirandello, Leonardo Sciascia, and Giovanni Verga.

place during text adaptation, via a brainstorming phase organised in *officine*, i.e. 'workshops' (Arrojo 1986) open to all members of the community.

In such workshops, the creation of the actual dialogues for the representations by the specialists could be refined by way of testing. Obscure Sicilian forms, e.g. *vinura*, plural of *vinu* ('wine') rather than the more common *vini*, or terms that may have fallen into disuse, such as *'nfurii*, currently replaced by the Italian *fodere* ('pillowcases'), could create ground for discussion between the community and the experts. Feedback regarding the present perception of Sicilian could be collected from the community, and interactions during the workshop would be conducted in the regional language, thus creating new situational settings, as suggested by Haarmann (1990: 114).

As for the theatrical representations, inserting surtitles or subtitles during the show, as well as other details such as costumes, may be included in the planning and considered, with themes such as responsible purchasing from local retailers. This practical community involvement generates revenue and strengthens the link between regional language and a financial dimension. Finally, a survey designed to obtain feedback from the public may also be distributed directly after the theatrical representations. Such activities are centred around creating a new realm of dialogue that focuses on the local language as a means of community growth.

6. Conclusions

The most prominent aspects of the above discussion are:

- a presentation of the current linguistic situation in Sicily.
- The existence of conditions in the community for regional language planning to be carried out.
- The language hierarchy market, and how language planning can come to terms with the notion of language as a commodity.
- The involvement of the community in language planning, both in their role as contributors and in terms of feedback.
- The sustainability of the format, which may be feasible in other peripheral communities.

The discussion provides ground for the application of language planning, with reference to ecology, status, and prestige, both in production and in reception (Haarmann 1990: 106). Combining effective planning with the presence of certain conditions in a peripheral linguistic market, such as demand and initiation of activities dedicated to regional identity, a peripheral language may increase its Q-value. Consequently, potential speakers may also be more motivated to learn the

language (de Swaan 2001), which in turn may find use in new domains, with more speakers and attention to competence. Collective growth is to be identified also with effective language planning. The idea of community strengthening in this proposal revolves around experts and community, providing not only a financial dimension to the regional language, but also a pleasant way for the community to foster and consolidate the transcendental value carried by regional identity. Such scenario may become symbolic of a bigger discussion, that of minority communities in general.

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CHAPTER 11

Teaching Piedmontese
A challenge?

Nicola Duberti and Mauro Tosco
University of Turin

Until 2015, Piedmontese, an endangered and contested language spoken in the homonymous region of northwest Italy, had never before been taught in a university context, at least in Italy. After discussing the complex (and still unsettled) juridical status of Piedmontese, the chapter traces the teaching history of this minority language in both schools and universities, and focuses in particular on a still ongoing project at the University of Turin. The chapter further addresses the special requirements of language courses for contested languages, and offers a few suggestions on the basis of the project's preliminary results.

1. Historical survey: A prototypical contested language

Piedmontese is usually dubbed in Italian an Italo-Romance "dialetto" (Avolio 2010). Even if Italian "dialetto" is a "false friend" and does not correspond to its English cognate,[1] "dialect" has often been used, and even by well-known scholars. Thus, Maiden and Parry titled their 1997 book *The dialects of Italy* and commented:

> The often used term 'Italian dialects' may create the false impression that the dialects are varieties of the standard Italian language. In fact, the Italian language represents the continuation of one of the dialects […] The other 'dialects of Italy' are 'sisters of' Italian. (Maiden and Parry 1997: 2)

The development of an Italian language in the sixteenth century led to a global restructuring of repertories (Grassi, Sobrero and Telmon 1997: 16–17) through which all the local languages – no matter how remote from Italian – acquired the status of subordinate varieties, i.e. "dialects."

Piedmontese faced such a destiny. However, since the eighteenth century Piedmontese (like a few other "dialects," e.g. Sardinian) has had its own written grammar (for Piedmontese: Pipino 1783) and has developed a well-established

1. Cf. the Introduction to the present volume.

https://doi.org/10.1075/wlp.8.11dub

form of regional koine which, without being "official," was used as a lingua franca in all the continental territories[2] of the States of Savoy, namely in the Principality of Piedmont, in the County of Nice, in the Duchy of Aosta, and to some extent also across the Alps in the Duchy of Savoy (Telmon 2001: 54). A few eighteenth-century intellectuals tried to establish Piedmontese as an autonomous language, distinct from Italian as much as Portuguese is distinct from Spanish and Dutch from German. The idea was clearly expressed by the historian Carlo Denina (Capello 1814 and Griva 1980; see also Cognasso 1969: 245):

> Sans prétendre donner ici une idée avantageuse de notre langage, je conviendrai avec M. l'abbé Charles Denina que si le dialecte Piémontais eût été cultivé du temps du premier duc Amédée VIII ou seulement d'Emmanuel Philibert, il serait devenu dans ce moment une langue illustre, au moins autant que le sont la Portugaise e l'Hollandaise, dont l'une est à l'Espagnole, l'autre à l'Allemande ce que la Piémontaise est à l'Italienne. (Capello 1814: ix–x)[3]

The House of Savoy, whose goal was to annex to their dominions as many Italian territories as possible, never approved nor supported these efforts. The ideas of Carlo Denina were overtly rejected and Denina himself was compelled to leave the Kingdom of Sardinia and take refuge in Prussia.

On the other hand Piedmontese, widely spoken in the mainland States of Savoy, was not only tolerated but even encouraged as a means to learn Italian (Regis 2012: 307). In the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, lexicographers like Sant'Albino were proud to declare that their aim was to lead readers to a better knowledge of the national (i.e., Italian) language:

> Tali sono in breve le basi sulle quali è fondata la compilazione di questo Dizionario, intorno al quale mi adoperai senza posa, e senza perdonarla a fatica, colla fiducia di far cosa non men grata che utile a' miei concittadini, e nell'intento di diffondere specialmente fra 'l popolo la cognizione della lingua patria.
>
> (Sant'Albino 1859: xii)[4]

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2. I.e., with the exclusion of Sardinia.

3. "Without pretending to give here too favorable a view of our language, I will agree with Abbot Mr. Charles Denina that if the Piedmontese dialect would have been cultivated since the time of the first duke, Amadeus the Eight, or even since Emmanuel Philibert, it would have become at these times an illustrious language, at least such as Portuguese and Dutch, which stand in comparison to Spanish and German exactly like Piedmontese in comparison to Italian" (translation by the chapter's authors).

4. "These are in brief the bases on which the compilation of this Dictionary is based and that I worked out without respite and never sparing my best efforts, with the trust to be doing a thing more useless than grateful to my fellow citizens and in the aim of spreading – specially among the common people – the knowledge of the national language (i.e. Italian)" (translation by the chapter's authors).

At that time, Piedmontese had a clearly Italian-oriented bias: unlike French, Italian was scarcely used, and its prestige was strictly bound to its scarcity.

Since then many things have changed. The roof "protection" of Italian has become more and more oppressive, while active speakers of Piedmontese have dramatically dropped in number in the second half of the twentieth century (Cerruti and Regis 2015: 62). Many scholars and language planners have theorised and observed an opposite ideological movement (a "swinging away of the pendulum;" Tosco 2012), this time not *towards* Italian but rather *away* from it (Regis 2012).

2. Teaching piedmontese: Experiences in primary schools

Though it has never been taught in universities as a language on its own, Piedmontese has a long tradition in educational contexts: Coluzzi (2007: 49) emphasises that since the end of the Seventies Piedmont has granted the strongest legal protection to its language among Italian (non autonomous) regions.[5] The first regional law for protecting and promoting Piedmontese in the schools dates from 1979. Eleven years after, in 1990, it was replaced by a new law (n. 26/90), through which a number of initiatives were deployed in order to organise courses in Piedmontese for both adults and children. In schools, the "Prima Mignin" project took place for the first time in the school year 2000–2001 under the aegis of the Region-funded *Ca dë Studi Piemontèis* ("House of Piedmontese Studies"). Within this project, a good number of introductory language courses in Piedmontese (mainly catering to primary schools, though in a few cases to kindergardens and intermediate schools) were launched; they reached a total number of 75 courses in the school year 2008–09; each course was ten hours long, for a total of 750 hours of teaching in that year). Some 22 teachers and 2,000 children were involved. Considering that the courses organised by the *Ca dë Studi Piemontèis* were only a part of the total number (many others being organised by different cultural clubs and organisations), the results were certainly very promising (Duberti 2010, 2012, 2013). Among the textbooks written within this project, one can mention Ferrero, Lupo and Lupo (2006) and Tosco, Rubat Borel and Bertolino (2006), both of which have been used – for different purposes – during the first university lectures given in the academic year 2015–2016 and whose results will be discussed in the following section.

Unfortunately, there are no Piedmontese courses in Piedmont's schools anymore – at least, not with the financial support of a regional law. In fact, there has

5. Italy is divided into 20 regions; five of them have autonomous status and varying degrees of freedom in several matters, among which culture and language.

not been any law for promoting and protecting the language since the last one (no. 11/2009) was overruled as unconstitutional by the Italian Constitutional Court (resolution no. 170/2010). As a consequence, the law was amended on October 18, 2016 with the unanimous vote of all the members of the Regional Assembly, making it acceptable to the central government and the Constitutional Court: Piedmont is now allowed to promote its "patrimonio linguistico" ("linguistic heritage") but without mentioning the Piedmontese language. Nevertheless, since then six years have passed without any new language courses in schools (and it is unclear whether such courses will be resumed in the future).

A few remaining classes still live on thanks to the good will and passion of many individual teachers, and in both primary and intermediate schools scattered in various towns and villages of Piedmont.[6] Nevertheless, they amount to no more than a drop in the ocean: it is with an eye to such a gloomy situation that we turn now to universities.

3. The first university experiences: 2015–2016 and 2016–2017

Maybe paradoxically against the backdrop of such a bleak panorama, for the first time in its history the University of Turin decided to open a course in the Piedmontese language during the academic year 2015–2016.

Technically, some teaching of Piedmontese at university level occurred abroad as early as the 1960s: in 1964 a young Gianrenzo Clivio (Turin 1942 – Toronto 2006), who was later to become a renowned Professor of Italian Linguistics at the University of Toronto, was entrusted with teaching Piedmontese at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. Since then, Piedmontese has been the subject of many university courses, but never by itself, neither at Brandeis nor in any other North American or European university – and still less in Italy, where the status of Piedmontese has often been seen as making it unfit for university lectures, at least as an academic subject. This does not mean that nobody has been studying Piedmontese in Italian universities: on the contrary, many scholars have done so very well, but always within classes in Romance philology (e.g., Giuliano Gasca Queirazza; Rome 1922 – Turin 2009) or Italian dialectology (e.g. Tullio Telmon, Professor Emeritus of Italian Dialectology at the University of Turin) or Piedmont's cultural and linguistic heritage (e. g. Alda Rossebastiano, formerly Professor of History of the Italian Language, University of Turin). It is only in Córdoba (Argentina) that for

6. To give just an example, in the schoolyear 2017–18, 42 children out of a total of 110 took a course in Piedmontese in the intermediate (junior high) school of Ròca de Baldi (Italian: Rocca de' Baldi).

the past ten years Piedmontese has been offered *per se*, albeit as an extracurricular subject, within the local Department of languages.[7]

The Turin course is therefore something fundamentally new: first of all, it is privately, externally funded, i.e., it was made possible by a private donation specifically targeted to the teaching of Piedmontese, and consists (as is standard practice at the University of Turin) of 36 hours of face-to-face teaching, and has so far always been repeated. The first two installments were entrusted to one of the co-authors of this chapter (Nicola Duberti), who was specially hired for the course and has no permanent position at the University of Turin.

The official denomination is *Laboratorio di piemontese* "Laboratory in Piedmontese." The name was chosen to quash any quarrel about the status of its object: pending the official recognition of Piedmontese by legislative bodies, Piedmontese is not labelled a 'language' nor a 'dialect.' Nor is the sociolinguistic status of Piedmontese part and parcel of the syllabus, which is instead devoted to teaching its orthography and basic structures only. "Laboratory" is the technical term used for learning activities concerning subjects (such as computer sciences, Italian style, Latin, modern foreign languages, etc.) where a good degree of continuous engagement and attendance on the part of the students is required. Unlike most academic lectures, laboratories, mostly attended by small number of students, foster a totally different kind of relationship both with fellow students and with the teacher.

At the laboratory, the course in Piedmontese has been organised as just another language course of a "major" language: the teacher had acquired a previous experience in teaching Piedmontese to children in primary schools; he is a native speaker of some peripheral south-western varieties of Piedmontese, in which he has written several books of poetry. The last piece of information means a lot: Piedmontese is seen as an established language in which many diatopic varieties co-exist. In fact, public opinion in Italy is often puzzled when the teaching of local languages is proposed, because, it is claimed, "every village has its own dialect" and there is no standard to be taught. For Piedmontese, which has boasted a regional literary koine for at least a few centuries, this is of course utterly false. The regional koine is based on the Turin variety, but it is of course unnecessary to be a native speaker from Turin in order to master and even teach it.

The regularly attending students were just 10 (5 males and 5 females) in 2015–2016 but their number increased in the following year to 16 (9 males and 7 females), and has steadily increased in the following years. The gender ratio seems to reflect the real situation of the language: in the more conservative south-western lowlands of Piedmont, for instance, it is easy to find teenagers actively speaking Piedmontese,

7. http://sitios.fl.unc.edu.ar/agenda/e/piamontes.

but almost all of them are boys from the countryside, to the point that Piedmontese could sooner or later become a "language of country boys."[8]

Not all the students were Italian citizens and Italian-language first language speakers. In the year 2015–2016 there were two foreign students (both from Spain), while in the following year there was only one foreigner (from Romania).

The percentage of students with a previous knowledge of Piedmontese declined, too: if in 2015–2016 60% already knew it before attending the laboratory, in 2016–2017 only 7 students (out of 16; i.e, 43%) already had any knowledge of the language. In the second year the laboratory was forced to become more and more a foreign language course: in other words, Piedmontese, that had been treated in the first year more as a regional contested language, has been taught since the second year as a fully-fledged established language.

In fact, the second year's lectures were organised as a "language and literature" course: more space was devoted to conversation and writing, while the dialectological subjects were strictly linked to the active practice of the language. As far as literature is concerned, a subject-related course was developed on the depiction of women in nineteenth and twentieth century literature.

The references offered to students in the two years reflect this difference: Telmon (2001); Brero and Bertodatti (1988); Tosco, Rubat Borel and Bertolino (2006); Duberti (2016) were the reference books for the 2015/2016 course, while for the 2016/2017 iteration two documents were added, both assembled *ad hoc:* first, a collection of dialogues (Duberti 2017), the very first since Clivio (1964), and, second, an anthology of poetry and literary prose concerning gender issues. Most of the texts were taken from Clivio and Pasero (2004) and from Brero (1983).

Even teaching methods changed. In the first year most lectures were offered in Italian and the audience was essentially passive. Many invited professors took part in lectures, and all of them were academics at the University of Turin. On the contrary, during the 2016–2017 course a real laboratory method prevailed: students were invited to hold conversations in Piedmontese since the very first lesson, while peer-teaching and group works rapidly became the prevailing ways to learn grammar rules and lexicon. The teacher spoke Piedmontese, even with students without any previous knowledge of the language. Videos and songs in Piedmontese were widely introduced in the lectures and students were invited to criticise and comment. In other words, Piedmontese was treated as a useful living language fit to express any possible content. The sociolinguistic status was deliberately left aside, while diatopic variation, on the other hand, was constantly addressed: some of the students who were already able to speak at least a little Piedmontese often knew only

8. Unfortunately, there are no scientific studies on this topic and it is not possible to provide any number. Researches are urgently needed.

a local peripheral variety. Therefore, they were invited to speak and write in their own dialect, offering to their fellow students an interesting sample of comparison with the standard koine and with other local dialects. Students who knew different Romance languages were asked to provide further possible terms of comparison.

