

**ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE SAFEGUARDING OF MINORITY
LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS IN MODERN ITALY:**

The Cases of Sardinia and Sicily

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to assess attitudes of speakers towards their local or regional variety. Research in the field of sociolinguistics has shown that factors such as gender, age, place of residence, and social status affect linguistic behaviour and perception of local and regional varieties.

This thesis consists of three main parts. In the first part the concept of language, minority language, and dialect is discussed; in the second part the official position towards local or regional varieties in Europe and in Italy is considered; in the third part attitudes of speakers towards actions aimed at safeguarding their local or regional varieties are analyzed. The conclusion offers a comparison of the results of the surveys and a discussion on how things may develop in the future.

This thesis is carried out within the framework of the discipline of sociolinguistics.

DEDICATION

Ai miei figli Youcef e Amil che mi hanno distolto spesso dai miei studi

A mio marito Samir

Ai miei genitori Linda e Mimmo

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PRELIMINARY DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the content of sections 4.3.3, 4.4.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.2.1, 4.4.2.2, 4.4.2.3, and 4.4.3 included in Chapter Four of this thesis was briefly discussed in my MA dissertation *Minority Languages in Italy: Aspects of Bilingualism in Sardinia and South Tyrol* but that all the material has been rewritten.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SI	Standard Italian
EU	European Union
EP	European Parliament
RML	Regional or Minority Language
Ols	Osservatorio linguistico siciliano
Als	Atlante linguistico siciliano

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to analyse attitudes of speakers towards their local or regional variety (using the neutral term ‘variety’ to cover both ‘dialects’ and ‘languages’). This will be done through an assessment of the linguistic competence of the speakers, the status of the local or regional variety within the community, the link between local or regional variety and local or regional identity, and the reactions towards measures aimed at the safeguarding of the local or regional variety.

I will adopt a sociolinguistic approach, according to which a language is a communicative process that takes place within a social context. Sociolinguistics is interested in the relationship between language and society and in the way language and society influence each other (Wardhaugh, 1992: 11). Since social structure can be measured by reference to factors such as gender, age, and social status, verbal behaviour and performance can also be related to these factors. Attitudes of speakers towards their variety also play a very important role in affecting their linguistic behaviour. As Berruto puts it: ‘gli atteggiamenti linguistici sono una componente fondamentale dell’identità dei parlanti e costituiscono un fattore molto importante per comprendere il comportamento linguistico degli individui’(1999: 112). In the study of the relationship between language and society, another important area of investigation is the status the variety enjoys within a specific community. Berruto observes:

Le lingue standard e le varietà standard delle lingue godono di regola di (alto) prestigio. [...] Non bisogna tuttavia credere che le varietà di lingua proprie degli strati bassi e di gruppi svantaggiati siano sempre del tutto prive di prestigio: anzitutto, prestigio è sempre un concetto relativo, e in secondo luogo ma soprattutto, occorre distinguere fra ‘prestigio aperto’, esplicitamente riconosciuto da tutti i membri della comunità e ‘prestigio coperto’ o nascosto, vale a dire quel tipo di prestigio che si discosta dai valori dominanti della comunità e la cui esistenza non è ammessa esplicitamente. (1999: 108-09)

My investigation is focused on the Italian linguistic situation. In Italy, local or regional varieties are still very much alive. Although recent surveys suggest that the spread of the national language has limited their use to informal and familiar contexts (www.istat.it/Comunicati/Fuoricale/allegati/Lingua-ita/ver3.doc [accessed 27 May 2004]), they continue to play a very important role in the life of many Italians. Local or regional varieties are, in fact, the most outward sign of expressing local or regional loyalties, which, in Italy, are often perceived in conflict with the national identity. In recent years, there have been attempts to safeguard local or regional varieties, usually associated to illiteracy and backwardness, and to give them equal dignity, if not equal status, to that of the national language. The recent revaluation of local or regional varieties has raised a number of issues such as:

- the definition of local or regional varieties
- an emphasis on the link between local or regional varieties and local or regional identities
- the undertaking of actions aimed at the safeguarding of local or regional varieties

At this point, I will discuss these points briefly in sections 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4.

1.2 The definition of local or regional varieties

Positive attitudes towards local or regional varieties can raise the issue of how to define them. Promoters and speakers can regard them as languages rather than as dialects. The distinction between ‘language’ and ‘dialect’, however, is not clear-cut and can be a controversial issue. Wardhaugh describes the ambiguity of the two terms in the following way:

Many speakers experience difficulty in deciding whether what they speak should be called a *language* or a *dialect* of a language. Such indecision is not surprising: exactly how do you decide what is a language and what is a dialect of a language? What criteria can you possibly use to determine that, whereas variety X is a language, variety Y is only a dialect of a language? What are the essential differences between a language and a dialect? (1992: 24)

The answer to these questions is not straightforward. Extra-linguistic criteria can play a major role in determining the distinction between 'language' and 'dialect'. In Italy, for instance, Italian and the so-called Italian dialects derive from Latin. The national language in Italy is based on the literary language of Florence in the fourteenth century, the language of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. The Italian dialects are not linguistically inferior to the national language. Moreover, they differ from each other in phonology, grammar, and lexis and can be reciprocally unintelligible to their users in the same way Italian and Spanish can be. Lepschy (1990: 63) makes this point when he recalls an episode in Venice, when he overheard two people speaking a language unintelligible to him. He assumed that the two speakers were foreigners. However, when he asked which language they were speaking, they replied in ordinary Italian and explained that they were speaking an Abruzzese dialect.

The language vs. dialect opposition raises the issue of distinguishing within the Italian linguistic situation between Italo-Romance dialects on the one hand and separate Romance languages on the other. Sardinian, Friulian, and Ladin are included by law 482 in the minority languages spoken in Italy on the grounds that they are Romance tongues that do not belong to the family of the dialects of Italy. The reasons why they deserve the status of language, as opposed to dialect, are not entirely clear. The linguistic distance from standard Italian is often used to justify the distinction: Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian differentiate themselves from standard Italian more than the so-called Italian dialects. However, this criterion is debatable: how much more do these three varieties need to differ from the national language, in order to deserve the status of language? And how can one prove that, in their case, there is a higher degree of linguistic autonomy?

The controversy on the status of language of Sardinian, Friulian, and Ladin leads to the question: if these three are languages, what about the many other varieties spoken in Italy such as Piemontese, Sicilian, Neapolitan, and so on? The definition of Italo-Romance tongues on the grounds of their linguistic difference from other Italo-Romance tongues, in reality, has more to do with the perception the speakers have of their local or regional variety and culture as being separate from the rest of Italy. Claims for linguistic autonomy have been made by the groups speaking these varieties. Sardinians, Friulians, and Ladins wanted, for various reasons, to have

a language which was different from the national one. These claims have been followed by the recognition that these varieties are languages.

It is important, therefore, to stress that the difference between a language and a dialect is not strictly linguistic but cultural, social, and political. Some dialects have acquired the status of language not because they are intrinsically superior to other dialects but because for reasons related to economic, political and cultural prestige.