4. Conclusion: Why and how to study Piedmontese in a university context?

The students in both courses were invited to express their opinions and their feelings about their experience, using whatever language they preferred. All of them chose to do so in Piedmontese.

It comes as no surprise that the approval rating rose in the second year, since the laboratory of 2016–2017 was organised taking into account the suggestions and advice offered by the previous year's students. Many of these suggestions were unexpected: for example, the students felt the lack of a "true" language course, in which it would have been possible to learn more than basic Piedmontese. They also wanted to know more about Piedmontese history, literature, tradition, music, dances, and so on. Students wanted a completely new project, since all the past experiences of university courses concerning local languages had a dialectological/linguistic content (Bidese 2011). The 2016–2017 laboratory offered students exactly what their predecessors had asked for: and therefore it succeeded.

There is one more fact to take into consideration: the very first lecture of the 2016–2017 laboratory was delivered by Albina Malerba, director of the *Ca dë Studi Piemontèis*. During her lesson she offered the students a warmly encouraging speech addressing the basic question: why study and learn a regional language like Piedmontese? The answer is that there are many things to do with it. There is a vast literature to catalog and analyze through philology, dialectology and literary theory. There is rich written and oral material to collect and study for historians and anthropologists. And there is a rich treasure to unearth through linguistic research and fieldwork. For all these purposes it is important and useful to know Piedmontese, to speak it at least to some extent, and to read its literature. Her speech achieved its goal: during the whole course, students were enthusiastic and deeply motivated.

Finally: can we draw any general conclusions? Certainly, the key for the successful teaching of a contested language is not the denial of its sociolinguistic status: one can simply *pretend* it is a full-fledged, established language. In a kind of "Pascal's wager," here the stake is not the existence of God but the status of a language. The teacher and the students alike learn and act on the assumption that Piedmontese is an established language. The students start behaving in the classroom as if the

contested language is simply a language: and through this acting they learn, and they also start loving the language they are learning, and have fun with it.

And then: is to have fun a problem? To paraphrase the Italian writer Gianni Rodari: why should a university student get bored learning the same contested language he or she can learn and at the same time have fun?[9]

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9. Gianni Rodari's (1920–1980) original line reads: "Vale la pena che un bambino impari piangendo quello che può imparare ridendo?" ("Why should a child learn crying what he can learn laughing?") (translation by the chapter's authors).

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CHAPTER 12

Publishing a grammar and literature anthology of a contested language

An experience of crowdfunding

Andrea Francesco Daniele Di Stefano
Independent researcher

The present essay reports the experience of applying a web-based system of fundraising such as crowdfunding to publish a textbook for a local language (the variety of Piedmontese spoken in Biella and its neighbourhood). Piedmontese is classified as an endangered language whose number of speakers is steadily decreasing. Conversely, the mean age of speakers is increasing. Crowdfunding was chosen as a fundraising system with the aim of supporting the publication of a Piedmontese grammar and anthology. The campaign was launched on the crowdfunding platform *Produzioni dal Basso* on 2 September and terminated on 31 December 2015. The appeal was posted at weekly intervals on the social network Facebook starting from the day of the campaign launch. Pages specific for users with interest in Piedmontese were chosen for spreading the news. The appeal was spread also via private messages whenever possible. Meanwhile, the news was also published several times in dedicated articles by newspapers. The positive feedback by the supporters, who received copies of the book in return for contributions of a certain size, ensured the actual publication of the grammar in December 2017. In conclusion, an up-to-date system, such as that offered by the online crowdfunding platform, combined with the possibility of spreading the appeal through social networks, gained an unexpected positive feedback from the public and was able to attract the interest of a number of potential readers of the proposed text book.

1. Preamble

1.1 Piedmontese

Piedmontese is a Romance language native to and spoken primarily in Piedmont. It is also spoken outside Europe, e.g. in Argentina and Brazil (Parry 1997), the destination countries of migration flows moving out of Piedmont in the previous centuries.

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At present, no national Italian law safeguards Piedmontese in Piedmont though it is internationally acknowledged as an endangered language (UNESCO 2003; Salminen 2007). First of all, the lack of transgenerational transmission is the major problem which led Piedmontese to the status of an endangered language (Salminen 2007; Miola 2012). In addition, the lack of any adequate legislative safeguard made the survival conditions of the language more problematic. In the period from 1999 to 2009, a regional law acknowledged Piedmontese as a regional language in Piedmont, together with the protected minority languages French, Provençal, Francoprovençal and Töitschu, also spoken in Piedmont. While in force, the regional law had allowed the implementation of teaching programmes in the public schools, whereas current educational initiatives concerning Piedmontese do not receive any regular institutional support since the part of the law mentioning Piedmontese among the other regional languages to be safeguarded was repealed in 2009 by the Italian Corte Costituzionale (Ricorso nr. 38 2009, Sentenza nr. 170 2010). In January 2017, Piedmont approved a new regional law which envisages some protection for the language in the region.

1.1.1 *Piedmontese spoken varieties and literature*

Piedmontese has several spoken varieties, among which Biellese extends through the area of Biella adjacent to Canavese to the west, to Vercellese to the south and to Valsesiano to the east and north-east (Parry 1997). Piedmontese has also been written over the centuries and its first evidence dates back to the Middle Ages (Brero 1981; Clivio 1976; Clivio 2002; Gasca Queirazza 2003; Pasero 2000). A literature in Piedmontese flourished in particular between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, while the various political entities existing in Piedmont until the eighteenth century were gradually uniting under one rule. Indeed, in 1783, the first Piedmontese grammar was published by a royal physician who endeavoured to teach the French princess Marie Clotilde, spouse of Charles Emmanuel, prince of Piedmont, to speak Piedmontese. The foreign princess was the younger sister of Louis XVI of France. In 1796, upon the accession of her husband to the throne, Marie Clotilde became the Queen of Sardinia. The physician's manual was also accompanied by one of the very early Piedmontese dictionaries and by a literature anthology. The variety of Piedmontese which has been used in the literature over the centuries is the so called Turinese-based literary koine. The literary koine evolved from the late seventeenth century and grew in prestige, accompanying that of the capital chosen by the House of Savoy, and underwent a gradual standardisation through literary, grammatical and lexicographical publications up to first half of the twentieth century (Parry 1997). The peripheral varieties of the Piedmont provinces have generally survived as purely oral dialects and started to be written only in the

twentieth century. The Biellese variety emerged in written form primarily in the twentieth century though a few texts dating from the previous century were also available (Buratti 1984; Buratti 1990). Literary production in Biellese comprises several dozen writers including eminent poets and, less frequently, novelists. Some of these writers, such as Tavo Burat, Jaco Calé and Nelo dij Casaj are among the most notable representatives of serious literature in the twentieth century (Brero 1981; Pasero 2000). They wrote, not only in Biellese, but also in the literary koine in their copious production. The increasing interest in writing in Biellese led to the publication in 2000 of a first grammar manual (Ël Sol ëd j'Alp 2000) which had the merit of establishing the orthographic rules for Biellese according to the Pacòt-Viglongo orthography (vide infra).

1.1.2 *Number of speakers*

Published data show that the number of Piedmontese speakers is decreasing steadily and that, conversely, the mean age of speakers is increasing (UNESCO 2003; Salminen 2007; Miola 2012, Allasino 2007, Berruto 2006). In 2005–2006, the overall proportion of the regional population speaking Piedmontese as first local language was 76.6% (Allasino 2007). If the Turinese metropolitan area was excluded from the calculation, the percentage was 84.4% (Allasino 2007). In the overall region, the percentage was 85% if the analysis included also the speakers who had just some knowledge in Piedmontese, but did not have it as first local language (Allasino 2007). Active competence accounted for more than 50% of the sample, while 31% had passive competence (Allasino 2007).

Based upon the results of the previous national ISTAT survey dated 2005, the researchers (Allasino 2007) estimated the proportion of adults in Piedmont endowed with active or passive competence in Piedmontese. Overall, they estimated at the time of the survey that there were two million adults with active competence and 1,140,000 adults with passive competence.

With the exclusion of the metropolitan area, the active competence in Piedmontese had a frequency of 70% in the group aged seventy or over (Allasino 2007). However, one third of the young aged below thirty still possessed an active competence in Piedmontese. The distribution of use frequency by age groups showed that almost one third of the elderly aged seventy or over always spoke in Piedmontese (Allasino 2007). If the group aged below thirty was considered, about 60% of the sample spoke in Piedmontese only occasionally (Allasino 2007).

1.2 Adult classes[1]

While the centripetal force of the royal capital, Turin, and of the ruling house of Savoy have been declining since the end of 1800 and while Piedmontese vitality is progressively diminishing in the absence of an effective institutional safeguard, the fragmentation of the local dialects and the absence of any scholastic transmission not only of a Piedmontese grammar but also of the literature have prevailed. With the purpose of bridging this chasm at a local level, adult literacy evening classes have been held since 2011 by courtesy of the municipality of Cossato with the aim of teaching the speakers orthography, grammar and literature. Cossato is 11.6 kilometres east of Biella and has a population of about 14,800, being the second town in order of size and importance in the Province of Biella. The adult classes were aimed at giving the speakers a knowledge of the written form of their language, i.e. the Biellese variety, and how it is grammatically structured. Secondarily, the classes gradually introduced the participants to the literary koine and always compared it with the local variety. The classes were oriented toward adults able to speak Piedmontese, although people with passive competence in the language also took part in the classes. The participants were literate in Italian, but did not have any knowledge of Piedmontese grammar or literature at the beginning of the classes.

1.3 The book project

The educational material prepared for the adult classes over the years constituted the core of the textbook whose publication was financed through crowdfunding. The manual thus aimed at offering a wider audience a reference text together with literary material which currently has limited dissemination. Consistent with the reference grammar by Milo Bre (Brero 1987) and with the predecessor grammar of Biellese (Ël Sol ëd j'Alp 2000), both entirely written in Piedmontese, *Leĝe e scrive 'l Piemontèis* is fully in the Piedmontese of Biella (Di Stefano 2017). This choice was also made because the classes in Cossato were held in Piedmontese and the material for the classes had also been originally written in Piedmontese. Furthermore, readers able to speak Piedmontese who are starting to learn writing and reading, will benefit from a text fully written in the language. Readers who approach the book without any prior knowledge will be guided in the understanding of the text by the enclosed glossary.

Five main sections are included in the book: spelling and pronunciation, morphology with some hints of syntax, written exercises, an anthology and a Piedmontese-Italian dictionary for the words used in the text and an Italian-Piedmontese dictionary for the written exercises.

1. Cf. also Duberti and Tosco's contribution about the whole issue of Piedmontese in schools.

Leĝe e scrive 'l Piemontèis (Di Stefano 2017) strictly adheres to the orthographic rules defined in 1930 by the poet Pinin Pacòt (Pacotto 1967, Rossebastiano et al. 2011), who was also president of the Brandé circle grouping most Piedmontese writers during the twentieth century. The codification of the so called modern or Pacòt-Viglongo orthography took place after the editor, Andrea Viglongo, met Pacòt and charged him with the task of codifying a unique orthography for Piedmontese (cf. Miola, this volume, for a discussion of the orthography of Piedmontese) (Pacotto 1967). The enterprising Viglongo was planning to publish many Piedmontese masterpieces in a unified orthography (Rossebastiano et al. 2011). Indeed, Pacòt simply reaffirmed the use of an orthography previously used by the major authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Rossebastiano et al. 2011). The Pacòt-Viglongo orthography, initially adopted for the literary koine, was later extended to the local varieties, which differ phonologically. At that point, the philologist Gianrenzo Clivio, great activist for the cause of Piedmontese and co-founder of the *Ca dë Studi Piemontèis*, the Centre for Piedmontese Studies, suggested the addition of some special characters in the preface to the 1969 edition of Brero's grammar (Brero 1987, Rossebastiano et al. 2011). One of these special characters, i.e. < Ĝ >, has been regularly applied to writing Biellese. <Ĝ> represents the voiced palatoalveolar fricative (IPA: ʒ), present in words such as *ruĝo* ('ryʒu), *ĝlà* ('ʒla), *onĝe* ('uŋʒi) or *leĝe* ('lɛʒi), which mean rust, frozen, to grease and to read, respectively. Clivio also suggested the use of two digraphs which are not used in koine, but regularly applied to writing Biellese: <TS> and <SC> representing the voiceless alveolar affricate (IPA: t͡s) and the voiceless palatoalveolar fricative (IPA: ʃ), in addition to the digraph <GL> representing the lateral palatal approximant (IPA: ʎ), which is also missing in koine, but present in Italian. The three digraphs are present in Biellese words like *tsucre* ('tsykre), *scëndre* ('ʃəndre) e *seugli* ('sœʎi), which mean sugar, ash and smooth, respectively.

The section on morphology and syntax is enriched with many illustrative examples that follow the pedagogic principle that only direct application allows for clarification and consolidation of the concepts transmitted.

The self-teaching readers will be able to test their learning by means of written translation exercises from Italian to Biellese. The translation key enclosed in the book will allow self-teaching readers to verify their translation exercises. Since pronunciation and lexicon may locally vary in the Province, the translations proposed in the key for each exercise present more than one possible version.

The anthology section with its outline of literary history moves backwards in time. According to the handbook's fundamental concept of first illustrating the local variety then extending to the literary koine, the peculiar backward structure of the anthology aims at introducing the reader to twentieth-century texts in Biellese at the beginning and then gradually moving backwards through the centuries to the richer literature in literary koine. Literary texts are annotated in order to familiarise

the reader from Biella with the language used by the authors and with the various cultural aspects of Piedmont throughout the centuries. Whenever possible, a parallel translation of the texts into Biellese is provided.

2. Fund raising for the grammar publication

2.1 Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding was chosen as a fundraising system with the aim of supporting the issue of *Leĝe e scrive 'l Piemontèis* (Di Stefano 2017). Crowdfunding is a method of collecting many relatively small contributions by means of an online funding platform to finance or capitalize a relatively large enterprise.

Schwienbacher and Larralde (Schwienbacher 2012) define crowdfunding as an open call, essentially through the internet, for the provision of financial resources by a group of individuals instead of professional parties either in the form of donation or in exchange for some form of reward in order to support initiatives for specific purposes (Schwienbacher 2012; Gierczak 2016; Belleflamme 2014).

Crowdfunding removes barriers to the access and sharing of capital, usually involving a potentially enormous number of supporters who are not finance or technology experts (Guerzoni 2016).

The current world economic crisis has compelled many countries to reduce government spending, thus forcing the culture sector to search for alternative funding solutions. Therefore, crowdfunding, which represents a valid alternative, has developed remarkably in recent years. Italy is one of the countries suffering the most from the global economic crisis and one that presents most critical levels of access to credit. Indeed, Italy shows a strong dynamism in the crowdfunding sector: as of July 2019, there were 159 active crowdfunding platforms (https://www.crowd-funding.cloud/it/piattaforme-di-crowdfunding-italiane-attive-143.asp?PageNo=9/), against 52 in May 2014 and just 16 in November 2012 (Guerzoni 2016). Many crowdfunded projects tried to raise small amounts of capital, often under $1,000, to initiate a particular one-time project. In these cases, capital is often provided by friends and family (Mollick 2014).

Generally, crowdfunding occurs according to one of three different models: all-or-nothing, donation or keep-it-all. The project owner chooses one of the three modalities when configuring the campaign. In the modality all-or-nothing, the campaign owner sets a budget, a deadline and rewards, if any, but if the project does not reach its stated funding goal within the scheduled deadline, neither the funder nor the platform earn anything. This modality is indicated for projects strictly needing the established budget. In the donation modality, the campaigner schedules a deadline and collects the funds, but does not set either ceiling budgets or rewards

for supporters. This modality better fits social or personal projects. In the keep-it-all mode, the project owner defines the budget, schedules the deadline and offers the rewards. At the end of the campaign, the project owners may keep all the funds they raise even if the ceiling budget is not reached.

> What is commonly called reward-based crowdfunding is the most prevalent. In this approach supporters receive a reward for backing a project (Mollick 2014). Reward-based crowdfunding allows the supporters access to the products produced by funded projects at an early date, at a better price or with some other special benefits. (Mollick 2014)

2.2 The campaign launch

The Italian platform *Produzioni dal Basso* was founded in 2005 by a team of technicians who developed a database for online funding. *Produzioni Dal Basso* was the very first crowdfunding platform in Italy and among the first in Europe (D'Eredita 2013).

Produzioni dal Basso is open to everybody and anyone can submit their project or idea on the platform. Projects to be posted on the platform do not need any formal approval from the platform administrators. Everyone's idea can be submitted straight away and autonomously.

The reward-based keep-it-all model was chosen for the *Leĝe e scrive 'l Piemontèis* campaign, which was launched on 2 September and terminated on 31 December 2015.

The tasks of configuring the campaign, disseminating the appeal and informing the supporters reside with each project owner. The platform provides a home page for the appeal. What is presented on the campaign home page may be crucial to the success of the campaign (Kaplan 2013). The text should describe the project in an attractive and convincing way that is easily understood by a lay audience and the page should also include photos and, possibly, videos. It should be updated periodically to ensure that the campaign remains dynamic and compelling (Kaplan 2013). The *Leĝe e scrive 'l Piemontèis* campaign home page in *Produzioni dal Basso* contained a presentation of the book, including a description of rationale, aims and contents (https://www.produzionidalbasso.com/project/gramatica-d-lengua-piemonteisa-ant-la-varianta-d-biela/). The campaign home page contains instructions for the potential supporter on how to give their contribution and how to be entitled to their reward.

In the *Leĝe e scrive 'l Piemontèis* crowdfunding, the supporters were totally free to choose the amount of their contribution and were entitled to be mentioned and acknowledged in the book (tabula gratulatoria). The supporters who contributed at least 14€ or multiples thereof were entitled to be rewarded with one or more copies of the grammar. The amount of 14€ was defined taking into account a reduced price for each handbook volume, the shipping costs and the 5% platform charge.

2.3 The campaign management

After a campaign is actually launched, giving visibility to the announcement is up to the project owner. The announcement of the crowdfunding was posted repeatedly on the social network Facebook pages linking to the campaign home page in the platform.

The announcement posted on the social network was written in Italian. Announcements were made from the day of the campaign launch at weekly intervals. Pages specific for users with interest in Piedmontese were chosen for spreading the news periodically. To a lesser extent, the announcements were also posted elsewhere on the web and other networks were also used.

Meanwhile, the news of the grammar crowdfunding was also published several times by local or national newspapers (Balocco 2015; Fossati 2015; Giussani 2015; Formagnana 2015).

The appeal was also spread via private messages, whenever possible, in Italian, Biellese, Piedmontese, English or Catalan, according to the specific addressee. The message in English read as follows: "May I invite you to take part in my crowdfunding? Last week, I started a crowdfunding which aims at sponsoring the publication of the book I've been working at for years, i.e. my grammar of Piedmontese. I reluctantly started a crowdfunding since I am averse to pleading with people for money. If you decide to help me here below is the link to support my project. Donations are totally free. All the supporters will be mentioned and acknowledged in the book. The supporters who contribute at least 14€ will receive one copy of the book at home. I beg for pardon if I am bothering you."

Whenever someone showed interest in the project and wished to contribute, additional explanations were often given about the use of the platform. Whoever was interested in supporting the grammar campaign could simply press the button "contribute" on the campaign home page. After pressing the "contribute" button, the supporter had just to select the contribution amount and/or a reward and then to register in the crowdfunding platform. For registration, the supporters needed an email account. At the time of the grammar campaign, *Produzioni dal Basso* used only PayPal as payment method. However, the supporters who wanted to contribute in other ways or after the campaign expired in the platform had the possibility to contribute outside the platform.

2.4 The campaign conclusion

The positive feedback of the supporters ensured the possibility of publishing *Leĝe e scrive 'l Piemontèis* in December 2017 (Di Stefano 2017). Indeed, the funds collected through the crowdfunding campaign covered about half of the printing costs, while artworks were financed by a separate budget. The remaining project costs were covered by one single supporter.

Altogether, 155 contributions were collected to fund the project. Interestingly, people from Biella or its neighbourhood numbered 39.36%, i.e. 61 out of 155 supporters. Supporters from other Piedmontese areas were 33 out of 155 (21.29%), while the remaining supporters (61 out of 155 corresponding to 39.36%) contributed to the project from outside Piedmont. Supporters from Biella and from outside Piedmont took part in the campaign at the same frequency, but the frequency of all Piedmontese backers was 60.65% vs. that of non-Piedmontese, i.e. 39.36%.

According to the literature, the success of a project depends on the nature of the project itself: projects of high quality are easily identifiable to supporters. Regardless of such speculation, the campaign for *Leĝe e scrive 'l Piemontèis* was successful inasmuch as the collected amount was higher than the budget initially set. The campaign's success showed also that the supporters judged the project positively and agreed with it in principle.

Mollick's analysis (2014) showed a direct proportionality between the social network size of the project's owner and the likelihood of the success of a project. Recently, also Guerzoni et al. (Guerzoni 2016) found that supporters of crowdfunding campaigns launched in Italy are likely to be relatives, friends and acquaintances of the project's owner and usually they are connected by social networks and located in the same geographical area.

Furthermore, the social network of campaigners is the initial source of significant funding for many projects (Agrawal 2011). Nevertheless, the campaign for *Leĝe e scrive 'l Piemontèis* showed that not all the supporters were friends or acquaintances of the project's owner at the time of the crowdfunding and a proportion of the supporters were informed about the campaign via the social network independently from a direct connection with the author.

3. Conclusion

Online crowdfunding, combined with the possibility of spreading news through social networks and web pages, gained an unexpectedly positive feedback from the public and was able to attract the interest of a number of potential readers.

On the basis of the results of the present experience (among many others), online crowdfunding may be recommended as an appropriate and successful way to safeguard, develop and revitalise any contested language. Indeed, various cultural, artistic or scientific projects concerning contested languages may be put into effect taking advantage of online crowdfunding campaigns launched on social networks.

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CHAPTER 13

Which Sardinian for education?

The chance of CLIL-based laboratories: A case study

Federico Gobbo and Laura Vardeu
University of Amsterdam / Independent researcher

According to the UNESCO Atlas, Sardinian is an endangered language, and the debate about its promotion in Sardinia is lively and passionate (Moseley 2010). In fact, over the past two generations, the language vitality and vigour of the *limba* (in Sardinian: language) have been drastically reduced. Nowadays, youngsters tend to abandon the limba when the literacy process towards Italian starts in school. The OCSE-PISA 2012 reports that students in Sardinia are among the lowest in literacy within the Italian state: Bolognesi and Heeringa (2005) argue that youngsters are losing Sardinian without mastering the Italian language. In order to reverse this language shift, a common written standard, the Limba Sarda Comuna (LSC) was made official by the local government in 2006. However, the LSC is still contested: "plastic language", "Frankenstein monster idiom" are some of the epithets cast against it by the local press. In this contribution, we show a successful pilot experiment of a concrete application of the *limba* at school, that in our opinion could be easily applied on a wider scale in other parts of Sardinia. In fact, in the academic year 2014–15, three classes in a middle school of Orosei (Nuoro) took part in a laboratory where the *limba* was used both orally (local variety) and in written form (LSC, for the didactic material) following the so-called CLIL approach. Students learned Sardinian history in a Mediterranean and European perspective, using the LSC in reading and writing. No participant – L2 speakers included – rejected the LSC for being "artificial", even though the local variety is approximately 85% similar to the LSC, according to Bolognesi (2007). This pilot experiment shows that a concrete application of the LSC in schools is possible and desirable. A discussion on how to expand this pilot experiment in different settings will be provided.

1. Introduction

Sardinian is an endangered language (ISO-639 identifier: srd) mainly spoken on the island of Sardinia, in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, belonging to the Romance group (Eberhard et al. 2020, Moseley 2010). Politically, Sardinia is a

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Special Administrative Region of Italy. The sociolinguistic profile of Sardinia has changed radically in the last two generations: from a condition of stable diglossia (*à la* Ferguson 1959), where Sardinian in the past was normally used for informal, non-written contexts and in-group communication while Italian was reserved only for formal, written communication, Sardinian is now at risk of disappearing within one or two generations. This is particularly evident in cities and larger towns in Sardinia, where Italian is used in informal settings too. In other words, Italian challenges Sardinian as the domains of use traditionally reserved to the local language are no longer the prerogative of Sardinian only. Sardinian often survives in speech only in code-switching and code-mixing with Italian. This condition is called "dilalia" by Berruto (1993) and in the long run it threatens the very existence of the L-code, i.e. the language used in "lower" social contexts.

In language revitalisation programmes, youngsters are a group of special interest as they are tomorrow's parents: if tomorrow's parents will not use Sardinian with their future children, the intergenerational language transmission chain will be interrupted and therefore it will very difficult to guarantee that Sardinian will survive, as Fishman (1991) already pointed out. Thus, the role of the middle school in raising linguistic awareness should not be underestimated. This chapter aims to describe a research project on the use of Sardinian in the context of a middle school and its possible applications in other contexts in the island. The use of the Sardinian language in primary, middle and secondary schools is a topic of lively debate throughout the island and it is often proposed by Sardinian politicians and intellectuals to counter the language shift towards Italian. However, as far as the authors know, it seems that aside from generic appeals to bilingual and bicultural education, concrete experiences in the classroom where Sardinian is not only the topic in the class – addressed in Italian – but also the active language of instruction, are still lacking. In fact, the opportunity for bilingual and bicultural education concerns not only the regional language itself, but also has a stronger impact, if we take into account pedagogic and social implications: the territory and the cultural and linguistic background of learners is crucial in order to guarantee academic success.

Unfortunately, the OCSE-PISA 2012 report has made it clear that in the Italian context schools in Sardinia have a high dropout rate and very low literacy scores: many school children experience difficulties in reading and understanding even very simple texts (INVALSI 2012). Among the factors that can explain this situation, the current Italian-Sardinian situation of dilalia can play a role in speakers' linguistic uncertainty, as they are hesitant about the boundaries between the two languages, especially on a lexical level (Bolognesi and Heeringa 2005: 10). This linguistic uncertainty can impact both literacy in Italian and oral proficiency in Sardinian: younger generations are losing Sardinian without mastering Italian correctly (Cappai Cadeddu and Bolognesi 2002: 11).

We argue that the revitalisation of Sardinian can also bring benefits to proficiency in Italian among the younger generation, if Sardinian is used as a language of instruction alongside Italian. Even if Sardinia's status as a Special Administrative Region permits it to have laboratories of Sardinian at school, up to the time of writing (September 2017) there is still no comprehensive and effective plan to realise language revitalisation programmes – one that takes into account other historical minorities present in the Region, such as Catalan in Alghero and Ligurian in Carloforte and Calasetta. Initiatives left to single individuals and small groups often lack documentation, thus we have neither quantitative nor qualitative data or analyses for comparison. A notable exception is the case study of Pinna Catte (1997), but this is over twenty years old. Our case study in the classroom is only a pilot, as it is limited in time and space. However, we are confident that it can be inspiring for larger and deeper case studies in the near future.

2. The standardisation of Sardinian and its impact in education

The debate over the use of Sardinian in schools is linked to the debate around language standardisation. In fact, the use of a regional or minority language as the medium for instruction implies that there is some sort of agreement in the written variety. In general, teachers – and scholars as well – agree that oral communication should be done in the local variety that learners find familiar; on the other hand, it should also be said that, even if Sardinian shows a high degree of variation, there is a substantial homogeneity in the language, especially at the levels of morphology and syntax, once we exclude Gallurese (ISO-639 identifier: sdn) and Sassarese (ISO-639 identifier: sdc), considered as independent languages by the majority of specialists, with different identifiers in *Ethnologue* (Eberhard et al. 2020).

There is no general agreement on the description of the internal varieties of Sardinian by specialists: each analysis implies a certain degree of abstraction and it has immediate consequences in the language policy and planning approach to be taken. Lőrinczi (2001) already noticed that several classifications underline some linguistic boundaries while downplaying the role of others; in particular, the boundaries between the traditionally defined two macrovarieties of Campidanese (ISO-639: sro) and Lugodorese (ISO-639: src) Sardinian cannot be traced with confidence in the center of the island, so the whole distinction between these two macrovarieties should be problematised. What is relevant in our discourse is the fact that this uncertainty reflects on the teachers who want to use Sardinian at school: the temptation is somehow to transcribe the local variety, without a special attention to the metalinguistic aspects and the consequences of that choice. The study by Iannàccaro and Dell'Aquila (2010) of the spontaneous writing systems

of Sardinian shows that a normative orthography should be adopted in order to represent and defend the vitality of local varieties. We argue that a shared orthography widely used could strengthen the sense of belonging of Sardinian speakers across the varieties of the local dialects. In particular, teachers and students who used Sardinian as a language of instruction could play an active role in this process.

The first attempt to have a Sardinian standard norm officially recognised was done in 2001, when the Region proposed the *Limba Sarda Unificada* (LSU), Unified Sardinian Language. The LSU was a complete standard, mainly based on the Lugodorese varieties, but was rejected by speakers of other varieties, who could not identify with it. In particular, the language planning was accused of being too "purist", according to Lugodorese the special status of the purest Sardinian, especially in the lexicon. This failure led to a revised plan whose main result was the *Limba Sarda Comuna* (LSC), Common Sardinian Language, adopted in April 2006 by the Region as an orthographic norm for the documents produced by the Region itself. The LSC is a transitional norm, that can be modified in the future according to the needs that emerge (Regione Sardegna 2006). After its launch, the LSC has been adopted by other agents such as publishing houses, web site administrators, and so forth. It should be emphasised that the LSC lets speakers be free in using the words of their own local varieties: for example, "to watch" in Sardinian can be *abbaidare, apompiare* and *castiare*. What should be respected is the rules of transcription defined in the LSC. For instance, the Sardinian word for "cat" is written *gatu* in LSC, and it can be pronounced ['gatu], ['ɣatu] ['batu] and ['atu] according to the different local varieties. In some cases, distinct language traits were adopted. For example, the very name of Sardinian in the language is *limba*: this word is quite different from *lingua*, which does exist in some varieties, but it has the disadvantage of being identical to Italian.

Unfortunately, just after its publication, the LSC was attacked in the regional newspaper *La Nuova Sardegna* and others as a "false" variety: "Frankenstein monster", "useless Esperanto", "a deception against the Sardinian people", "a plastic language", "a bureaucratic and artificial language" were some of the epithets casted against the legitimisation of the LSC. All these are false arguments. In fact, Bolognesi (2007) measured the Levenshtein distance of 77 varieties of Sardinian through a corpus-based analysis of the lexicon, showing that the LSC is a sub-standard variety of Mesania, a variety that is a natural point of encounter between the different varieties. However, even now graphisation is still considered not respectful enough of the varieties in the southern part of the island: in particular, the most contested decision addressed the exclusion of the flag character <x>, which is considered representative of the Campidanese varieties. In order to overcome this problem, Bolognesi proposed a variety of LSC called GSC. So far, no modification of the LSC has been implemented on an official level (at the time of writing: September 2017).