1.3 Local or regional varieties and identities

In Italy, the spread of the national language has affected the vitality of local or regional varieties. At the time of political unification, the local or regional varieties were the main medium of communication for the majority of the Italian citizens. De Mauro (1963: 41) claims that, at that time, only 2.5 per cent of the population was able to speak Italian. The estimate of Castellani (1982) is higher: according to him, 12.63 per cent of the population could speak Italian. Even Castellani's figure shows that competence in the national language was very low. From a minority of people being regular speakers of the national language at the end of the Second World War (no more than 37 per cent), Italian is now spoken by the vast majority (Moss, 2000: 110). The turning point for the acquisition of Italian was 1968 (Tosi, 2001: 14-17). During this year, the socio-political changes favoured the expansion of the national language. This process of linguistic homogenization has determined changes in the use of local dialects (Tosi, 2001: 24): these are mainly used in informal and familiar contexts, especially in urban areas, which have had a leading role for the spread of the national language. The consequence of this phenomenon for local or regional varieties is that their survival is perceived as at risk. The decline or even disappearance of the local or regional varieties has become a reason for concern or regret, not only among the older generation, but also among the younger people who wish to preserve regional solidarity alongside national identity (Tosi, 2001: 25). Fishman describes the link between language and identity in the following terms:

[...] A traditionally associated language is more than just a tool of communication for its culture. Such a language can mean much more to its ethnoculture than just languages in general or than the language capacity with which all humans are endowed. Such a language is often viewed as a very specific gift, a marker of identity and a specific responsibility *vis-à-vis* future generations. (2001: 5)

1.4 Actions aimed at the safeguarding of local or regional varieties

The concern for the future of local or regional varieties has created what Giulio Lepschy calls an ‘interventionist attitude’ (1994: 12): the local or regional varieties need to be protected through specific actions ensuring their survival. Promoters encourage the introduction of the endangered variety in the educational system, in the media, and in formal and administrative contexts.

Actions aimed at the safeguarding of the variety at risk, however, are usually preceded by a formal recognition that this variety is a language. The newly acquired status of language increases the chances of receiving financial support from organizations and official bodies involved in the safeguarding of regional tongues. The Council of Europe, for instance, grants funds to safeguard a regional tongue spoken in Europe, as long as this enjoys the official status of language.

Moreover, demands for linguistic autonomy may be met by the approval of legislation promoting the variety at risk and encouraging its use in formal and official settings. In Italy, national law 482 (1999) includes Sardinian, Friulian, and Ladin in the list of minority languages previously excluded from protection and entitles them to measures to safeguard their linguistic and cultural heritage. Law 482 was preceded by several bills. Approval of bill 612 in the Chamber of Deputies (1991) gave rise to controversy, as it was seen as a threat to the unity of Italy and encouraging the positions of the Lega (Northern political party claiming the autonomy of the North from the central government of Rome) in favour of adopting their dialect as the official language of their region. The hostility towards the bill may find an explanation in the fact that Sardinian, Friulian, and Ladin were included in the number of minorities requiring protection.

To conclude this section, it is worthwhile to note the view of Moss on this issue. When he refers to the opposition that the bill 612 (1991) met among cultural and intellectual commentators, he observes that the distinction between dialect and minority language is a matter of contention, often depending on the agenda of those who discuss the topic (2000: 123).

1.5 The case studies

The reasons why certain groups have advanced claims for linguistic autonomy, together with the implication of this recognition, offer an interesting field of research. Would law 482 (1999) guarantee the survival of minority languages, or even favour their diffusion? Would the speakers accept the use of these varieties in contexts where the national language is normally spoken or written? Moreover, what about the other local or regional varieties spoken in Italy? Would the speakers of Piedmontese, Sicilian, or Neapolitan argue: if Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian are considered Romance languages, what about our own varieties? If law 482 allows their use in education, broadcasting, and administration, can we not safeguard our own local or regional varieties in the same way?

For this reason, I decided to compare a situation where a ‘Romance language’ is spoken with another where an ‘Italian dialect’ is spoken. The varieties selected were Sardinian and Sicilian. Their choice was determined by the fact that they have in common the characteristic of being spoken in an island. The other similarity is that both Sardinia and Sicily enjoy a higher degree of administrative autonomy, compared to the other Italian regions: they are both special statute regions. However, while in Sardinia administrative autonomy is matched by linguistic autonomy, in Sicily this is not the case.

The intention of this thesis is, therefore, to compare the attitude of the Sardinians towards their language with that of the Sicilians towards their dialect. For this reason, a questionnaire was formulated to assess the replies of a group of sixty Sardinians and sixty Sicilians. The areas investigated are:

- the competence in Sicilian and Sardinian and the linguistic behaviour of the sample
- the status Sicilian and Sardinian enjoy within the community
- the link between local or regional variety and local or regional identity
- reactions towards actions aimed at the safeguarding of Sardinian and Sicilian
- views on the issue of the promotion of Sardinian and Sicilian through legislation

1.6 Limitations

One has to be aware of the limitations of this research. The size of the sample is too small to allow generalization on the current linguistic situation in Sardinia and Sicily and on the attitude of the speakers towards their local or regional variety. However, larger-scale surveys have been taken into consideration and, very often, similar results have been found between this study and more exhaustive ones. When a discrepancy occurred between my findings and those of other studies, a possible explanation has been offered.

Despite the limitations of this research, I hope that this analysis will provide a framework in which to situate further studies.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of three main parts: a first part introducing the concepts of national language, minority language, and dialect, a second part examining the position of minority languages in the EU as well as the status of minority languages and dialects in Italy. The third part of the thesis is focused on the link between language and identity. A more detailed outline of the thesis follows:

- Chapter Two attempts to clarify the concepts of language, dialect, and minority language, stressing that extra-linguistic factors are very important in the definition of these terms.
- Chapter Three provides a wider institutional setting in which to situate the present study. The chapter examines the status of linguistic minority groups within the European Union and discusses whether and how linguistic minorities within the EU are protected. The main aim of this chapter is to show that the EU's friendly attitude towards multilingualism is a consequence of the member states' tendency to favour monolingualism within their territories. However, this friendly attitude towards multilingualism has made it easier for minority groups to advance demands for protection of their own language and culture.

- Chapter Four examines the status of dialects and minority languages in Italy from political unification to the contemporary period. During this time, the status of minority languages has improved, also as a result of the EU's friendly attitude towards them. The position of local or regional varieties classified as dialects has also benefited from this new approach.
- Chapter Five analyses the link between local or regional varieties and local or regional identities. The different ways of safeguarding local varieties and cultures are assessed.
- Chapter Six investigates what has been done at a practical level to safeguard and encourage Sardinian and Sicilian.
- Chapter Seven describes the methodology adopted by the present study.
- Chapters Eight and Nine discuss attitudes towards Sardinian and Sicilian and reactions to possible ways of safeguarding them. The linguistic competence of a sample of Sardinian and Sicilian respondents and their attitudes towards the promotion of Sardinian and Sicilian is analysed. The data are collected through questionnaires distributed to Sardinians and Sicilians.
- Chapter Ten summarizes the main findings of this study and its contributions to the field of sociolinguistics, especially as it relates to local and regional varieties. It provides a general conclusion together with recommendations for further research in this area.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEFINITION OF ‘LANGUAGE’, ‘DIALECT’, AND ‘MINORITY LANGUAGE’

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will attempt to clarify the concepts of language, dialect, and minority language, stressing that extra-linguistic factors are very important in the definition of these terms.

2.2 Language and dialect

To the question ‘What is a language?’ one can answer that a language is what the members of a particular society speak. However, confusion can occur when people are asked to label a certain variety as a language or as a dialect. Haugen (1966: 923) points out that this lack of clarity dates back to the Ancient Greeks. In the classical period there was no unified Greek norm, but only a group of closely related norms. Each Greek dialect was specialized for certain literary uses: e.g. Ionic for history, Doric for the choral lyric, and Attic for tragedy. In this period, therefore, there was no unified norm but a group of written dialects, based on spoken dialects of the regions whose name they bore. These spoken dialects derived from a Common Greek language of an older period, which can be reconstructed by comparison of the dialects with each other and with their Indo-European kinsmen (Haugen, 1966: 923). ‘Dialect’ is a Greek term and its original meaning is ‘language of a country’. In the postclassical period, however, the Greek dialects disappeared and were replaced by a unified norm, the *koinè*, based on the dialect of Athens. Moreover, Haugen suggests that the linguistic situation in Ancient Greece was both the model and the stimulus for the use of the term ‘dialect’ in modern writing. Trovato, in his article ‘Dialetto e sinonimi’, states that the linguistic situation in Greece was compared to the Italian linguistic situation during the sixteenth century. The first text in which the comparison is established is the second redaction of the *Libro del cortegiano* by Baldesar Castiglione (1518-20):

Non però estimo che non si possano usare li termini che usano adesso li toscani et ancor gli altri italiani, perché, sì come li greci hanno cinque lingue et in tutte scrivono e spesso confondano l'una con l'altra senza biasmo, così credo a noi sia leccito torre termini italiani d'ogni sorte, e basti che se ne servino le regole grammaticali e che l'uomo sia discreto e cauto in ellegere belle parole, ma però consuete nel comun parlare, et in tal modo ne risulterà una lingua che si potrà dire italiana, comune a tutti. (Ghinassi (ed.) 1968: 43)

Furthermore, Trovato agrees with the hypothesis of Alinei that the revival of the Greek concept 'dialect' took place during the Italian Renaissance and only afterwards spread to the other European languages (Alinei, 1981: 148-49). The concept was already familiar to the Italian humanists in the first half of the fifteenth century and the first instance of the word 'dialettò' appears in the *Occorrenze umane* by Niccolò Liburnio in 1546 (Trovato, 1984: 211).

Haugen points out that 'language' and 'dialect' can have different senses in the technological terminology of linguistics:

In a descriptive, synchronic sense 'language' can refer either to a single linguistic norm, or to a group of related norms. In a historical, diachronic sense 'language' can either be a common language on its way to dissolution, or a common language resulting from unification. A 'dialect' is then any one of the related norms comprised under the general name 'language', historically the result of either divergence or convergence. (1966: 923)

However, when referring to language and dialect, there is another dimension, the functional, which concerns the social functions of a language. While the study of linguistic structure is the central task of the linguist, the functional dimension falls into the domain of the sociolinguist. From a sociolinguistic point of view, a language is a variety that is fully developed to respond to the needs of the modern society. It is what is often referred to as a 'standard language'. The concept of 'standard language' is closely linked to that of 'nation'. A distinct language is the most visible sign of a specific identity, which coincides with that of the nation: to be French is to speak French, to be Italian is to speak Italian, and so on. While a standard language is a developed language from the social point of view, a dialect is an undeveloped one in this respect. It is a language, Haugen says, 'that no one has taken the trouble to develop into what is often referred to as a standard language' (1966: 927). All the modern standard languages are based on the standardization of a dialect: French is based on the standardization of the dialect spoken in Paris, Italian on the standardization of the Florentine dialect of the fourteenth century, and so on.

Standardization is a deliberate process, often carried out by governments seeking to promote a certain variety spoken in a country to the rank of 'standard'. Standard languages are often national languages. Behind the standardization of a language there is thus usually a political aim.

It is important to stress that strictly linguistic criteria are not sufficient to assess whether a certain variety constitutes a dialect or a language. In an attempt to solve the problem, a vital role is played by extra-linguistic factors relating to specific political, economical, and social conditions of a particular group.

Haugen (1966: 933) isolates four aspects of language development, which are necessary to transform a certain variety from the condition of dialect into that of language: 1) selection of norm, 2) codification of form, 3) elaboration of function, 4) acceptance by the community. Selection of norm means choosing amongst several vernaculars the one that will function as the norm for that particular society. Obviously, the selected variety will enjoy a higher status than the other varieties spoken by a social group. Therefore, it is vital that the selected variety meets with the agreement of the group. The choice of a particular variety may not be easily accepted by the speakers of a different variety. Codification involves matters such as the development of an orthography, standardization and modernization. Elaboration of function implies the extension of the selected variety to different areas such as government, education, administration, the media, and so on. The variety selected, to become the linguistic norm for a particular society, has to be a fully developed language, that is, it can be used in all possible contexts and serve all the needs of the group. Acceptance does not come easily or quickly. It can take some time: two, three generations or even more. In the case of Italy, for instance, there were two types of acceptance: in the sixteenth century there was a process of agreement by the literate about the nature of the literary language; in the twentieth century, there was a process of diffusion of the written language as a spoken language, through the media, migration, military service, the educational system, and other factors (Maiden, 1995: 2). The year of Italian political unification is 1861 and yet, it is not until the 1950s that Italian started to gain ground as a common language.

A dialect, by contrast, is an undeveloped language. This means that it has not been codified. Dialects are commonly reserved for specific situations such as familiar or rural contexts. This happens not because of the intrinsic nature of dialects

but because dialects, unlike national languages, have not gone through the four steps identified by Haugen, which are necessary to obtain a fully-fledged language, a language that responds to the needs of a modern society. It is also important to emphasize that the limited spectrum in which dialects operate is due purely to human decisions. Speakers can change the fortune of a particular variety.

To give a practical example, let us consider the Italian situation. Standard Italian, the national language of Italy, is based on the Florentine dialect, or rather, on the standardization of its literary variety as used by certain authors in the fourteenth century. But Turinese, Milanese, Venetian, Bolognese, Florentine, Neapolitan, and Palermitano are all Romance varieties, derived from spoken Latin. The so-called ‘Italian dialects’ could be regarded as separate Romance languages. They differ from each other in phonology, grammar, and lexis and can be reciprocally unintelligible to their users in the same way as Spanish and Italian can be (Lepschy, Lepschy, and Voghera, 1996: 72). The Florentine dialect became the national language in Italy because of the cultural and political prestige held by Florence in the fourteenth century and not because it was intrinsically superior to the other dialects. Maiden explains the relationship between Italian and the ‘Italian dialects’ in these terms:

The Italian dialects are not ‘dialects of Italian’. And they are not daughters of Italian, in the sense of being regional variants of Italian historically descended from the Italian language. Rather, Italian has its roots in one of the speech varieties that emerged from Latin in the Italy of the first millennium A.D., namely that of Tuscany, and more precisely the kind of Tuscan spoken in Florence. Historically, then, the Italian language is simply a sister of the older dialects of Italy. Indeed, the Florentine of the Middle Ages might be said to have been merely ‘one of the crowd’. (1995: 3)

It is important to stress that no language is intrinsically superior to another, and that national languages are different from dialects in that they are standardized, and their functional domain is wider than that reserved for dialects. A standard language can be used in many different contexts, from the colloquial to the more formal (administration, education, government). A significant feature of Italy is its linguistic diversity: the national language coexists with the regional and local dialects. Haller divides the Italian dialects into three areas:

As offspring of local and regional varieties of spoken Latin, the Italian dialects can be roughly divided into three areas: (a) the *Gallo-Italic dialects*, with Piedmontese, Ligurian, Emilian-Romagnol, Venetian, and Friulian; (b) the *Central dialects*, with Tuscan, Umbrian; and (c) the *Southern dialects*, with Roman, Abruzzese, Marchigian, Neapolitan, Calabrian, Pugliese, Lucanian, Sicilian, and Sardinian. (1999: 11)

It is interesting to note that Haller classifies Sardinian as an Italian dialect. In Žarko Muljačić's classification of the regional varieties of Italy, however, the two Sardinian varieties Logudorese and Campidanese are described as Peri-Italian languages (1997: 390). The point of regarding Sardinian as a language or as a dialect, however, will be dealt in more detail, in the following section. At this stage, it is important to underline that, 'from a structural perspective there is no difference between "a dialect" and "a language" ' (Maiden, 1995: 3). Moreover, Maiden stresses that, until the first half of the thirteenth century, the position of Florentine was in no way different from that of the other dialects spoken in Italy: 'in the first half of the thirteenth century Florentine still did not stand tall in the crowd of Romance dialects, and as yet enjoyed none of the cultural importance, as a *literary* language, of Sicilian or Bolognese, whose influence had spread widely beyond their place of origin' (Maiden, 1995: 7).