Moreover, in the meantime, other intellectuals have adopted different orthographies: for instance, Mario Puddu uses the *Limba de Mesania* in the laboratories of Sardinian at the University of Cagliari; a writing system in which he published a normative grammar of Sardinian (Puddu 2008). In sum, there are three positions: first, some people want to adopt the LSC as it is; second, others want to have a modified version of the LSC, in order to be more acceptable to the southern part of the island; finally, a third group rejects the LSC and chooses to use other orthographic norms. This last position is not held by a coherent group, but covers a collection of different proposals, quite often used only by the proponent. Unfortunately, it is worth noting that, ten years after its publication, we have little understanding of how the LSC entered Sardinian society, outside its official use, as no surveys were conducted, at least to the authors' knowledge.

We argue that the LSC is the strongest candidate to be the orthographic norm of Sardinian. An important test is the acceptance of the LSC by the younger generation, which is a group of special interest for the reasons given in the introduction. For that reason, we adopted the LSC as it is, i.e. without any adaptation, in our case study.

3. The setting of the case study

The project *Cherimus su sardu in iscola* was realised in the school year 2014–2015 in three different classes in the G. A. Muggianu middle school in Orosei. Orosei is a small town (approx. 7,000 inhabitants) in the province of Nuoro, on the north-east coast of Sardinia. The local variety of Sardinian in Orosei has Nuoro as the main reference. According to our participant's observation, there is still a good level of intergenerational transmission. In that middle school there were no activity concerning Sardinian in any sense before our project. We had in mind two main research questions in proposing the project.

First, we wanted to test a CLIL-based methodology applied to Sardinian. Is it feasible to have a CLIL-based classroom in Sardinian? The term CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning, see Coyle et al. 2010) was introduced by David Marsh and Anne Maljers in 1994 in reference to foreign language learning, following the motto "the goal is language using as well as language learning". In fact, in using the foreign language as the language of instruction for a given content, students learn the language in context and at the same time they improve their competence in the language. In our case study, the setting is non-standard, as the language is not foreign but contested. We prepared a laboratory on Sardinian culture and history along the periods of the normal curriculum taught in Italian: the idea was to offer a different perspective on historical events – from a Sardinian perspective. We take

as a standpoint that the languages of instruction are never neutral: for example, it is not the same to teach the history of the European continent in English, Italian, or Russian, as the perspectives are different. In particular, the narrative of some specific events concerning Sardinia is different if we use Italian or Sardinian. It is important to underline that we do not see these two perspectives in conflict but as complementary: in other words, Sardinia is often regarded as peripheral to the history of Italy, so a laboratory such as ours can introduce a level of detail that normally is not taught to the learners, usually concerning places that are familiar to them. The style of the written material prepared ad hoc for the three classes used a serious, high register: we carefully avoided *folkloricism*, i.e., viewing the regional language as being the flag of the "Good Old Times" and nothing more. Morevoer, events were put in a larger perspective, not only mentioning Italy but also other European realities, in particular Catalonia and Spain, for their historical connection with the island. While allowing learners to use Sardinian in the classroom – which is a formal context – they are forced to access the high register of the language, which is quite rare in the current situation of dilalia. In this way, they strengthen their proficiency in Sardinian while learning new facts about their island.

The second research question concerns the LSC and its applicability. We aimed to check the reaction to the LSC among youngsters – in many cases, participants had never seen a text written in Sardinian in their entire life. One of the criticisms levelled against the LSC concerns the structural distance between the LSC and local varieties of Sardinian: will young learners accept the LSC or, on the contrary, will they reject it as artificial or too distant? This problem is widely recognised in the literature of language planning of regional and minority languages (Dell'Aquila and Iannàccaro 2005: 146). In his analysis, Bolognesi (2007) shows that the Nuoro variety is 85% identical with the LSC. In other words, there is a considerable degree of distance between LSC and the local variety, therefore the fieldwork in Orosei proved to be a good test of the research question.

We also envisioned some goals concerning the contestedness of Sardinian in general. First of all, we wanted to see if the project could increase students' pride in being Sardinian and in particular being speakers of the language. Second, we wanted to see if the use of Sardinian as the language of instruction would have some consequences on the academic performances of the learners. Third, we wanted to prove to the teachers that it is possible to propose a multilingual education not only through the introduction of English as a foreign language but also and mainly through the valorisation of the linguistic repertoire of the learners, which in most cases include Sardinian in some form. One important point to verify was the reaction of students in class who were not themselves Sardinian and, coming from abroad, do not use Sardinian in the family. Would they feel discriminated against

by the use of the regional language in class? This was one of the concerns of the teachers in the middle school.

The project was carried out in four different phases. The preliminary phase had two parts. First, we did a sociolinguistic survey, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, in order to depict the linguistic repertoire present in the classroom. The results of this sociolinguistic analysis will be presented in Section 4. Second, we prepared ad hoc material written in LSC for the three classes. Each class would cover a distinct period of history: students in the first class were 11–12 years old and they had to study history from the Byzantines (500 A.D.) to the Giudicati (circa 1300), the four independent states settled in the island; the second class (12–13 years old) covered the period from the Aragonese conquest of Sardinia (1323 A.D.) until the Spanish conquest (circa 1700); finally, the third class (13–15 years old) had to study the period from the Savoia domain on Sardinia until the Great War (1914–1918). We did not have a working example of such texts in Sardinian as nothing similar had been done before, to the extent of our knowledge; however, a somewhat similar case can be found in an acquisition planning experience regarding Mocheno, a Germanic minority language in Northern Italy (Ricci Garotti 2011). Some exemplary texts produced in LSC will be shown in the Appendix to this chapter. The texts were proofread by Roberto Bolognesi, who attested their validity from a linguistic point of view. Sometimes it was not easy to choose the "right" Sardinian lexeme in writing the texts, especially if they were technical terms not in use in the everyday language. Whenever possible, an autochthonous term was chosen, without relying on Italian: for example, instead of the borrowing *divisione amministrativa* (used in official texts written in the LSC), literally "administrative division", the Sardinian term *partidura* was chosen.

The operative phase was conducted in the classroom: only Sardinian was allowed in class, both for oral and written communication. The researcher acted as though she were a teacher. The participant's observation done during this phase will be illustrated in Section 5. Last but not least, in the control phase we asked the participants to evaluate the project through another test – see Section 6.

4. The sociolinguistic analysis

The sociolinguistic analysis began with a paper questionnaire given to the students in the preliminary phase. The questionnaire was designed to establish the students' competence in Sardinian and in Italian, particularly if Sardinian was their main language, i.e. the language they used more in oral communication, not only in the family but also with peers and in their social life in town.

Table 1 shows the students who participated in the questionnaire. It is important to stress that four more students were added to the operative phase: those four students were not present the day the questionnaire was given. Basically, 47 students completed the questionnaire, while 51 participated in the operative phase.

Table 1. Students who completed the questionnaire on the language repertoire

Class / sex	Third grade	Second grade	First grade
Female	4	7	6
Male	8	9	13
Total	**12**	**16**	**19**

The questionnaire consisted of 22 questions (multiple choice, yes/no, and open questions) and students had 30 minutes to complete it. Eight questions were devoted to the sociological profile of the students, such as gender, age, class; one of these questions asked if the student lived outside the Orosei community for a significant period of time, i.e. not just for holidays, but for a protracted period. One of the parameters we evaluated through the question was the linguistic habits of students' parents: as recounted by the students, 40.4% of the parents used only Sardinian with them, while only 25.6% used only Italian; both languages were used by 23.4%, while the remaining 10.6% used another language. The students were then asked which language(s) they received when they were children: 38.8% of the students considered Italian their L1 while 38.3% considered Sardinian their L1 (36.2% the Orosei dialect, and 2.1% the dialect of another town, always in the Nuoro area). Only 6.4% considered themselves early bilinguals in the two languages. Interestingly, gender played a role: a majority of the Sardinian L1 students were male (approximately a quarter more), while most early bilinguals were female (approximately two thirds). These data are not surprising: Sanna (1979) has pointed out that females tend to refuse Sardinian in order to have better opportunities in society, guaranteed by the Italian language. Finally, 17% of the interviewees declared that they had a different L1: some students came to Orosei from abroad. We will deal with this subgroup in the sociolinguistic analysis below. In any case, passive competence in Sardinian was acknowledged by 93.6% of the students, students from abroad included.

When asked to self-evaluate their active competence in Sardinian, 74.5% of the students said they could speak the language. Of course, this self-evaluation should be analysed more deeply, as there is no general agreement on what the statement "I speak Xish" actually means. For this reason, the most relevant part was devoted to analysing each student's language in their everyday life: in particular, we were interested in knowing if students were confident in the use of Sardinian in any domain or if they had to switch to Italian, and why. We divided the domains of use as follows: the language of interaction with teachers, school janitors, parents, siblings,

grandparents, peers in school and friends in town. The fine-grained analysis shows that clearly the dominant language was Italian. In the domain of school, we found unsurprising data: teachers were addressed exclusively in Italian, while students used both languages with school janitors. Italian was also preferred in communication with peers in school (only 27,7% declared that they used both). In short, there was a clear stigma in using Sardinian in school: in this sense, the overall project we proposed was perceived as a complete novelty by students, if not a language revolution. These data were checked through a participant observation of their behaviour in the playground during breaks between class hours: Sardinian was used mainly by males when they played football, quite often in code switching or code mixing with Italian. Within the family, data are unsurprising too: Sardinian was dominant in use with grandparents and also with parents; on the other hand, students preferred to use Italian with siblings and peers, both inside and outside school.

We did not rely only on the emic approach. In fact, a third part of the sociolinguistic questionnaire was devoted to translation, in both directions, between the two languages. We compared the self-evaluations of the single students with their translations. Their command of Sardinian through such a written task is quite unstable, and full of Italianisms: for example, nobody translated from Italian the common adjective *giallo* ("yellow") with *grogu*, but they used the Italianised term *zallu*. Even students who had discretely mastered the morphosyntax of Sardinian often used Italianised terms. For example, the sentence "tomorrow I will paint the wall of the courtyard" was translated as *Cras apo a dipingere su muru de su cortile* using the Italian verb *dipingere* instead of *intunicare, pintare* or *tinghere*, all acceptable in Sardinian, even if the analytical syntactic form for the verb *apo + a + infinitive* was correct. Also, the Sardinian term for "courtyard", *corte*, was substituted with *cortile*. This phenomenon has already been noted by Paulis (2001), who pointed out that in the long run this relexification could lead to the disintegration of the Sardinian language. Though ours was only a pilot study of no statistical value, we agree that a dramatic change in the linguistic habits of the younger generation is needed as soon as possible if we want to actively preserve the Sardinian language.

On the other hand, when asked to decode sentences from Sardinian to Italian, the results were far more promising: only 21.3% showed little or no competence, while 34% of the students were highly competent. Here, the age variable plays a role: 50% of the students in the third class showed a high competence in Sardinian, while in the first class only 21,1% did. Other important data revealed by the questionnaire concerned students coming from abroad: all of them showed some competence in Sardinian. Our participant observation showed that they were highly motivated in increasing their proficiency, as Sardinian is the in-group language and they want to be included by their peers.

5. Sardinian in the classroom

The operative phase took place in the classroom. All special activities to be done in the ordinary school hours, like our language laboratory, had to be previously approved by the board of the school: we were allowed only twelve contact hours in total, four hours for each class. The language used in class in our project was only Sardinian: the researcher, herself local, spoke the local variety to the students, while she prepared the texts in LSC in advance, for the purpose of this research. Students who already had confidence in Sardinian could improve it through their work, while students who were not confident took the occasion to get introduced to the language. Cooperative learning between the two subgroups was encouraged, so that nobody had any feeling of exclusion, regardless of their competence. It is important to note that all students used Sardinian in class in peer-to-peer communication to the best of their abilities, without any explicit instruction by the teacher. Sardinian was freely accepted as the language of instruction during the laboratory. In other words, nobody in class rejected Sardinian, both in oral and written use.

During the first contact hour of each class, the researcher presented herself in Sardinian, and then presented the structure of the laboratory. In other words, she used no Italian during the laboratory. Very few students were already informed of the existence of the LSC, and nobody had any previous experience, even in reading a text. Therefore, a brief and simple introduction of what is the LSC was needed. In our opinion, awareness of the existence of the LSC should be given greater emphasis by local administrations in the future. The introduction of the LSC was done through the presentation of the written material. Different tasks were proposed, according to the level of the students: for instance, students had to describe the historical maps of Sardinia through "concept maps" (Novak and Cañas 2006) and compare the topics of the laboratory with the ones already encountered during the hours devoted to history in Italian throughout the school year. Our approach was "learning by doing": students were asked to describe actively the Sardinian society of the time, and to explain the processes that led to the results put in the right contexts. In doing so, students were encouraged to problematise historical events using the language in an active manner.

The linguistic goals we set in advance for the students were the following: first, to understand the global meaning of the topics in history proposed through the active use of Sardinian in class; second, to analyse the texts written in the LSC, extracting the key concepts and thus increasing the students' lexicon in Sardinian; and third, to improve their oral competence in the language in a formal setting. Throughout the contact hours the researcher was aware she should use simple sentences and ask control question to prevent any major misunderstandings. Students were asked to read aloud the texts written in LSC, and they did so using the pronunciation of

their local variety. We did not ask them to write in LSC as the contact hours were only four, and students were not accustomed to writing in Sardinian at all.

Participant observation showed that all the activities were received positively by all students. In the first two hours female students were reluctant to participate for the reasons we already presented above; probably the fact that the researcher in class was a young woman helped them to feel more comfortable in using Sardinian in the classroom. Several times students asked why Sardinian was not included in their normal activities in any form: we argue that there is an active interest among the younger generation in approaching the Sardinian language in the classroom as a normal part of the curriculum, and that such activities, if done regularly, could be beneficial for all students. In fact, some of the students fluent in Sardinian normally tended to fail in their academic tasks, as the teachers told the researcher on site. We argue that the fact that Italian is not the main language of this subgroup parallels their tendency to fail in their tasks in school, as it is a medium of instruction that they are not confident with. On the other hand, latent competences in Sardinian were activated in the students who initially declared that they had low or no competence in the language. We did not have enough contact hours to classify this sub-group as "ghost speakers"; but it is important to note that they were the first ones to be surprised by themselves when they started to answer the researcher and their peers in the language.

A word should be said about reaction to the LSC. Frankly, our experience shows that most of the debate by specialists and intellectuals about the "right" way to write Sardinian is simply pointless: students effortlessly compared their oral variety with LSC, and sometimes they pointed out the differences. No hostility in any form was shown: we want to report in particular that one of the students bluntly said that "it is like British and American English: there are some differences, but it is the same language". We should admit that the reading style of students relied a lot on their local variety, and therefore it could be considered not optimal if we compare it with the phonological rules of the LSC. However, students did not encounter any difficulties in reading the texts written in LSC, as confirmed by the last questionnaire they completed. Nonetheless, we are confident that a more structured activity through an entire school year could overcome this problem easily. In sum, not only did the LSC prove to be a good fit for the linguistic needs of the students, but also it was a valid instrument for metalinguistic awareness. In particular, students coming from abroad were actively involved, referring to their own repertoires. The family languages spoken by this subgroup were Moroccan Arabic, Chinese, Romanian, and Spanish. With the help of the researcher, they could compare different linguistic forms for the same communicative needs in Sardinian, Italian and their languages. That strategy was particularly effective when dealing with Romanian and Spanish.