Another important attempt to discuss the problem of language in relation to dialect is given by Heinz Kloss (1967). Abstand languages are languages by distance. The distance is not geographical, but it is an intrinsic distance from other languages. There are several criteria that linguists apply in measuring the intrinsic distance between languages. In simple terms, an Abstand language has structural characteristics at all levels, which make it different from other languages (for example, the gypsy varieties in Italy). Ausbau languages, languages by development, have been shaped or reshaped to fulfil the whole range of functions required by modern society, particularly the literary and technological expressions (for example, Slovak has been redeveloped to reinforce the distance from Czech). Many languages, like Italian, English, German, French, and Chinese are both Abstand and Ausbau.

Kloss also stresses the speakers' perception of their variety and the functions that the variety has within the social group, to establish the difference between language and dialect:

But we have other abstand languages which fate has also largely relegated to dialect-like primary group functions and which the speakers, or at least a huge majority of them, feel to be mere dialects of an all-powerful literary language. This is possible because of the proximity between the two abstand languages, the ruling one and the submerged which from now on we shall call near-dialectized – as distinct from fully dialectized vernaculars. (1966: 35)

2.3 Some issues regarding the concept of minority language

The concept of dialect is also seen in opposition to that of minority language. A minority language enjoys a higher status than that of dialect, simply because it is a 'language'. In Italy, the label 'Romance languages' describes regional varieties spoken in Italy, such as Sardinian, Friulian, and Ladin. These varieties enjoy the status of language because they are deemed to have a higher degree of linguistic autonomy than the 'Italian dialects'. This distinction, however, is subtle, and it is difficult to define which criteria should be taken into account to determine it. Maiden stresses this point:

The affinities of Friulian, spoken around Udine in north-western Italy but classified by many linguists as belonging to the Rhaeto-Romance grouping (represented also in the Grisons area of Switzerland), are moot, as are those of Sardinian, which has many distinctive structural features, yet also much in common with southern Italian dialects. From the point of view of linguistic structure, it is notoriously the case that the so-called Italo-Romance dialects have no single feature which distinguishes all of them from all other Romance dialects, and that there are rarely sharply defined boundaries separating 'Italo-Romance' and other Romance varieties. (1995: 4)

In this section, I will attempt to clarify some of the problems associated with the notion of minority language. The first problem is given by the uncertainty in the terminology used to refer to these varieties. Recent attempts (Council of Europe, 1992; Carrel, 1995) to give a suitable name to these tongues claiming different degrees of autonomy are 'regional languages' or 'lesser-used languages'. The expression 'regional or lesser-used languages' is found in the EU vocabulary and legislation, as the EU is particularly committed to the safeguarding of these tongues. However, it should be noted that these different labels have in common the word 'language'. These varieties are regarded as languages. This is very important because the fact that they enjoy the status of 'language', distinguishes these varieties from the condition of dialect.

However, if we leave these more formal issues behind, several problems arise with the definition of linguistic minorities or lesser-used languages. One is that of the identification of linguistic minorities. French or German are minority languages in Italy, that is, they are spoken by a minority of the population, but they are official and national languages in France and Germany. Albanian and Greek are spoken in Italy but they differ greatly from the Standard Albanian spoken in Albania and the Standard Greek spoken in Greece. This difference is due to the fact that the Albanians and Greeks living in Italy are ancient settlements that arrived in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries or, possibly, even in the early Middle Ages, in the case of the Greeks (Maiden: 1995: 6). The language they speak, therefore, has not gone through the process of standardization of Albanian in Albania and Greek in Greece.

It thus seems an almost impossible task to define the concept of minority language. A very general definition will therefore be given: a minority language is a variety spoken by a minority of the population of a state, that is perceived by its speakers to have a certain degree of linguistic autonomy with respect to the national and official language of that state, and that can be used in some specific contexts by a minority of its citizens as an alternative to the national language of that state. We will distinguish three main situations:

1. Minority languages that are official or national languages in different states, like German and French in Italy.
2. Minority languages that are not national or official languages in a different state and are spoken by a minority of the population in more than one state, like the Basque language, spoken in France and Spain.
3. Minority languages that are spoken only in one state and are not official or national languages in a different state, like Sardinian, Friulian, or Ladin in Italy.

This general typology of different situations, however, does not help much to understand why a certain variety enjoys the status of minority language. If the minority language is an official or national language in another state, then it is easy to understand why it is considered a minority language in the host state. But if the

minority language is not an official language somewhere else, it is difficult to understand why that variety is regarded as a language and not as a dialect of the national language. In the case of Italy, for instance, Italian is based on the standardization of the Florentine dialect. The Italian dialects, including Florentine, derive from Latin and could therefore be considered as Romance languages, given that standard Italian is a Romance language. However, only Sardinian, Friulian and Ladin, and not all the different dialects spoken in Italy, are regarded by some as Romance languages. For this reason, they enjoy the status of minority languages spoken in Italy and are protected by law 482. This law concerns both the protection of the language and culture of minority groups living in Italy since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries or before, perhaps, in the case of Greek, and the protection of the language and culture of varieties classified as Romance languages. Nevertheless, one could easily object: why are Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian regarded as minority languages and not as dialects of Italy as are Piedmontese, Venetian, Neapolitan, and so on? One of the most common reasons given by those who claim linguistic autonomy is the criterion of mutual intelligibility: standard Italian is closer to the dialects spoken in Italy than to Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian. The following quotation shows the position of the supporters of this theory in relation to Sardinian:

Il sardo può assolvere alle funzioni di *lingua nazionale*, inquantoché:

1. Esso mostra delle strutture linguistiche prettamente divergenti da quelle che caratterizzano il resto delle lingue neolatine.
2. Esso gode dell'accettazione unanime dei parlanti nativi, coscienti del valore uniforme e distintivo del sardo rispetto ad altri sistemi linguistici affini. (Ferrer, 1984: 174)

This explanation, however, does not seem to be satisfactory. If we apply Kloss's concept of Abstand to Sardinian, we can say that it is, in some ways, intrinsically distant from standard Italian, but this is also true of the varieties classified as 'Italian dialects'. Sardinian might differ from standard Italian more than the dialects spoken in Italy, but it is very difficult to prove it. How much more and in what ways has Sardinian to be different from standard Italian in order to deserve the status of language? Savoia's classification (1997: 225-34) shows how the three main groups of Italian dialects (dialects of the north, of the centre, and of the south) have their own distinctive features. separating a dialect from others and, consequently, also

from the Florentine dialect on which Standard Italian is based. Therefore, it is controversial that Ladin, Friulian, and Sardinian, are languages purely because of some grammatical peculiarities that make them different from Italian. Cristina Lavinio disagrees with the position of those who establish a linguistic distance between Sardinian and the Italian dialects:

Per quanto riguarda la Sardegna, almeno le varietà campidanese e logudorese sono sicuramente rapportabili ad un diasistema (o, se si vuole, ad una 'lingua') sardo che però, dunque non le pone su un piano privilegiato in quanto varietà di 'lingua minoritaria' rispetto alle altre varietà di 'lingua minoritaria' costituite dagli altri dialetti parlati in Italia. Né è detto che la distanza tra il diasistema del sardo e quelli cui sono riconducibili rispettivamente, ad esempio, le varietà napoletana e veneziana sia maggiore rispetto a quella che intercorre tra i diasistemi comprendenti il napoletano da una parte e il veneziano dall'altra. (1979: 153)

In terms of *Ausbau*, which refers to the social function of the language, this minority language does not perform more functions in society than the Italian dialects: it is mainly reserved for oral, colloquial, and familiar contexts: 'Al sardo si conettono contesti legati a valori di solidarietà, confidenza, informalità; all'italiano di formalizzazione e di stratificazione sociale' (Dettorri, 1979: 185). Alinei questions the status of language for Sardinian and concludes that 'le richieste di riconoscimento del sardo come "lingua" sono, sostanzialmente, politiche, e dovrebbero essere considerate come tali' (1984: 195).

The situation of Ladin has been examined by Giovan Battista Pellegrini (1972), who challenges the notion that it is a minority language because it is linguistically more distant from standard Italian than the Italian dialects. He makes a linguistic comparison between a Central Ladin dialect and two Italian dialects (one Northern and the other Southern). He concludes that the Southern and Northern dialects can be as distant from standard Italian as is the Central Ladin dialect: 'Le distanze degli idiomi meridionali e settentrionali dal toscano sono sempre molto considerevoli (si pensi al calabrese, al pugliese, all'emiliano-romagnolo, al piemontese) [...]. Tanto che si potrebbe tranquillamente affermare *per absurdum* che ancor oggi la nazione italiana è costituita da una *maggioranza di minoranze*' (Pellegrini, 1972: 263). Pellegrini does not share the view that there is a boundary between a Ladin language and the northern Italian dialects. He concludes that purely linguistic criteria seem to deny that the Gardanese (a variety of Ladin spoken in the

Gardena valley) is a dialect of the Ladin language and that Lucano or Cadorino (two different varieties of Ladin) are Italian dialects: ‘A dire il vero con criteri esclusivamente linguistici, non vedo la ragione per la quale si debba dichiarare “lingua ladina” il dialetto gardenese e un dialettaccio italiano il cadorino oppure il lucano’ (Pellegrini, 1972: 266). Moreover, Pellegrini challenges the notion of a *ladino* or Rhaeto-Romance unit and claims it does not exist:

The Ladin lexical base of Rhaeto-Romance, especially of its purported central Dolomitic and its Friulian components, is essentially identical with that of northern or Cisalpine Italian dialects. Common peculiarities, i.e. unique features shared by the three putative Rhaeto-Romance zones, which would set them off en bloc from their immediate southern neighbours, are singularly absent. (Pellegrini, 1987: 294-95)

In general, Pellegrini is sceptical about any attempt to give a purely scientific classification of Romance languages and considers it necessary to refer to historical, political, and cultural criteria. A certain variety does not deserve the rank of language because it belongs to a specific diasystem, but because it is based on a recognized standard *koinè*. In classifying Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian as Romance languages spoken in Italy, extralinguistic factors must be taken into account. In the case of Ladin, the speakers’ perception and understanding of their variety plays a fundamental role in giving the status of language to Ladin.

Mentre i Ladini ‘atesini’, cioè i Gardenesi, Badiotti, Marebbani, Fassani e Livinallesi, già da vari decenni hanno sentito parlare nella scuola (specie prima del 1918) di un loro *ethnos* speciale e della loro lingua retoromanza che nulla ha coll’italiano (persino con i dialetti parlati dai loro vicini che divennero Italiani dal 1866), i Cadorini non hanno mai saputo di parlare un dialetto analogo. (Pellegrini, 1972: 264)

The speakers’ attitude towards their variety is a very important factor in determining the future of that variety. The recognition of a variety as a minority language must have as a starting point the claims made by the groups speaking this variety for linguistic autonomy. The speakers want, for various reasons, to have a language that is different from the national language, a language that is an outward sign of their specific identity. This perception of their own variety as a way of differentiating themselves from the mainstream, this link between language and identity, is of

paramount importance for achieving concessions of linguistic autonomy. Such claims create several practical problems for central governments.

Italy, given the high number of dialects that have survived until the present day (fifteen main dialect groups), provides a fascinating ground for investigating the reasons why just a few of them provide the basis for regional movements. Stuart Woolf, in his article 'Language and Regional Identity in the Valle d'Aosta' (1997), implies that French, the language that has so far acted as the standard-bearer of regional identity, may be displaced by the local dialect. He writes that 'It is as if the Valdostan administration's francophone policy, by weakening the monolingualism so passively accepted by the citizens of the modern states, has offered the shield for the vigorous flowering and social legitimation of patois'. At present, the Valdostan administration acknowledges the respectability of patois and its political potential as an aspect of Valdostan popular culture. Woolf sees the establishment of the Bureau Régional pour l'Ethnologie et la Linguistique (BREL) in 1985 as an institutional recognition of the new status of patois. The idea that the French language embodies the concept of *valdostanità* could be reviewed in favour of the local patois, depository of a greater authenticity.

In the broad panorama which dialects and minority languages represent, my contribution will be limited to two Italian regions: Sicily and Sardinia. Both these regions are characterized by geographical isolation from the mainland. Both Sardinia and Sicily enjoy a degree of political autonomy, as they are Special Statute regions. However, while political autonomy in Sardinia is matched by linguistic autonomy, this is not the case with Sicily, where the link between language and political autonomy is much weaker. These two specific situations will be examined below in Chapters 7 and 8.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that extralinguistic factors play a major role in the distinction between language and dialect. National languages are often based on the standardization of a dialect spoken in the country. Through this process, the selected dialect increases its status and prestige, as it becomes the norm spoken in the whole country, unifying the nation and covering a wide range of functions. Therefore, the common assumption that dialects are inferior languages or a deformation of the

national language is wrong. However, dialects are not fully-fledged languages. This means that they have not been codified and cannot fulfil the demands that the modern society requires from a linguistic norm.

The other important point is that the distinction between dialects and minority languages can be misleading. In Italy, for instance, the status of ‘minority languages’ granted to Sardinian, Friulian and Ladin, on the grounds that they are ‘Romance languages’ is controversial. The Italian dialects can also, in fact, be considered ‘Romance languages’, that is, derived from spoken Latin. The distinction between ‘language’ and ‘dialect’ is often based on non-linguistic criteria. The terminology used to label these varieties depends on questions of identity (ethnic, historical, and cultural) rather than on purely linguistic reasons. If the label ‘Romance languages’ is used to enhance the status of Friulian, Ladin and Sardinian, there should be no reason why the same label could not be applied to Milanese or Neapolitan. The boundary between language and dialect is very much a subjective factor rather than an absolute and indisputable truth. Behind claims that a particular variety should acquire the status of language, there may be a concern for an endangered identity. Within this context, the protection of the language becomes the protection of the identity of the people.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRESENT POSITION OF LINGUISTIC MINORITIES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the status which linguistic minority groups enjoy within the European Union. However, before concentrating on this area of investigation, I will consider the present status of the EU national languages. I will then discuss the issues of whether and how linguistic minorities within the EU are protected. Finally, I will suggest what future action needs to be taken in order to improve the protection and promotion of minority languages. This chapter will provide an institutional setting within which to situate my study.

3.2 The status of EU national languages

The idea of ‘one language’, ‘one nation’, which still nowadays enjoys a great degree of popularity in Europe, is the result of the complex process of state development. The integration of diverse culture groups into ‘national populations’ has meant the institutional denial of minority groups’ rights. In most histories of nation-state formation, it was unavoidable to legitimize some cultures and repress others (Williams, 1991: 4). The history of the minorization of some languages and some cultures, will, however, be considered in more detail in the following chapter.

The great importance the European states still give to their national languages is reflected in the fact that the European Union has since 1958 granted equal status to all the national languages spoken in its territory. No discrimination is made in favour of French and English, which are the most widely spoken languages in the EU, and European legislation guarantees official status to all Members States’ national languages. Article 217 of the Treaty of Rome of 1950 states that the rules governing the use of languages by the institutions of the Community shall be determined by the Council of the European Economic Community (Coulmas, 1991: 4). Accordingly, these rules are laid down in Council Regulation N.1/58 (in Coulmas, 1991: 38-39).