6. Concluding remarks and directions for further research

After the operative phase, we sought feedback from the students. We accomplished this in two ways: through an explicit question at the end of the last contact hour, and through another questionnaire given to them on paper later. In the group, students proved able to collocate historical events not only in the regional panorama but in a broader Mediterranean and European context. They felt confident and proud of their work. Their individual feedback was very positive too: 52.1% of the participants found the project "very interesting", while 43.5% found it "interesting"; together, these percentages almost covered the totality of the participants. 80.4% of the participants declared that they did not experience difficulties in listening to the researcher's instructions. 76.1% of the participants declared they had no difficulty reading material written in the LSC. These last two values show that the two subgroups of students who had mastered Sardinian at a competent level and students with significant, even if mainly passive, exposure to the language did not find the structural distance of the LSC from the local variety an obstacle. The questionnaire allowed students who had encountered difficulties free to express the reason: in many cases, they declared that the main problem was the fact that they were not accustomed to using Sardinian actively. 82.6% of the students wanted to have such activity through the whole school year while 67.4% were convinced that they could learn any topic in Sardinian. We would suggest that such results are very positive and that students could profit from such an extension of the laboratory. Moreover, even though both questionnaires were written in Italian, many students decided to answer the open questions in Sardinian in the second questionnaire administered after the operative phase. We left a space for open comments and suggestions. Among them, many students argued that Sardinian should be studied like any other language, and that non-linguistic topics could be learned through that language. In other words, according to the students, a Sardinian-based CLIL-strategy with the LSC in the classroom proved to be potentially effective.

Using the results of the laboratory just presented, we can now check if the three goals illustrated above, concerning the contestedness of Sardinian in general, were fulfilled, and, if so, to what extent. The first goal concerns the sense of belonging to the Sardinian language and the sense of pride in being Sardinian. Results clearly show that an active use of Sardinian in the classroom has positive effects in this sense, not only for youngsters who feel attachment to the language as part of their family repertoire, but even for students coming from abroad, who perceive the language acquisition process as inclusive, being conducted in a formal setting such as the school.

The second goal concerns the academic performances of the learners. Also in this case, it seems clear that success or failure depends a lot on the level of confidence in the language of instruction used in class. In particular, students who

perceive themselves as "losers" in the academic competition may find new confidence if the language that they use every day in an informal setting – Sardinian, in this case – is also used as the language of instruction in formal settings. Third, in spite of some initial skepticism among some teachers, who had not previously seen the CLIL applied with a linguistic medium different from English, the methodology proposed proved to be sound and effective, realising the general goal of multilingual education.

On the other hand, these results and their effect in achieving the three goals proposed should be applied in a wider project so as to be empirically tested with more robust data. In particular, we argue that it would be important to repeat the experiment in particular in the Southern part of the island, where there is more resistance to the LSC. We argue that this resistance is more ideological than structural, as the Nuoro varieties are as structurally distant as some Campidanese varieties. A wider application of the laboratory could be the testbed for the changes to be done to the LSC, if needed. We argue that the debate on the LSC in particular and on the revitalisation of Sardinian should be based on fieldwork data concerning the younger generation and not only on personal opinions.

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Appendix

Here below an extract of the text written in LSC for the first class; for the whole classes. Approximately, there were produced 4,800 words.

Dae sos Bizantinos a sos giudicados. In sa segunda metade de su sèculu X in Sardigna naschiat unu modellu istitutzionale nou: sos giudicados. Fintzas a custu perìodu su guvernu de s'ìsula fiat afidadu a ufitziales dipendentes dae Bisàntziu: su praeses chi teniat funtziones amministrativas e su dux chi aiat funtziones militares. In momentos de perìgulu mannu su pòdere podiat èssere unificadu in una persone ebbia: sos istòricos non ischint galu cale càrriga aiat pigadu su mandadu de s'àtera ma est seguru chi dae su sèculu VIII su pòdere fiat in manos de un'ùnicu iudex provinciae (o archon) chi istaiat in Càlari e teniat poderes siat tziviles siat militares. A su comintzu custa càrriga fiat eletiva e petzi pro sos Bizantinos, ma a bellu a bellu s'est furriada a ereditària e finas pro s'aristocratzia sarda.

SECTION 4

Beyond contested languages

When contestedness creeps in

CHAPTER 14

Citizenship and nationality

The situation of the users of revived Livonian in Latvia

Christopher Moseley
University College London

The last native-born speaker of Livonian, the aboriginal Baltic-Finnic language of Latvia, died in Canada in 2012. The last mother-tongue speaker on Latvian soil died some years before that. However, encouraged by Latvia's nationality policy since it regained independence from the USSR in 1991, people of Livonian heritage are encouraged to identify themselves as Livonian even in their passports, and a new generation of heritage speakers is taking classes in the language. This is a reversal of former Soviet policy, one of benign neglect, and a refusal by the regime in the last years of the independent republic (1934–1940) to acknowledge or allow the use of the language.

Becoming citizens of the new republic was simultaneous, for many people, with declaring their nationality within the new state. This chapter traces the history of this small ethnic minority's relationship with the state – Tsarist Russian, then Latvian, then Soviet, then Latvian again – and the vicissitudes that the spoken, written, and above all taught, Livonian language had to pass through to reach its present precarious status as a marginal heritage language in a relatively newly independent state in Europe.

The chapter will be illustrated with documentary evidence of the Livonian language's use in writing and education in Latvia down to the present day.

1. Preliminaries

Livonian, a Finno-Ugrian language most closely related to Estonian and Finnish, was spoken in Latvia until very recently by a few native-born speakers. Although the last mother-tongue speaker died in an old people's home in Toronto, Canada, in 2013,[1] and the last indigenous speaker remaining in Latvia died in 2009,[2] by that

1. The speaker was Grizelda Kristiņa (1910–2013). See *The Times* (London), 5 June 2013.

2. The speaker was Viktor Berthold (1921–2009). See Ernštreits (2013).

https://doi.org/10.1075/wlp.8.14mos

time there was a new generation of heritage speakers growing up, and claiming ethnic Livonian identity.

The Livonian language being genetically unrelated to Latvian, it was an important badge of distinctive identity. The Livonian way of life was somewhat different to the Latvian heritage, too: living on a narrow coastal strip of land for the past few centuries of recorded history, these people depended on the sea for their income. For centuries they engaged in fishing, and traded in fish with the Latvians in return for other foodstuffs. Some of them were also mariners, and provided the crews of some merchant ships, which again ensured that they came into contact with other nations, despite their isolated location at the edge of Europe.

The time when the Livonian language seemed doomed to extinction was also the time when Latvia regained its independence from the Soviet Union, in 1991. One of the early acts of legislation of the newly independent state was to create a Cultural-Historical Reserve, called *Slītere* (Sīlis 1994), and this was an important factor in preserving the last traces of Livonian identity. But to fully understand how the Livonian nation lasted so long, hanging by a thread under various foreign masters, I need to take you back into history.

2. Early history

Of the peoples speaking Baltic-Finnic languages, it is possible that the forerunners of the Livonians arrived earliest in the area of their permanent settlement, probably in the first half of the first millennium AD. They probably migrated there along the Daugava (or Western Dvina) River. The term *Livland* was coined by the German knights to refer to the *Livs*, the speakers of Finnic languages whose territory they conquered at the beginning of the thirteenth century, as we know from the *Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*,[3] the earliest documentary source of information about the Livonians.

At the time the Chronicle was written, the Livonians were settled on the coast of the Gulf of Riga, from the present border of Estonia to the Daugava and beyond the site of Riga, and also on the Courland peninsula on the opposite side of the Gulf.

At the time of the Chronicle, most of the Livonians lived on the eastern side of the Gulf. Gradually this branch merged with the Latvian-speaking population which moved into Livonian coastal territory. Information about the pace of assimilation and the recession of the Livonian language is scanty, but we do know that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were speakers of a separate Eastern

3. *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, translated from Latin by James. A. Brundage. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press: 1961.

dialect of Livonian living in villages around the Salis river. The last recorded speaker of this dialect died in 1868.

The speakers of the Western dialect have lived, during their recorded history, on a strip of land some sixty kilometres long, along the Courland peninsula, spread through twelve villages. Statistical evidence can be gleaned from various sources in the researches of visiting linguists and ethnographers:[4]

1835 (Köppen)	2,074
1852 (Sjögren)	2,324
1858 (Wiedemann)	2,390
1888 (Setälä)	2,929[4]

Census figures, when they acknowledge the existence of the Livonians at all, have not provided an accurate picture. In both Tsarist and Soviet times, the Livonians were not distinguished from the Latvians in census statistics, yet an official figure of 866 Livonians given in 1920 differs widely from the estimate by the Finnish linguist Lauri Kettunen of 1,500 Livonian speakers (Kettunen 1920), which itself would seem a conservative estimate compared with the figures from the previous century. Of course, what constituted a 'Livonian' for official purposes may not have had a linguistic basis, and one must also bear in mind that in 1915 the whole population was forced into temporary exile for the rest of the duration of the First World War. The vast majority, however, returned to their villages after the war.

3. Doom

The concept of a separate nationhood among the Livonians was fostered first by Baltic-German scholars of the late eighteenth century, and later through the researches of the Finnish linguist Anders Johan Sjögren and his successor Ferdinand Johann Wiedemann (Sjögren 1861). Native speakers contributed as informants to their work, and later to that of Kettunen, the compiler of the comprehensive *Livisches Wörterbuch* (1938). Literary Livonian may be said to have begun with the publication of the New Testament in the language in 1863, again with foreign assistance. The concept of nationhood was further strengthened by supportive work from Finland and Estonia: in 1920 Kettunen, accompanied by the Estonian folklorist Oskar Loorits, paid an extensive visit for fieldwork, directly prompting the Tartu Academic Society for the Mother-Tongue (*Akadeemiline Emakeele Selts)* in Estonia to undertake to subsidise the education of young Livonians and to publish

4. Figures cited from Manninen (1929).

literature. A Livonian Association (*Līvõd Īt)* held its inaugural meeting on 2 April 1923. Later that year permission was given by the Latvian Ministry of Education to provide one hour's tuition in Livonian a week as an optional subject in the five schools. School readers, primers and almanacs were produced.

Significantly, 1920 was also the year when Latvian national sovereignty was properly secured at the end of a bitter civil war.

Thanks to the efforts of Professor Kettunen on his return to Finland, interest in the Livonian cause was being fostered, and funds were provided through the Finnish Embassy in Riga for the Livonian Association to build a cultural centre, the 'Livonian House'. Further preparations for its construction were delayed by the development of intense Latvian nationalism, especially after President Ulmanis' seizure of absolute power in 1934. The foundation stone of the house, in the village of Mazirbe, was laid in October 1938, and the official inauguration ceremony was held on 6 August 1939. Funding for the project had come from the kindred nations of Finland, Estonia and Hungary.

The social space occupied by the language in the twelve home villages had by this time shrunk significantly: minimal teaching of it in schools in the years immediately preceding the Ulmanis coup of 1934 was reduced to nothing thereafter. Naturally, in this relatively remote part of the country, use of the language social domains within the family and village interaction continued thereafter, but within a context of bilingualism with Latvian.

The outbreak of the Second World War, however, prevented any opportunities for the Livonian community to make use of their new focal point. The ensuing German and Soviet occupations dispersed the population from their native villages once again, many of them going abroad never to return. The Livonians, if they had remained, and long after they returned, were deprived of their sole economic livelihood: fishing and fish-processing. When peace returned on Soviet terms, fisheries were collectivised and placed in alien hands. The Livonian language and way of life were obliterated in two generations.

The Livonian House subsequently became a meeting-house for the local (Latvian) fishing collective, but fell into disuse and disrepair for a long period. In 1982 it was acquired from the collective by the Slītere Nature Reserve, and major restoration work was carried out in time for the 50th anniversary of its inauguration, in August 1989, the ceremonies being attended by representatives of the by now much depleted and dispersed Livonian-speaking population of Latvia. Once again it is now a cultural centre and museum, and the distinctive Livonian flag flies over it.[5]

5. For an overview in English see Moseley (1993).

Thus a sense of nationhood was surviving among the Livonians at their demographically weakest point. The newly restored Latvian state made provision for Livonian to be a declared nationality in the new Latvian passports. Over five hundred people have availed themselves of this opportunity to declare themselves Livonians by heritage, if not by language.

4. Resurgence

So what is being done in present-day Latvia to preserve this privileged status? Latvia, after all, has other regional ethnic groups, who identify themselves by costumes, dialects and material culture. Those, of course, have a continuous existence, and do not need to be revived or revitalised.[6]

In the context of Europe, Livonian is a good example of a revitalised language. Only a few short years have passed since its last native speaker died, and while the last speakers were still alive, the language was already being taught in Latvia to younger learners. There are good dictionaries, lots of sound recordings, and clear memories of the voices and personalities of earlier generations of speakers. Not many languages are so well equipped to be revitalised. Even so, just as in the earlier phases of the language's documented existence, the revitalising organisations felt a need to seek help from outside.

Most promising of all, there are groups of learners still on the territory of the language. The Livonian community of Kolka, at the northernmost tip of the Livonian speech area, applied to the Foundation for Endangered Languages for funds to pay for the teaching of classes in an ongoing programme of Livonian language learning. They got the money from the Foundation, and produced a report on their progress. It is worth considering some aspects of the language courses and the contribution they make to revitalising Livonian as a living, working language.

The Livonian group of the Livonian Association in Kolka consisted of thirteen members at the time of the 2013/2014 teaching programme. There were two fields of activity in the programme: learning the language and finding out about the cultural heritage. Language learning was done by a programme of lessons, which were reproduced for the Foundation. The medium of instruction for was Latvian, and there was no published textbook; rather the texts were on photocopied sheets handed out to the learners, and they filled in the answers to prompted Livonian sentences following instructions in Latvian.

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6. See Ernštreits (2016) for a summary of recent activities in English.

But in addition to language learning, the class members were exploring the Livonian cultural heritage as well. Each lesson took up a new theme. They learned about Livonian place-names and their traces in modern Latvia and North Kurzeme especially. They learned about Livonian folk costumes in recorded history, from the 18th to the 20th centuries. They studied the textiles of North Kurzeme. Other traditional occupations of the North Kurzeme region were also studied. The course provided an insight into Livonian mythology. Livonians' relatives among the Finno-Ugrian peoples were also studied.[7]

Another way of getting familiar with Livonian heritage is through recordings on film, and there have been a number of films made on this subject. In the process they become familiar with Livonian songs and singing: Andris Slapiņš' film *Līvõd lõlõd* and films in both Livonian and Latvian, *Meža stāsti* ('Forest Tales'), *Līvõ pivād* ('Livonian Festivals'), *Lībiešu mēles liegā ieskanēšanās nedēļu pirms pasaules gala* ('The sound of Livonian a week before the end of the world') and *Es dzīvoju lībiešu mājā* ('I live in a Livonian home').

The course lasted from January to May 2014, and unlike previous course in the language, it took place in a part of the Livonians' traditional territory, Kolka. The Livonian language space is of course part of the greater Slītere culture and nature reserve, which is a slightly usual situation for a minority language in Europe, and not quite the same thing as a 'reservation' in North America or tribal land in Australia, where the reasons for the special status usually don't have anything to do with either language or nature.

This coastal reserve has some points in common with two areas of Britain that are home to revitalised languages, namely Cornwall, the ancestral home of Cornish, and the Isle of Man, the home of Manx. The Livonians and Manx were traditionally tied to the sea and to fishing. Fishing is also very important to the Cornish economy, but inland that economy was more varied, and even included mining. All three are far from the metropolitan centre of the nation, and not on a route to anywhere else by land, which is a significant reason why they have survived until so recently. Some parallels might also be drawn with Breton in Brittany, another peninsular linguistic outpost in Europe (Moseley 2012).

Language as an emblem of distinctiveness is a sensitive issue in Latvia. Proficiency in the state language, Latvian, is a prerequisite for citizenship, and this has been a controversial policy in the first two decades of independence since 1990. I mentioned earlier that Livonian 'nationality' can be entered in a Latvian passport. Obviously that is not the same as citizenship; and to apply the Latvian proficiency standard to Livonian as a qualification for 'nationality' would clearly be impossible.