When this regulation was adopted on 15 April 1958, it identified German, French, Italian, and Dutch as the official languages and working languages of the Community. As a result of the subsequent enlargement of the EU, this regulation was changed several times in order to grant all EU national languages the same status. Regulation N.1/58 distinguished between official languages and working languages of the Community, but did not explain the difference between the two terms. Article 6 of Regulation N.1/58 stated that the institutions of the Community might set their own language rules as long as they conform with the regulation. None of the institutions, however, seems to make use of the distinction between official and working. The European Parliament uses both terms without clarifying them and admits the use of all EU official languages. For this reason, the deputies have to wear headphones much of the time and therefore find it very difficult to communicate with each other. The Court of Justice in its rules of procedures makes provisions for the language of a case (Coulmas, 1991: 6). This means that the Court of Justice reserves the right to establish the language to be used in court, according to the requirements of a case. In the Council of Europe, only English and French have official status.

As all national EU languages enjoy official status, translation and interpretation are essential for the work of Union institutions. The EU runs the largest translation and interpretation services in the world, investing a considerable amount of capital to provide such services. Along with this policy, the need to improve the linguistic skills of European citizens is regarded as essential to favour closer integration within the Union. For this reason, foreign language teaching has received much consideration by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. One of the objectives of a Community programme, which was the result of agreements between the Council and a meeting of Education Ministers in 1976, explicitly mentions the necessity of offering all pupils the opportunity of learning at least one other Community language (*Bulletin of the European Communities*, 6-1984: 45). The ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes are also intended to increase the opportunities to learn a foreign language.

Since European students are encouraged to learn national languages only, this policy could be perceived as discriminatory against minority languages, given that there are no programmes similar to ERASMUS and LINGUA aimed at the learning

of minority languages. So far, there are bilingual pilot teaching projects in regions where the minority languages are spoken. These projects are mainly directed towards members of minority groups. Obviously this tendency to exclude the learning of minority language from projects like ERASMUS and LINGUA contributes to lowering the status of minority languages. Foreign language education, seen as the process of learning and teaching a national language, gives an insight into the many ways minority languages can be marginalized by national languages.

Moreover, it is ironic that this friendly attitude to multilingualism in the Union is a consequence of the Member States' tendency to favour monolingualism within their territories. It is important to point out that linguistic pluralism in the Union was originally conceived as a means of protecting the national languages. The protection of monolingualism at Member State level has resulted in favouring multilingualism at Union level. In the following sections of this chapter, we will see whether and how minority groups have managed to exploit the Union commitment to multilingualism in their favour.

3.3 Linguistic minority protection in the EU

At this point, two questions may be raised. Has the European Union such a positive attitude towards European minority languages as it has towards European national languages? Do the minority languages spoken in Europe benefit from the existence of the EU?

To answer these questions, we need perhaps to formulate yet another: has the European Union the right to interfere in the linguistic policies of its Member States? We should not forget that the European Community was originally conceived as an economic and trade-oriented union. The European Economic Community treaty, which dates back to 1957 and was the legal starting point of the EC, contained specific rules binding all the contracting states and attributing specific powers to the Community institutions. Everything else was left within the jurisdiction of the Member States. And as the EEC Treaty did not contain any rules relating to language use (except for the functioning of the European institutions themselves), and did not provide the Community powers with competences to adopt such rules, the logical conclusion would seem to be that EEC rules could not affect the linguistic policies of the Member States (De Witte, 1991: 164).

However, in the long term, the Community did not limit itself to purely economic matters and gave attention to other areas such as education, culture, and language, which did not find any mention in the EEC Treaty. The main objective of the Community, clearly expressed in this Treaty, was to achieve a Common Market. In 1987, in the Groener case, Anita Groener, a Dutch national, was refused a permanent appointment at the college of Marketing and Design in Dublin on the grounds that her knowledge of the Irish language was inadequate. The case was decided by the European Court of Justice. On this particular occasion, the French government asserted that linguistic policy was entirely beyond the scope of Community law. The European Court of Justice rejected this view and stated that any national policy standing in the way of the Common Market was to be carefully scrutinized (De Witte, 1991: 168-70).

In 1992, with the Treaty of Maastricht, the European Union was created. Since then, European integration has meant not only an association of common interests, but also a cultural contribution through the great historical heritage of each Member State in all of its 'national and regional' diversity (European Bureau, *Unity in Diversity*). We will see that this new approach has had a strong impact on linguistic minorities. European integration, which is the main objective of the EU, is based on a new orientation, referred to as neo-liberalism (European Commission, 1996: 45). Central to neo-liberalism is the concept of the 'enabling state', which is contrasted with the welfare state. Welfarism has created a dependent relationship between the individual and the state, in which the state has guided the citizens towards certain aims and objectives. The enabling state, by contrast, should respond to the needs of its citizens. In the enabling state, the individual's creativity is stimulated and citizens are encouraged to find the solution to their own problems. Within this framework, citizens will be actively involved in responding to their own economic, health and social needs. Obviously, neo-liberalism is opposed to excessive government and advocates the rolling back of the state. These models of self-regulation or self-government lead to what Donzelot (1984) refers to as autonomization, that is the governing of society via self-government. The concept of enabling or empowering replaces that of dependency (European Commission, 1996: 47).

In what way do neo-liberalism and this new way of understanding European integration affect the living conditions of minority groups? According to this new approach, regional or minority languages not only represent Europe's cultural richness, but are also valuable resources and can lend an impetus to the economic development. This new view on minority groups is expressed by Hingel in these terms:

While socio-economic disparities in the Community are images of inequalities and a threat to European construction, 'diversity' (differences based on diverse cultural and historical backgrounds) is an underrated and poorly exploited source of development and progress. Diminishing diversity could be a threat to an important part of the Community knowledge base and would reduce the number of development options which are open and the learning capabilities of local actors in the Community. (Hingel, 1993: 31)

Hingel stresses the importance of diversity for economic development in Europe. This approach is in contrast with the assimilationalist model of modernism of the eighteenth century. The new model of development, which the European Union is seeking to adopt, is based on a 'decentralised network economy deriving from grass roots local initiatives that draw upon resources of cultural and social diversity and transnational cooperation' (European Commission, 1996: 49). This means that the forms of organization of minority groups can be exploited for the economic advancement of the European Union. The energy and cohesiveness of minority groups are seen as a valuable resource. They can be directed towards economic purposes that link to the idea of European integration rather than towards nationalistic movements. Close communication, interaction, and the integration of different skills are of paramount importance for the achievement of the Single Market.

Within this new framework, the issue of language planning in order to promote a regional or a minority language acquires a completely different connotation. Language planning, rather than being regarded as a benevolent and tolerant attitude on the part of a Member State towards minority groups, is now a duty that the Member State has towards the minority groups living in its territory. More than a duty, it can be seen as a strategy to boost economic development and compete with the other Member States in the construction of a Single Market.

Therefore, no straightforward answer can be given to the question of whether the European Union has the right to interfere in the linguistic policies of its Member States. The position of the European Union in this matter is rather ambiguous. While, on the one hand, in the EEC Treaty linguistic policy was left within the internal jurisdiction of the contracting States, on the other, the Community claimed the right to evaluate any national policy that might hinder the goal of a Common Market.