7. For a summary of the course teaching see www.ogmios.org, the web-site of the Foundation for Endangered Languages.

A near parallel to the Livonian civic status would be the 'Maori' qualification for nationality in New Zealand passports: a demonstrable line of descent. In New Zealand the Maori language is a patrimony that is making a successful comeback.[8] Perhaps this recognition of descent, though, is the first and most important step on the road to the revitalisation of a language. The case of Livonian seems to indicate this.

The civic status of Livonian heritage speakers in Latvia raises a problem in sociolinguistic terms: a language that has never had official status before, or been a vehicle for any kind of statehood, has now become an emblem for generations who were not born or educated speaking it. Annual summer camps for heritage speaker children and celebrations of traditional summer festivities on the traditional Livonian territory serve to strengthen a sense of community, but most of the participants live outside the territory and have no regular opportunities to use the language. Thus there is nowadays no regular and continuous space in which to use it. In this important respect the Livonians differ somewhat from the inheritors of the other declining Finno-Ugric languages. As is known, complete state independence exists only for speakers of Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian. In the wider Finno-Ugric sphere, the Karelians, Mari and Komi have their own republics within the Russian Federation, with declining native-speaker populations and weak institutional support. In the Republic of Mordovia, Erzya and Moksha Mordvin are generally, but not universally, recognised as distinct languages. Within the narrower Baltic-Finnic subgrouping, all the speaker populations are in a nominally stronger position than the Livonians, but even though the languages are spoken on their own native territories, the identities of some are contested.

Closer to the Livonian homeland, Estonian as a national language has, in the century of independence, and especially in post-Soviet times, served to blur the distinction between the official language and the Võro-Seto variety spoken in the extreme southeast. In former centuries the language of the Võro area and of the academic centre of Tartu in the south served to establish a separate South Estonian literary language, which is still cultivated today to a limited extent. On the territory of Russia, just northeast of Estonia, the Vote language is critically endangered. Until the nineteenth century, Vote had an outlier within Latvia, Krevin. Its neighbour in Russia, Ingrian, is so closely related to Finnish and Karelian as to be in dispute as a separate language, especially since the migration of large parts of the Ingrian population to Karelia and Finland in the past century. A strong case can be made for the separation of three languages in the Finnic chain, Karelian, Olonetsian and Lude, now within the territory of the semi-autonomous Karelian republic in the

8. See for example http://www.stats.govt.nz/methods/classifications-and-standards/classification-related-stats-standards/maori-descent/definition.aspx

RSFSR. The republic's population is so heavily diluted by Russian speakers that the tiny speaker populations of each are shrinking towards extinction.[9]

Lastly, within the Baltic-Finnic grouping, in Finland itself the language of the Torne/Tornio valley straddling the Swedish border in the north indicates a possible emerging separate language, also known as *Meänkieli* ('our language'), which enjoys some degree of institutional support.

Even the definition of Livonian as a language was in the past somewhat in dispute. The variety spoken around the Salis River at the northern end of the Gulf of Riga, mentioned earlier in this chapter, and variously known as Eastern or Salaca Livonian, is known to have been substantially different from the Eastern variety, from materials preserved from before its demise in 1868,[10] especially with regard to phonology. Within Courland Livonian, differences in the spoken language between villages north and south of the Irbe brook were noted by some scholars, but hardly amounted to even dialectal differences (Moseley 1993). As far as its heritage speakers and learners today are concerned, however, Livonian constitutes a single, distinct linguistic entity.

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10. See for example Pajusalu (2014) and Winkler (1994).

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CHAPTER 15

The language ideology of Esperanto

From the world language problem to balanced multilingualism

Federico Gobbo
University of Amsterdam

The status of Esperanto, the language launched by Zamenhof in 1887, has been contested since its beginning. Esperanto became the most relevant of the International Auxiliary Languages (IALs) from a sociolinguistic perspective, as it successfully survived two World Wars in spite of being explicitly persecuted by Hitler and Stalin, among others (Lins 2017). The motivations of the pioneers of Esperanto were put under scrutiny according to the different political context, both across time and place (Forster 1982). Therefore, its language ideology was adapted in order to reduce the level of contestedness of the language, and this adaptation re-framed the self-perception of its speakers and their attitudes toward Esperanto itself. For instance, before the Great War in Europe there was a strong connection between the Esperanto movement and pacifism (Alcalde 2015), while in the 1930s in China and Japan Esperanto was linked to anarchism and communism (Lins 2008). In the aftermath of the Second World War, the language ideology deeply changed (Jordan 1987), and the link between Esperanto and linguistic rights became increasingly stronger (Pietiläinen 2010). Nowadays, the new generation of Esperantists is facing the new challenges of the Digital Era. In particular, there is an ideological convergence with other contested languages, in particular Regional and Minority Languages, also in the Esperanto speaker's attitudes (Caligaris 2016; Gobbo and Miola 2016). This chapter aims to illustrate the evolution of the language ideology of Esperanto, in comparison with other contested languages.

1. Introduction

Esperanto is the most relevant International Auxiliary Language (IAL) in history. A stable community of practice formed around the idea of it as a "neutral language", unlike other rival IALs that failed to prevail, starting from the challenge of Ido (for a recent account, see Garvía 2015; a classic study, still relevant, is Large 1985). For

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the moment, I define Esperanto as a "neutral language" in the sense used in interlinguistics, i.e. Esperanto, like all classic IALs (from Volapük to IALA's Interlingua: for details, see Gobbo 2009, 2020) does not belong to a specific ethnic group or nation, and therefore it is neutral. Later, when referring to this sense of the word in contrast with other interpretations I will use the expression "ethnically neutral". This ethnic neutrality has important consequences from a sociolinguistic point of view. In particular, the collective of Esperanto speakers is hard to define in usual terms, so that approximations are often used, at least since Melnikov (1992), who uses the term "pseudo-ethnic group" (*kvazaŭetno*, in Esperanto). I propose here a different perspective: instead of taking for granted that the collective of Esperanto speakers is a "speech community" (as done, for instance, by Fettes 1996), it is better to refer to them as a "community of practice". Eckert (2006) adopts this term from sociology, meaning a social grouping in virtue of a shared practice that not only builds a shared experience among the group members but also shares a commitment to understand the experience itself. In this case, the shared practice and the commitment is the use of the Esperanto language, in any form. In other words, what binds Esperanto speakers together is the language used (the object level of the experience) and the reflection over the language itself, namely why it is worth using the language (the meta-level).

In this chapter, I mainly investigate the meta-level, which deals with how Esperanto speakers represent the language in time and which eventually constitutes the Esperanto language ideology. In fact, language ideology is formed by two factors: the language representation (the emic approach, i.e. Esperantists' perspective)[1] and the collocation of that language representation in the larger society (i.e., how it is perceived externally). As we will see below in detail, both factors are necessary to understand language ideology. Far from being independent from the external world, we might even say that language representation is shaped within the boundaries that the external world puts on the community of practice in order to co-exist with it.

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1. I use the expression 'Esperanto speaker' referring to the dimension of language proficiency. An "Esperantophone" is an individual with some level of proficiency in the language obtained by using it with other speakers. An ideological commitment to the language, i.e. some kind of "Esperantism", is usual but in some cases the Esperanto speaker refuses to be considered an Esperantist. The term "Esperantist" – which has a long tradition in the community – on the other hand refers to somebody supporting Esperanto even without actually using the language. According to my observation as a participant in the last twenty years, there are Esperantophones who do not like to be defined as Esperantists, while on the other hand there exist people who define themselves Esperantists without any actual knowledge of the language. Both subgroups are considerably small in percentage in relation to the total members of the Esperanto community of practice. In other words, the majority of Esperantists are Esperantophones and vice versa.

Unlike speech communities, in the case of communities of practice the sociological profile of the speakers (e.g., class, gender, ethnic group, workplace, birthplace) is not predominant in the definition of the relations among group members. This distinctive feature is usually perceived as a distinctive trait of the community itself, being one of the traits that not only attracts people to join the Esperanto community but also convinces them to stay because it is worthwhile to do so. The other trait that fosters belonging to the community is the possibility of contributing to Esperanto culture. A clarification is needed here. For "culture" I follow the non-essentialist view of several anthropologists (for instance, Street 1993), whereby the active process of shared sense-making within a community produces virtual and real artefacts that last over time. For "virtual artefacts" I mean both artefacts living in a virtual space – like the internet – and social conventions, which are part of Esperanto pragmatics. An example of the first case is the Facebook group launched in Esperanto on the topic of Esperanto literature called *Literatura Babilejo* ('place for chatting on literature'). An example of the latter can be found in a pragmatic social convention of being introduced to strangers. In Esperanto, it is not polite to ask "where are you from?" as one of the first questions when meeting another Esperanto speaker for the first time, while "when/how did you start learning Esperanto?" is perfectly acceptable. If we compare, for example, two non-native speakers of English in the same situation, politeness works the other way around: the first question is perfectly acceptable, while asking a stranger when he or she started learning English would sound odd, to say the least.

Ethnic neutrality as illustrated above is the common ground upon which Esperanto speakers have built their language representation over the years. The concept of neutrality is far from being stable, and in many cases it is re-framed according to the external context. In particular, the word "neutrality" can assume a greater or lesser political colour, as attested by a PhD dissertation written in German, entitled "the neutral language" (Sikosek 2006; see also Gobbo 2017). As Schor (2016) recently pointed out, several Esperantists she met in the last seven years are still convinced, even today, of the political neutrality of Esperanto, even if the sole fact of supporting the idea of a universal language – whatever this means – is already a political statement per se. In fact, the very existence of Esperanto is supported by people who express some sort of dissatisfaction with the power relations that exist between languages (and the groups that support them), at least at an international level, with an implicit or often explicit desire for radical change. Which direction should Esperantists take for the realisation of this radical change depends on the language ideology adopted. This is the topic that will be illustrated in the next sections.

2. Is Esperanto a contested language?

Nic Craith (2006: 108) introduces the expression "contested languages" as a consequence of the quest for recognition into the exclusive club of national languages: they are "forms of communication whose linguistic status is or has been disputed in the recent past [frequently being] an unfortunate consequence of the establishment of national boundaries". Quite often, they are called "dialects", *patois* or similar expressions, especially in public discourse, in order to suggest that they are not "real" or "true" languages (see also Tamburelli and Tosco, and Tamburelli this volume). Consequently, it is perfectly acceptable to exclude them from formal domains, most notably formal education and writing. Among the original examples given by Nic Craith are Alsatian, Franco-Provençal, Friulan, Ulster Scots. According to the definition of "contested languages" and the context from which they emerged, Esperanto is clearly not a member of this unfortunate club. However, there are some similarities between contested languages and Esperanto that are worth noting.

Like all other IALs, Esperanto is quite often accused of not being a fully-fledged language because of its artificiality. In fact, the *lingvo internacia* ('international language') originated like Athena from Zeus' head, already in written form as a book in 1887. Its author, Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof, an Ashkenazi Jew living in Tsarist Russia, defined his language project through a prescriptive grammar, some sample texts and a basic dictionary (less than one thousand radicals). In other words, the language was ready for use, thanks to its written norms, before actually being spoken. Unlike several other IALs, Esperanto evolved from its project phase quite quickly and established a community of practice after Zamenhof's struggles (for a recent account of the early history of Esperanto, see Garvía 2015). Esperanto's main ideological concern in its relations with the rest of the world has always been defending its status as a living language capable of expressing all the nuances of life, as well as justifying the purpose of the language itself. Quite often Esperanto is considered a pseudo-language. One of the typical attacks against Esperanto is its supposed rigidity and lack of expressiveness, especially for literary purposes. This is simply false, as there is a rich original literature (for an overview see Sutton 2008). For example, one Esperanto poet, William Auld, who also wrote a small book in Esperanto about Scots, was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature by the Esperanto Centre PEN Club International.

The status of Esperanto is highly dependent on the context in which it is spoken, both in time and space. For example, the ideological discourse regarding Esperanto is different in France, the United States, or China. For instance, Lins (2008) shows that in China Esperanto has strong links with anarchism, and it was associated with the liberation of China against the Japanese invasion in the 1930s. China is an exception, however, as there is currently state support for Esperanto. In general,

the visibility of Esperanto in public relies on the efforts of activists, as in the case of many contested languages in the Old World (see also Coluzzi, Brasca and Scuri, this volume).

Another important variable that distinguishes Esperanto from the prototypical contested languages exemplified above is the dimension of territoriality. As Mark Fettes, a recent president of the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA), once said, Esperanto has no territory but it has a geography. In other words, there are places that are more important for Esperanto than others, either for historical reasons or due to the presence of related activities in modern times. For example, Białystok, the small city where Zamenhof was born, has been important mainly in the past – now there is the Ludwik Zamenhof Centre, with a permanent exhibition on his life and other cultural activities. Another example is Rotterdam, which is sometimes called by Esperantists the "Esperanto Rome", because UEA, the leading institution supporting Esperanto since the end of the Second World War, has its headquarters there. However, it is important to emphasise that there is no physical place where Esperanto speakers live permanently in a society speaking mainly Esperanto for their everyday needs, such as to get petrol from a pump attendant, to do their shopping, or to go to see the doctor. The life of Esperanto does not rely on a society living in a definite space but only on local clubs, national gatherings, international congresses, and the internet – a possible exception being *Bona Espero* ('Good Hope'), a community in Brazil devoted to orphans and poor children, which uses both Brazilian Portuguese and Esperanto for bilingual education (Dobrzyński 2008). Usually Esperanto meetings last only one week and only during holiday periods such as the middle of August or New Year's Eve. Thus, Esperanto is neither a territorial language (e.g. Sardinian) nor a non-territorial language in the usual sense (e.g. Romani), as the Esperanto community of practice does not form a speech community in the strict sense.

Within the classic framework by Fishman (1991) on reversing language shift, intergenerational transmission is the most important factor that guarantees the survival of a language in danger: unless three consecutive generations speak the language at the same time, it is highly probable that the language will soon die. This assumption guides many analyses of the vitality of languages. For example, the E-GIDS – a tool to measure the status of the world languages in *Ethnologue* derived from Fishman's work (Simons and Fennig 2017) – considers intergenerational transmission the main parameter of analysis. In the case of Esperanto, this choice leads to somewhat strange results. Moreover, another important parameter is the territoriality principle: because of that the E-GIDS makes Esperanto a "language of Poland", because Zamenhof, the original author of Esperanto, was born in Białystok. It is worth mentioning that while nowadays Białystok is in Poland, in Zamenhof's time it was part of Tsarist Russia, and Zamenhof never defined himself

as "Polish", but as "a Russian citizen" (*rusujano*, according to his original wording in Esperanto). In any case, the "population" of Esperanto is indicated as "scattered internationally", which is true. However, the most striking point of E-GIDS is the importance given to family speakers, which are estimated by specialists to be approximately 1,000 in the world, while the total number of Esperanto speakers ranges from pessimistic evaluations of 10,000 to more optimistic ones of up to one or even two million. Gobbo (2015a) proposed a diagram which depicts the typology of speakers according to their use: apart from family speakers, the most important group of Esperanto speakers consists of language activists (which counts approximately 10,000 people), while simple language users and people having some contact with the language – such as people studying the grammar without any involvement in Esperanto life – are many more. Of course, there is no guarantee that these potential Esperantists will enter the community of practice after having completed an online language class, and therefore they are placed in the outer circle of the one million estimate. It is worth noting that, even if family speakers are placed in the very centre of the diagram, the main effort of Esperanto societies is directed at increasing the number of language activists. In other words, unlike regional and minority languages, intergenerational transmission is not guaranteed by families – as Joshua Fishman pointed out – but by language activists on a voluntary basis. It should also be mentioned that some Esperantists argue that the mere existence of "native" speakers is a threat to the neutrality of the language, because it is the beginning of "real" ethnicisation (for a discussion, see Fiedler 2012 and Lindstedt 2016).

The role played by family speakers is another peculiar sociolinguistic variable in the Esperanto case. Sometimes their existence is ignored, sometimes it is excessively emphasised. An example of the latter is found in *Ethnologue* 2016, where it was argued, following Fishman's approach, that the survival of Esperanto relies mainly on the thousand families speaking the language, and therefore the language is classified as "moribund" (E-GIDS scale = 9) because of the low number of family speakers. This evaluation seemed to be at least unfair, and it was changed to level 3 "language of wider communication" after a discussion held on the *Ethnologue* web site (Editorial Action June 2, 2016). Besides this episode, it is clear that Esperanto vitality cannot rely on family speakers alone. In reality, the role played by Esperanto families is not very important: they do not determine the normative or prestige Esperanto register, nor do they have a special authority on the language. And, above all, the community does not rely on them for intergenerational transmission (this fact has interesting parallels with the Deaf community, which cannot be investigated here for reasons of space). This difficulty in classifying Esperanto derives from the peculiar sociolinguistic profile of the language, whose history is unique among the living languages of the world. In any case, Esperanto is far from

being moribund: the truth is that intergenerational transmission is guaranteed not by families but by the language activists, who constitute the large majority of the members of the Esperanto community of practice.

From a structural point of view, Esperanto is a contact language (Lindstedt 2009), showing traits of the Slavic, Germanic and Romance languages present in Zamenhof's repertoire – and, in addition, of the classic languages he studied: Ancient Greek, Latin and Biblical Hebrew. This is not the place to delve into this topic: what is important to stress here is the fact that Esperanto shows a considerable degree of distance with all the languages of the Old World (and not only). In other words, Esperanto is an *Abstand* language, i.e. a language defined by distance (see also Tamburelli and Tosco, this volume), of all languages present in Europe. This fact has an important consequence: there is no risk of confusion or assimilation to other languages, as in the case of many Contested Languages of Italy, such as Piedmontese, Lombard or Venetan, that are often considered dialects of Italian in public and academic discourse, even if in reality they are Romance languages of their own (see Miola 2017 and Cravens 2014. Also Coluzzi, Brasca and Scuri, this volume).

3. The tradition of Esperanto: One language, several ideologies

The year 2017 had a symbolic value for Esperanto: UNESCO celebrated the centennial of the death of Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof, the founder of the language. In fact, Zamenhof was proclaimed one of the "great personalities" of humankind as early as 1959, on the centennial of his birth (Korzhenkov 2010). In accounting for its celebration of Zamenhof, UNESCO argues that Homaranism "is the idea of the union of all the nations communicating in a common language". However, this is Zamenhof's idea of Esperantism, i.e. his *language* ideology, not Homaranism, which is Zamenhof's religious and political project, arising from Hillelism, a reform of Judaism "dislodging the concept of a covenanting God" (Schor 2016: 79). On his view, Homaranism was something different from Esperantism: inside the Esperanto community, Zamenhof dreamt of a distinct group of Esperanto speakers forming a speech community in the strict sense, with Esperanto as the main language. They might have lived together in a city of a neutral state, such as Switzerland, with neutral calendar, school, habits, and even "temples" for a positivistic cult. In this way, Zamenhof argued, the nucleus of a *neŭtrala popolo* ('neutral people', a Zamenhofian expression) would be formed, and the avant-garde of humanity reunited as a single family (Zamenhof 1929). The Homaranism project never materialised in practice, as Zamenhof's religious and political project was fiercely attacked and rejected

by the majority of Esperantists as well, especially Catholics. The only trace that remained in the Esperanto culture is the so-called *interna ideo* ('internal idea'), whereby the use of the language per se makes Esperanto not only a tool for communication but also and above all, an instrument for improving human welfare and brotherhood, international friendship and peace. The internal idea would eventually erase animosity and war worldwide, as humans would understand each other better through the use of an ethnically neutral language (Jordan 1987: 107).

While this internal idea gives a common ground for its language representation, avoiding the adoption of Esperanto by explicit chauvinistic or xenophobic groups, on the other hand it leaves a lot of room for further ideological elaboration. Through its 130 years of life, Esperanto's language ideology was developed in so many ways that we can hardly talk properly of "Esperantism"; it would be more appropriate to talk about "Esperantisms" in the plural. Mainstream Esperantism started to be defined in the early days of the 20th century. In the year 1900, for the first time there were more Esperantists in France than in Tsarist Russia, Zamenhof's homeland, according to the statistics of activists enrolled in the Esperanto societies (as reported by Garvía 2015). The need of an IAL for practical purposes, such as tourism, commerce and diplomatic relations between the states, started to gain popularity among intellectuals and scholars, and it was popularised then through the press, especially in France (Large 1985). Moreover, in a moment where scientific research was produced not only in English, French and German but also in Japanese and Russian, an IAL was also considered as a serious option to solve the "scientific Babel", i.e. to have only one language for the writing of original, new scientific results (Gordin 2015). This idea of instrumental neutralism is well represented in the first ideological document, the Declaration of Esperantism, proclaimed during the first World Esperanto Congress, the moment in which the Esperanto Movement presented itself to the Old World (my translation from Esperanto, my emphasis):

1. Esperantism is the endeavour to spread worldwide *the use of this neutral, human language*, which, "not intruding upon the personal life of people and in no way aiming to replace existing national languages", would give to people of different nations the ability to understand each other […] All other ideals or hopes tied with Esperantism by any Esperantist are his or her purely private affair, for which Esperantism is not responsible […]
4. Esperanto has no lawgiving authority and is dependent on no particular person. All opinions and works of the creator of Esperanto have, similar to the opinions and work of every other Esperantist, an absolutely private quality. […]

5. An Esperantist is a person who knows and uses the Esperanto language with complete exactness, for whatever aim he uses it […][2]

The French leaders of the Esperanto Movement believed positivistically in an ethnically neutral language such as Esperanto as a tool for the improvement of human life, without taking into account the ethical message proposed originally by Zamenhof, nor the *interna ideo* generally accepted by Esperantists. However, the founder of the UEA, the Genevan Hector Hodler, wanted to develop the internal idea in a more political fashion. As Sikosek (2006) pointed out, it would be wrong to compare the political neutrality of UEA with the political neutrality of nation-states, which are, by their monopoly of power, in a fundamentally different position. In fact, the role envisioned by Hodler was on the level of relations between individuals, not states. It is not by chance that UEA was headquartered in Geneva, in neutral Switzerland, where the Red Cross was born as well. Unlike the leaders of the Esperanto Movement in France, Hodler had no faith in the acceptance of Esperanto by nation-state political leaders. On the contrary, he nurtured the network of *konsuloj* 'consuls' already established in 1906 during the second World Esperanto Congress in Geneva. These "consuls" became *delegitoj* 'delegates', acting as local contacts for individual Esperantists joining UEA on a personal basis, regardless of their passports. Hodler's scepticism about governments caused him to move away from the term "consul" which echoed the world of inter-state diplomacy.[3] This dualism between the originally French idea of Esperanto societies based on nation-states (called *naciaj societoj* in Esperanto at that time) and the French-speaking Swiss Esperanto movement's network of free individuals created considerable friction in the relations between UEA and the national societies, friction that would eventually be solved in 1933 in Cologne, Germany, during one of the most troublesome World Esperanto Congresses ever (Sikosek 2005). There, the national societies (since then called *landaj asocioj*, avoiding an explicit reference to the concept of nation, unlike the previous name) accepted that UEA would

2. The original Esperanto text follows: "1. La Esperantismo estas penado disvastigi en la tuta mondo la uzadon de lingvo neŭtrale homa, kiu "ne entrudante sin en la internan vivon de la popoloj kaj neniom celante elpuŝi la ekzistantajn lingvojn naciajn", donus al la homoj de malsamaj nacioj la eblon kompreniĝadi inter si […] Ĉiu alia ideo aŭ espero, kiun tiu aŭ alia Esperantisto ligas kun la Esperantismo, estos lia afero pure privata, por kiu la Esperantismo ne respondas. 4. Esperanto havas neniun personan leĝdonanton kaj dependas de neniu aparta homo. Ĉiuj opinioj kaj verkoj de la kreinto de Esperanto havas, simile al la opinioj kaj verkoj de ĉiu alia Esperantisto, karakteron absolute privatan […] 5. Esperantisto estas nomata ĉiu persono, kiu scias kaj uzas la lingvon Esperanto tute egale por kiaj celoj li ĝin uzas."

3. I am grateful to Humphrey Tonkin for this remark.

be the umbrella association that should lead the representation of the Esperanto movement to the external world. Unfortunately, that system did not last very long. In 1936, the headquarters of UEA were moved to London, officially because of the high costs of the office in Geneva. In reality, there was a desire to change the political equilibrium between UEA and the national associations, which eventually lead to a schism in the mainstream Esperanto movement. For ten years, there were two associations in competition for leadership of the Esperanto Movement: on one hand, there was the so-called "Genevan UEA", which took up Hodler's view of Esperantists as a network of individuals, while, on the other hand, there was the International Esperanto League (IEL), which interpreted its role as the umbrella of national societies (for more details on the history of UEA, see van Dijk 2012). Only after the tragedies of the Second World War, where Esperantists were openly persecuted (Lins 2017), the two associations merged together: the basic structure was that of IEL, while the name of UEA was used to promote the idea of continuity with the past.

The idea of neutrality between the two World Wars again changed its political colour. The mainstream Esperanto Movement between the two World Wars defined itself as "neutral" in order to distinguish itself from the politically and socially engaged Esperanto Movement that emerged after the foundation of the USSR and the raise of socialism in Europe. In the rhetoric of that time, Esperanto was considered the "international language of the proletarians". According to that view, proletarians should speak Esperanto, avoiding and eventually destroying national languages as instruments of oppression by the bourgeoisie and nation-states (Masson 1996). The left-wing Esperanto Movement was clearly compact in fighting against the neutralism of the mainstream Esperanto Movement, but on the other hand it was not united internally. In fact, there were different realities corresponding to the main ideologies linked with Esperanto: communism, socialism and anarchism. A separate problem was the relationship with the USSR, which at first supported but then openly and explicitly persecuted Esperantists during Stalin's period (Lins 2017).

It is true that the limits of the mainstream Esperanto Movement's political neutrality were severely tested in the 1930s. In Italy, for example, Esperantists tried an improbable alliance with Mussolini and Fascism, lasting only a few years (Minnaja 2007). In Germany, attempts were also made to become allies of the Nazis, with tragic results (Lins 2017). In fact, already in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler expressed his hostility to Esperanto, a language created by a Jew: "If the GEA [German Esperanto Association] thought to save Esperanto in Germany by embracing the Nazi Party, it was too late; it had always been too late" (Schor 2016: 180).

The history of the Esperanto Movement in 1930s Germany shows that point 5 of the Declaration of Esperantism of 1905 (quoted above) is problematic: the

Genevan UEA in the 1930s refused to protest against the Nazification of Esperanto in Germany because it violated the principle of the association's political neutrality. Yet, can we call a Nazi who uses Esperanto to find Esperanto speakers and kill them an Esperantist because of his active use of the language, as stated in point 5 of the Declaration of Esperantism? Nazism always considered Esperantism its nemesis, and the persecutions changed Esperanto's concept of neutrality forever.

Finally, it is worth noting that other relevant non-neutral Esperanto Movements exist, beside that of the left. One of the first ideologically non-neutral Esperanto Movements to emerge was that of the Catholics, founded in December 1902. For Catholic Esperantists, the role played by Esperanto in the long run was to become the new Latin of the Church, finally reuniting Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox. As the Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Miloslav Vlk, himself an Esperanto speaker, stated during the homily of a mass celebrated in Esperanto: "When I am with the Esperantists I always feel not only the advantages of the language, but that it brings about more than mutual understanding: it brings community, unity, communication. And at the level of the Gospel, at the level of the Church, this means one very important thing, because it is not only community but also the presence of Christ among mankind" (Matthias 2002).

Another relevant connection is between Esperanto and vegetarianism. The first World Vegetarian Congress was organised in 1908 in Dresden, Germany, by Esperanto speakers, who founded the first international association devoted to vegetarianism. Its name was *Internacia Unuiĝo de Esperantistaj Vegetaranoj* (IUEV), International Union of Esperantist Vegetarians. In the second congress, held in Manchester in 1909, it was recognised that "the Esperanto Society worked like the Vegetarian Society, for humanitarian ends; it is desired to bring the peoples of the Earth into closer union, and therefore the two should shake hands and join in their efforts." After that, Esperanto was recognised as one of the languages in which papers might be submitted for communications during international congresses. However, the presence and relevance of Esperanto as a working language in World Vegetarian Congresses varies according to the years. In any case, it was never predominant after the first meeting in Dresden.

4. Multilingualism and Esperanto: A complex relation

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Esperanto Movement had to reconstruct itself. The architect of the new UEA was Ivo Lapenna, an Italian-speaking Dalmatian Yugoslav, who learnt Esperanto at the age of nineteen. During the Second World War, Lapenna fought against the Ustashe, the Croatian Fascists who ruled a puppet state of Nazi Germany. In taking the leadership of the Esperanto Movement,

Lapenna was motivated by antifascism, as well as by anticommunism: his idea of political neutrality was linked to the newly created United Nations. Lapenna saw Esperanto as the only possible solution to *the* "world language problem". For him this meant that there was still no ethnically neutral language for diplomatic relations among countries affiliated with the United Nations. He considered unrealistic the acceptance of a single national language such as English for international communication by the other nation-states (Lapenna *et al.* 1974). Using his diplomatic skills, he tried to get Esperanto accepted as a working language within the United Nations, but in the end his best result was acquiring for UEA "Consultative Relations Category B" with UNESCO following the acceptance by the UNESCO General Conference in Montevideo of Resolution IV.4.422–4224 (1954) in favour of UEA's work for Esperanto, which, according to the resolution, "correspond[s] with the aims and ideals of UNESCO". Ironically, in the resolution Esperanto was not recognised for its linguistic features (for instance, its high degree of transparency between pronunciation and writing system, or low degree of suppletivity thanks to morphological regularity), but for its ideal, represented by Zamenhof's "internal idea". My hypothesis is that eventually this motivation dashed Lapenna's hopes to make Esperanto the main language for inter-state diplomacy.

Certainly Lapenna did not have a positive attitude towards multilingualism: for him, the lack of a shared language across the countries was *the* world's language problem, in Esperanto *la monda lingvo-problemo*. In Lapenna's view, there was space for one language problem only and therefore one solution: Esperanto. However, a new generation of Esperanto speakers emerged with a very different point of view. In 1956, a major change occurred in the structure of the Esperanto Movement: since then, a distinct association, a *junulara movado* "youth movement", was accepted as part of UEA, only four years after its foundation.[4] Its name was TEJO (*Tutmonda Esperantista Junulara Organizo*, World Esperanto Youth Organisation). Most ideological novelties of the Esperanto Movement would emerge from TEJO, while UEA in many cases would act as the bastion of conservatism. A new style also emerged: instead of statements by single UEA leaders, documents with new ideas about Esperanto's language representation were signed collectively. One of the most important appeared in 1969, when the young Esperantists met in Tyresö, Sweden. There, the following Declaration was written (my translation from Esperanto of this fundamental passage):

4. An ancestor of TEJO, called TJO, was already founded in 1938, but the Second World War prevented it to be very active.