Furthermore, the most recent approach (European Commission, 1996) adopted by the European Union towards linguistic minorities living in a territory of a Member State is intended not only to ensure their cultural and linguistic heritage is safeguarded, but also to promote their integration in the economic activities of the EU and to create conditions favourable to their active participation in the goal of the Single Market. However, since there is still no specific law which allows the Union institutions to interfere in the linguistic policy of its Member States these Member States may decide whether or not to grant linguistic rights to their own minorities. The present situation is that, if a Member State decides that the claims made by a particular minority to protect its linguistic heritage are not legitimate, the EU does not have the right to alter this decision.

3.4 European institutions working in favour of regional or minority languages

At this point, it will be useful to give an overview of the European institutions working for the promotion and safeguarding of regional or minority languages.

3.4.1 The European Parliament

On 16 October 1981, the European Parliament (EP) adopted the Arfè Resolution, which was the first major milestone towards defining a policy for the lesser-used languages. In 1983, the second Arfè Resolution asked the European Commission to continue and intensify its activities to promote these languages. In the same year the EP allocated a budget line B3-1006 (Regional or Minority languages and Cultures), for the purpose of developing a Community policy on regional languages (European Bureau, *Unity in Diversity*). In 1983, an Intergroup for Minority Languages within the EP was set up. It is composed of members of all the political groups within the EP, and its presidency changes every six months. It meets regularly to examine

initiatives to promote regional languages and cultures. It is also responsible for the main EP resolutions in favour of regional or minority languages (European Bureau, 1996).

3.4.2 *The European Commission*

The European Commission represents the interests of the European Union: it carries out the decisions of the Council of Ministers and ensures that EU Directives and regulations are implemented (The European Bureau, 1995). The Commission's main objectives are: to encourage initiatives in the field of education, culture and information; to reinforce European co-operation and exchanges of information between members of minority groups; to promote the teaching of these languages throughout the educational network, including adult education. The Commission manages the budget line B3-1006 and, every year, funds projects that relate explicitly to regional or minority languages. Calls for projects are published annually in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.

Another important initiative of the Commission has been the funding of a project called 'Euromosaic: *The Production and Reproduction of the Minority Language Groups of the EU* (1996). The study has been carried out by four partners who responded to the EU's call for tenders: Henri Giordan of the National Centre for Scientific Research in Paris, Peter Nelde of the Centre for Research on Plurilinguism in Brussels, Miquel Strubell of the Catalan Sociolinguistic Institute in Barcelona, and Glyn Williams of the University of Wales in Bangor. The main objectives of the Report are expressed in its introductory part:

1. To elaborate for each linguistic community a description of the language and its historic and literary profile; an analysis of the legal, political, administrative and socio-economic situation; an idea of its social use and of the number of speakers by age distribution; the existence of different levels of the schools and non-school teaching of the languages; its use in the written and audio-visual media, in professional and commercial life.
2. To present the research results in a clear and precise form deploying the same criteria for all languages. (European Commission, 1996: I)

The value of the Report lies in its treatment of minority groups as social units, in relating language production and reproduction to agencies such as the family, education, and community and in underlining that language production and reproduction are strongly affected by the position minority groups occupy within the economic order. Other important issues raised in the Euromosaic project are the need to take into account the distinguishing features that characterize each minority group and the need to develop specific policies for different minority group situations.

3.4.3. The European Bureau for lesser-used languages

The Bureau is an organization with non-profit status, established in Dublin in 1982 on the initiative of members of the European Parliament and funded by the European Commission. Its purpose is to promote and defend the autochthonous regional or lesser-used languages of the countries of the European Union and the linguistic rights of those who speak these languages. One of the Bureau's goals is to define a legal framework that applies to authorities at all levels — the European institutions, the States, and the regions — in order to guarantee all citizens belonging to a linguistic minority all the services they need to develop and use their language in everyday life.

The three main strategies pursued by the Bureau have been described by its Secretary General Donall O'Riagáin in these terms:

1. To press for the bringing into being of legal and political structures which would protect lesser-used language communities;
2. To engage in and promote work programmes which would be of practical assistance to those it is endeavouring to serve;
3. To facilitate an exchange of information and experiences between the various lesser-used language communities and thus help bring a greater sense of collective awareness. (O'Riagáin, 1989: 514)

So far the Bureau has been very active in pursuing these objectives. It has undertaken initiatives such as a comparative analysis of pre-school education in the EU's lesser-used languages, a project on primary school education, the preparation of an EU map of the minority languages in Europe and several investigations into the relation between the media and lesser-used languages. The Bureau has acknowledged the need for legislation for more use of Europe's lesser-used languages in formal contexts and has, therefore, written several reports urging the

European Parliament to take positive action in this direction (Williams, 1991: 12). It is interesting to note that a regional variety of Italian spoken in the region of Piedmont and which has been denied the status of minority language by the Italian government is included in a list of minority languages spoken in Europe, prepared for the Bureau by Dr Yvo Peter of the Centre for the Study of Ethnic Group Rights and Federalism (Parry, 1994: 182). Piedmontese thus enjoys an higher status at European level than at national level. However, the Bureau has no power to persuade the Italian government to make some provisions for the safeguarding of Piedmontese.

3.4.4 Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organization founded in 1949. It is not an institution of the EU, although it comprises the twenty-five Member States plus twenty other states: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Norway, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, and Ukraine United (www.coe.int [accessed 14 June 2004]).

The Council of Europe is not to be confused with the European Council, which is a regular meeting of the Heads of EU Member States for the purpose of defining Community policy. The Council aims to bring about greater unity between its members through intergovernmental co-operation. Its work is achieved through conventions and other legal instruments, which provide an opportunity for states to adopt a common standard in a variety of fields, from environmental protection to equality for men and women. It addresses all questions of major concern to European society, with the exception of defence problems. Since 1984, the Council has shown its concern about the situation of lesser-used languages. In 1992, the Council adopted the Charter For Regional or Minority languages (RML), a document with the potential legal status of a convention. Five ratifications were, however, necessary, for the Charter to come into force as a legal convention. This was achieved in March 1998. So far, seventeen states have ratified the Charter: Armenia, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The states that have signed but not ratified the Charter are: Azerbaijan, Czech

Republic, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Ukraine (www.coe.int [accessed 14 June 2004]).

3.4.5 *The Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*

The Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is a legal instrument providing an opportunity for Member States to subscribe to common principles in the area of linguistic minority protection (Tabouret-Keller, in Coulmas, 1991: 48). The document is regarded as a major achievement in the history of linguistic rights, as it provides a series of measures and regulations for the employment of RMLs in education, justice, public administration and services, the media, cultural activities, and economic and social life. However, even if the main aim of the Charter is the protection of linguistic minorities and their cultural heritage, its terms are formulated in such a way that they allow a great degree of freedom to the states in the way they intend to act towards their linguistic minorities.

In the Preamble of the Charter, the importance of both national sovereignty and territorial integrity is stated (Council of Europe, 1992). This means that any measure directed towards the protection and the promotion of RMLs must show awareness of these two principles. However, the definition of RMLs in the Charter is extremely vague:

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. (Council of Europe, 1992: 2-3)

The terms of the definition are so vague that states are almost entirely free to decide whether a group constitutes a linguistic minority or not. The definition itself is problematic in several ways. Many regional varieties spoken within a given country do not enjoy the official status of language, while others do. It is important to underline that official languages are in no way intrinsically superior to the non-

official languages. They have simply gained prestige in becoming the official language of powerful areas. Concessions in favour of certain languages are usually granted by governments when they are confronted by a potentially dangerous situation, that is, one in which a minority holds a particularly strong position and can represent a threat to the stability of the state if its demands are not granted. As discussed in Chapter 2, in Italy, some tongues spoken in the regions are regarded as regional varieties of the standard official language, others are labelled dialects, and others, like Sardinian or Ladin, which were once classified as Italian dialects, are nowadays considered by some linguists and politicians as minority languages. How can a state decide whether a tongue spoken within its territory is a language, a dialect, or a regional variety of the standard form? The definition of RML, as it stands in the Charter, leaves this task to the initiative of the states and the outcome of these 'linguistic' decisions is very likely to be strongly influenced by factors that are not purely linguistic but also political and economic. Grin states that 'the self-perception of the community that uses a particular form of expression would certainly to be taken into account'(2003: 60).