> If we consistently apply the concept of conserving the integrity of the individual, we will condemn linguistic and cultural discrimination in any form, any so-called solution of the language problem based on discrimination. We find that until now we have not paid enough attention to the destruction of the cultural and linguistic background of many peoples. This destruction is nothing else than a tool of linguistic imperialism.[5]

Lapenna's view is explicitly accused of being discriminatory and therefore untenable for the new generation of Esperantists. In the same direction, the magazine *Etnismo* ('Ethnicism'), founded in 1972, and the 'international committee for ethnic freedoms' (in Esperanto: *Internacia Komitato por Etnaj Liberecoj*, IKEL), founded six years later, took those ideas a step further, to include not only international relations but also intra-national relations and especially regional and minority languages. From the first issue of the magazine (my translation from Esperanto):

> The struggle against linguistic discrimination can in no way limit itself to state languages, rather it should consider at the same time, if it is sincere, the unfortunate languages of ethnic minorities within the states. (*Etnismo*, 1, May 1972)[6]

It should be emphazised that this "ethnicist" line within the Esperanto Movement was considered non-neutral and never became mainstream. In particular, Esperantists of the "Soviet school" did not take part in the struggle against linguistic imperialism, emphasising that 'international', 'interethnic' and 'global' language and Esperanto can co-exist in harmony (Pietiläinen 2010). However, in the long run the idea that multilingualism is not a curse but on the contrary a source of richness per se enlarged the average Esperantist's world view, according to the fieldwork study by Caligaris (2016). The point now became to find Esperanto's place on a multilingual worldwide language market. Caligaris's survey shows that the awareness of minority language rights and respect for language diversity are now part of the cultural baggage of both young adult and older participants in Esperanto meetings.

The expression "linguistic imperialism" in the Declaration of Tyresö eventually indicted the role of English as a global language, many years before the expression entered the academic discourse through the influential book by Phillipson

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5. The original Esperanto text follows: "Se oni konsekvence aplikas la koncepton pri konservo de la integreco de la individuo, oni nepre venas al malaprobo de lingva kaj kultura diskriminacioj en ĉiu formo, al malaprobo de ĉiu tiel nomata solvo de la lingva problemo, kiu baziĝas sur diskriminacio, kaj al konstato, ke oni ne sufiĉe atentas la detruadon de la kultura kaj lingva fono de multaj popoloj. Tiu detruado estas nenio alia ol instrumento de lingva imperiismo."

6. Original Esperanto text: "Luktado kontraŭ lingva diskriminacio neniel povas limiĝi al ŝtataj lingvoj, sed ĝi devas, kondiĉe ke ĝi estas sincera, konsideri samtempe la ŝtatinterne malfavoratajn lingvojn de etnaj minoritatoj."

(1992) with that title. The approach of the Tyresö generation is conflictual, pitting Esperanto against English, the latter being the problem of today's world, the former being the solution for the future. This approach proved to be quite unsuccessful in the long term, especially when dealing with the outside world: the more years passed, the more English was perceived as a catch-all winner of all international domains of use – with some authors emphasising the positive effect, while others the risks (see at least Gobbo 2015a). In such a scenario, it became increasingly difficult to determine a relevant role for Esperanto.

The generation after Tyresö believed that a new change of perspective was needed. Again, young Esperantists produced a collective document at a congress in Rauma, Finland, in 1980. This document was explicity called the *Raŭma Manifesto*. The text criticises explicitly not only Tyresö's and Lapenna's generations but that of the pioneers (my translation from Esperanto):

> The signers find a contradiction in the attitude of Esperantists, almost a conflict between our Superego and Ego: our Superego makes us preach some myths over others – L2 for all / English is our enemy / UN should adopt Esperanto / etc. – and praise the [Esperanto] language too much, even in an unfair way, in interviews; at the same time, among ourselves, we enjoy and apply Esperanto for what it really is, without any regard for the slogans of the early years.[7]

Using notions inspired by Freud, the original *raŭmistoj* 'Raumists' – as they were called after the publication of the Manifesto – moved the conflict from the external world (as the Esperanto Movement had always done until then) to the inner world of Esperantists themselves. Then, they go on, advancing their proposal (emphasis in the original):

> We believe that […] the downfall of English is neither a task nor a concern of Esperantists: in the end English is only an *auxiliary* language, analogously to French in its time […]: Zamenhof never proposed that the Movement fight against French, because he had another, more valuable, alternative role for Esperanto in mind. […] Esperantisticity is almost the same as belonging to a self-elected, diasporic, linguistic minority.[8]

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7. Original Esperanto text follows: "La subskribintoj konstatis kontraŭdiron en la sinteno de la esperantistaro, kvazaŭ konflikton inter idea superegoo kaj egoo: nia superegoo igas nin prediki al la aliaj homoj pri kelkaj mitoj – la dua lingvo por ĉiu; la angla lingvo estas nia malamiko; UN devas adopti Esperanton; ktp – kaj laŭdegi la lingvon eĉ neobjektive okaze de intervjuo; samtempe, inter ni, ni ĝuas kaj aplikas Esperanton laŭ tio kio ĝi efektive estas, sendepende de la pracelaj sloganoj."

8. Original Esperanto text follows: "Ni kredas ke […] la faligo de la angla lingvo estas nek tasko nek zorgo de la esperantistoj: finfine la angla rolas nur kiel *help*lingvo, analoge al la franca siatempe […] Zamenhof neniam proponis al la E-movado kiel celon kontraŭstari la francan, ĉar

Two comments are needed here. First, the original *raŭmistoj* 'Raumists' got back to the roots, arguing that Zamenhof's ideals for Esperanto were different from other pioneers, as he never challenged French's number one position. That choice is quite obvious if we consider that the centre of the Esperanto Movement at the time was France: it would be self-defeating to make French its enemy. Moreover, some of Zamenhof's ideals illustrated above were very radical and unacceptable to the Esperanto Movement of his time. The first Raumists, i.e., the ones who wrote the Manifesto and signed it at first, suggested taking up and realising Zamenhof's original project, without any success. Second, the identification of the Esperanto community of practice with linguistic minorities goes counter to the idea introduced by the Tyresö generation of Esperanto as a valuable help for language minorities: if Esperanto is put on the same level as linguistic minorities, there is no special role left for it in this sense. Here, a short digression is necessary. A regional or minority language exists as such only in the presence of a majority language: in other words, there is no minority language without a majority language. Usually the majority is perceived as the antagonist, and quite often it is also the official language in the given territory where the minority language is also spoken. This is clearly not the case with Esperanto, as there is neither a relation with a definite territory (it is not a "language of Poland", despite what *Ethnologue* 2016 states!) nor is there a clear majority language to oppose it. In reality, Esperanto is quite often simply ignored in the linguistic panorama in any context. What Esperanto speakers realised is neither Zamenhof's idea of a "neutral people" somehow echoed in the Manifesto (no temples, no common everyday life together exists), nor a linguistic minority in the usual sense (as there is no majority language threatening Esperanto).

The Manifesto of Rauma is the document that ignited most of the debates inside the Esperanto community of practice until the publication of the Prague Manifesto in 1996 (see below). It had indeed the merit of opening the issue of the meaning of *Esperanto-kulturo*, Esperanto culture. Nowadays, the discourse around Esperanto in its internal and external communications not only relies on the language per se but also on the culture produced in the language: original and translated prose, narrative and theatre, as well as popular music of various genres – such as pop, rock, rap, reggae, mainly made by garage bands. All these cultural artefacts have been produced in the language by its speakers for its speakers since the early days of Esperanto life, but only after the Manifesto of Rauma were they consistently used in external communications too, proving that Esperanto is not only a "neutral language" but also a vehicle for a sense of belonging.

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por Esperanto li antaŭvidis pli valoran alternativan rolon. Esperantisteco estas kvazaŭ la aparteno al mem elektita diaspora lingva minoritato."

During the last twenty years, the meaning of the word *raŭmisto* has been popularised in a way perhaps unexpected by the original authors of the Manifesto: it now indicates an Esperantist who cares much more about the life of the community than of the struggles of the Esperanto Movement to be recognised by the external world. The problem underlying the Manifesto is that many Esperantists reacted by explicitly distancing themselves from it, reaffirming that they were more involved in the diffusion of the language than in creating cultural artefacts. These Esperantists started to be called *finvenkistoj*, i.e. believers in the Final Victory, i.e. the moment when everybody will speak Esperanto as a second language. The result is that for decades Esperantists were divided into two fiercely contrasting ideological parties. This paradigm was finally considered a false dichotomy by the latest generation of young TEJO Esperantists, who in 2012 composed a resolution at the World Congress in Hanoi (my translation from Esperanto):

> In the youth movement we are used to working both for the development and strengthening of the Esperanto community and culture, as well as for the diffusion of the neutrally human international language. We believe that TEJO's action can be completely and largely defined as "Raumistic finvenkism" (*raŭmisma finvenkismo*).[9]

There is still a radical group that hopelessly tries to form an "Esperanto nation" based on the concept of diasporic statelessness, but this minority group is marginalised by the mainstream Esperanto Movement. The concept of diasporic minority has been rejected by the majority of Esperanto speakers, for being too nationalistic.

5. Esperanto and linguistic rights in the Digital Era

Two other major events deeply influenced the Esperanto Movement in the 1990s: the collapse of the USSR and the invention of the World Wide Web. After the end of the Soviet era, many national Esperanto societies in Eastern Europe entered a crisis that forced UEA to rethink its geopolitical role and therefore its language ideology. In fact, UEA's role as a bridge across the Iron Curtain did not make any sense anymore. In 1996 a new Manifesto was signed in Prague. Unlike all other previous documents, this one was immediately translated into dozens of languages. In other words, the Prague Manifesto was directed at the Esperanto community

9. Original Esperanto text follows: "En la junulara movado jam estas kutime labori kaj por evoluigo kaj fortigo de la Esperanto-komunumo kaj kulturo, samkiel por la disvastigo de la lingvo internacia, neŭtrale homa. Ni kredas ke la TEJO-agado povas esti pli komplete kaj amplekse difinita kiel raŭmisma finvenkismo."

of practice and the external world at the same time. We can compare it to the Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights, written in the same year by the World Commission on Linguistic Rights, a non-official body of NGOs and other organisations working in the field of linguistic law under the auspices of UNESCO. While the Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights is fourteen pages long and consists of 52 articles, the Prague Manifesto numbers but two pages and seven articles long. Gobbo (2016) analyzed the text twenty years after its publication, stating that the Prague Manifesto inserted two concepts in the ideological discourse of Esperanto: justice (pertaining to the domain of ethics) and effectiveness (pertaining to the domain of economics). While the first concept, expressed in various ways, was always present within the Esperanto Movement – even if implicitly – the second one was an absolute novelty in the context of Esperanto ideological documents. In fact, the idea here is that the effectiveness of Esperanto can be measured in quantitative terms. This idea has been around for a while (see Fantini & Reagan 1992), but it was never put at the forefront of communication with the external world by the Esperanto community itself. An example is point 3 (official translation, italics included):

> 3. Pedagogical Efficiency. Only a small percentage of those who study a foreign language begin to master it. A full understanding of Esperanto is achievable within a month of study. Various studies have ascribed propaedeutic effects to the study of other languages. One also recommends Esperanto as a core element in courses for the linguistic sensitisation of students. *We assert that the difficulty of ethnic languages always will present obstacles to many students, who nevertheless would profit from the knowledge of a second language. We are a movement for effective language instruction.*

The idea of the practical utility of Esperanto is slowly gaining ground again in the language representation of its language activists. For decades, Esperantists could work for Esperanto only during their free time: in other words, they earned their living elsewhere. This is still the case for most members of the Esperanto community of practice; however, some initiatives are heading in another direction. It seems that the latest generation of Millennials is following Zygmunt Bauman's (2000) idea of 'liquid modernity', which states that all social entities (such as political parties, universities, churches, and – by extension – the Esperanto Movement, expressed by national societies and other associations) are responding with increasing flexibility and fluidity in order to adapt in a fast-changing world. In particular, the more the World Wide Web spreads, the more members of the Esperanto community are potentially attracted, thanks to free courses on the internet. Brick and mortar schools and local Esperanto clubs still carry on the work, but have been forced to adapt to the new situation. One of the most influential Esperantists of the web generation is Chuck Smith, an American polyglot based in Berlin. He opened the

Esperanto Wikipedia, launched the Duolingo English-Esperanto course and the homonymous app (400,000 learners in one year, on September 2017 more than one million learners enrolled, in its English-based version) and co-founded the mobile app *Amikumu* ("do the friend thing"), launched in April 2017. The aim of the app is to connect speakers of the same language and be in contact with them through chatting. Esperanto was the first language to be used, and the Esperanto community performed the test phase (the author was an alpha and beta tester). The UEA is a major sponsor of *Amikumu*. This app actualises Hodler's idea of Esperanto living primarily through the networking of individuals.

The web generation introduced new traits into the language ideology of Esperanto. In 1905 Zamenhof decided to free Esperanto from his author's prerogative to fend for itself, as a gift to humanity. In 1985, something very similar happened with the establishment of the Free Software Foundation by Richard Stallman (2002), the legal framework that became famous with Linux and Wikipedia. It is not by chance that Linux and the popular free software office suite LibreOffice can be installed in an Esperanto version: the web generation considers Esperanto as if it were free software ante litteram. I have had the occasion to note that many male young Esperantists born after year 2000 are either computer scientists or polyglots, often both. Although there are no surveys to confirm this observation, the fact that the quality of web sites and mobile apps dealing with Esperanto is generally quite high can be considered an indicator of a positive correlation between the web culture and Esperanto. Other non-traditional ways to discover Esperanto matters include Hollywood languages, such as Star Trek's Klingon or Dothraki of *Game of Thrones*, and comics for collectors (e.g., Tin Tin, Asterix, Pondus, which exist in Esperanto). Perhaps the main challenge currently facing the Esperanto Movement today is not just providing basic courses for beginners, but providing services in the real world for people who have already had some virtual experience with the language.

From a more ideological perspective, Esperanto can become a critical element in the larger framework of alternative globalisation, making the world a better place to live, a world where respect for different cultures will be the norm. Some recent UEA initiatives are heading in that direction. On April 21 and 22, 2016 diplomats, scholars and activists of NGOs actively participated in a symposium, organised by Humphrey Tonkin (University of Hartford), former President of TEJO and UEA, on the topic of languages and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a programme launched by the United Nations in 2015. It is important to note that languages in general, and certainly not Esperanto in particular, are never explicitly mentioned in the SDG objectives, as if linguistic rights were not a pertinent topic for sustainable development. The UEA in this case plays the role of the NGO that advances linguistic rights at all levels.

6. Concluding remarks

Although Esperanto is not a contested language according to Nic Craith's definition (2006: 108), nonetheless it shows a considerable degree of contestedness, with its own peculiarities, as illustrated above. Esperanto is contested as a fully-fledged language because of its artificial origin and its ethnical neutrality, which is perceived as a lack of authenticity. The Esperanto Movement tries to counter these attacks through a complex ideological elaboration, mainly – but not solely – through the elaboration of the concept of neutrality. The three examples of non-mainstream Esperanto Movements (left-wing, Christian ecumenical, vegetarian) demonstrate how Esperanto's soft ideological basis allows other non-linguistic ideologies to enter the Esperanto community of practice with their own agenda intact. Ultimately, Esperanto has become a space of encounter of different people using Zamenhof's creation as their common link.

The motivations behind contestedness may differ, but the results are similar to what happens to many other contested languages, i.e. Esperanto is simply ignored and omitted from public discourse. Moreover, its vitality relies mainly on language activists, as is the case with many contested languages. The debate around the Manifesto of Rauma can perhaps be extended in the case of contested languages (let's call them C-ishes): my hypothesis is that all language activists both care about C-ish and its vitality (a sort of "Rauma") as well as struggle for the official recognition of C-ish from the external world ("Final Victory"). They represent two sides of the same coin, rather than two conflicting parties, as the abovementioned TEJO resolution in Hanoi suggests. However, before confirming this hypothesis, further research is needed.

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Index

This Index contains the main subjects covered in the book as well as the names of all the languages mentioned, their ISO 639-3 code and their adjectival uses in linguistic contexts.

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