Undertaking 2 of Article 2 states that 'each Party undertakes to apply a minimum of thirty-five paragraphs or sub-paragraphs chosen from among the provisions of Part III of the Charter, including at least three chosen from each of the Articles 8 and 12 and one from each of the Articles 9, 10, 11 and 13'. The provisions of Part III of the Charter concern the areas of education (Art. 8), judicial authorities (Art. 9), administrative authorities and public services (Art. 10), media (Art. 11), cultural activities and facilities (Art. 12), economic and social life (Art. 13), and transfrontier exchanges (Art. 14). Priority is, therefore, given to Articles 8 and 12, since their provisions for the protection of RMLs concern the fields of education and culture. Undertaking 2 of Article 2 stresses the importance of culture and education for the safeguarding of RMLs and, at the same time, puts some restriction on the freedom of the states ratifying the Charter. However, the fact that the states have to comply with only one provision of the Articles concerned with public services, media, administration, legal authorities, and economic activities means that each state, despite the restriction in favour of education and culture, is almost free to choose the measures to apply in its territory. Furthermore, a minimum of three provisions in the area of education may not suffice for the purpose of protecting the

RMLs, as a state could satisfy this condition by introducing the teaching of the relevant regional or minority language for only a few hours a week in pre-school, primary, and secondary education. Such a measure might not have a strong effect on the safeguarding of the RMLs.

Another problem is given by the ‘numerical criterion’, which is frequently adopted in the Charter. In the definition of RMLs, the minority group must be numerically smaller than the rest of the state’s population. There is no indication of how small the group can be, and again each state has to take a decision in this respect. It should be mentioned, however, that the issue of stating a percentage of language users was addressed and that it was agreed that mentioning a precise figure could give rise to more problems than it would solve (Grin, 2003: 61). Grin explains the problems that the numerical criterion can create in the identification of a minority group:

A certain number of language users, residing in a fairly compact area, could reasonably expect certain services in their own language from the authorities. However, if the same community were scattered over a much wider area it could prove to be extremely difficult and prohibitively costly to offer the same services. (ibid.)

Nevertheless, the numerical criterion can be used to favour one minority at the expense of another. Some minorities may be excluded from protection if the state decides that it is not big enough to apply measures to safeguard it. The numerical criterion also raises a considerable problem in Article 9, in which the provisions concerning judicial proceedings are laid down. Only in judicial districts in which the number of residents using the RMLs is regarded as sufficient can a party request that proceedings be conducted in the RML. If one of the bases of a truly democratic society is the right of every citizen to use his/her mother tongue, then the numerical criterion may prove to be controversial.

The numerical criterion also appears in Part 2 of Article 8, which, as we have seen above, concerns education in the RMLs. The Article states: ‘With regard to education and in respect of territories other than those in which the RMLs are traditionally used, the Parties undertake, if the number of users of a RML justifies it, to allow, encourage or provide teaching in or of the RML at all appropriate stages of education’(Council of Europe, 1992: 7). Once again the numerical criterion might be

used by the Member States to exclude some minorities from protection. In Italy, for instance, until the approval of law 492 in 1999, only the German and the Ladin speakers resident in South Tyrol/Alto Adige (a province of the Italian region Trentino-Alto Adige) were allowed to safeguard their linguistic heritage through special provisions, while the German and Ladin speakers living in Trentino-Alto Adige but outside South Tyrol were denied any form of linguistic protection.

The article 'The Netherlands Ratifies the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages' by Alex Riemersma, 1996, contains the two main arguments outlined by the Dutch Government in favour of the Charter: its contribution to political stability in Eastern Europe and the strengthening of the position of the Frisian language. However, no recognition is given to two other minority languages spoken in the Dutch territory: the Gypsy and the Yiddish languages. The position adopted by the Dutch government towards Gypsy and Yiddish confirms the fact that a country may ratify the Charter but not commit itself to protect all the linguistic minorities living in its own territory. As regards Frisian, the Dutch government has signed 47 of the recommendations contained in Part III, which are included in Article 8 (Education), Article 10 (Authorities), and Article 12 (Cultural Life). This latest development means that Frisian is now the second official language of this Member State. The official status of Frisian in the Netherlands, which has been granted by the Dutch government, proves what has been stated above: linguistic concessions are often the result of political decisions.

The last point in the Charter to be mentioned briefly here regards Article 19. According to this Article, the Charter shall enter into force only if five states of the Council of Europe express their consent to be bound by the Charter. As stated in section 3.4.4, seventeen states have ratified the Charter. This number is still lower than that of those ratifying other conventions, such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Grin, 2003: 67). According to Grin this is due to the fact that 'ratifying the Charter is no mere declaration of adherence to general principles, but rather a serious commitment which entails specific and measurable undertakings' (ibid.).

From this analysis of the Charter, it seems clear that, even though the document represents an important step in the development of linguistic rights, its terms are such that the states are allowed a great degree of freedom in their policy

towards linguistic minorities. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that there are difficulties in formulating a linguistic policy which does not conflict with political, economic, and national interests. Grin states that Article 3.1 ensures that the Charter is a living and flexible instrument for supporting regional or minority languages:

Any party may, at any subsequent time, notify the Secretary General that it accepts the obligations arising out of the provisions of the Charter not already specified in its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, or that it will apply paragraph 1 of Article 3 to other regional or minority languages, or to other official languages which are less widely used on the whole or part of its national territory. (Council of Europe, 1992: 3)

Since language is strictly related to social relations, moral values, and political viewpoints and traditions, the formulation and application of any linguistic policy will never be completely detached from the terrain of the social and the political.

3.5 Projects financed in 2000 by the European Commission to promote and safeguard regional or minority languages and cultures

Every year, the European Commission contributes funding towards projects designed to promote and safeguard minority languages spoken in the European Union. In 2000, the indicative budget available was Euro 2,500,000, to support thirty to forty projects (*Official Journal of the European Communities*, C 266/15, 2000, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/langmin/callen.pdf>, [accessed 21 July 2004]).

The Commission's call for proposals for projects in favour of regional or minority languages and cultures is published annually in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*. In the call, no definition of what constitutes a regional or minority language is given. The Commission does not have any strict set of criteria for establishing an exhaustive list of eligible languages but support is usually given to indigenous languages traditionally spoken by a section of the population of a Member State of the European Union. The Commission explicitly excludes dialects, immigrants' languages, and artificially created languages. The eligible languages must also have official recognition at regional or national level. Therefore, if the applicant claims that the project is relevant for the safeguarding of a particular

dialect, the application will not be considered. Hence, it is important that the distinction between dialect and minority or regional language is clear in the applicant's mind, because using inappropriate terminology will mean exclusion from subsidies. Furthermore, proposals must come from organizations which have their own legal status. In the call for proposals, two reasons are given for the Commission's stand: budgetary constraints and the great demand in this sector. This leads us, once again, to a point which cannot be over-emphasized: linguistic concessions or denials are often the results of political decisions and financial restrictions.

Part 2 of the call for proposals specifies which fields of activity the Commission aims to encourage:

- a) *developing linguistic resources*
lexicography, terminology and grammar, archives, corpora, linguistic research,
- b) *developing language skills*
language teaching (including distance teaching), teacher training, producing and distributing learning tools, developing and disseminating teaching methods, promoting bilingualism/multilingualism,
- c) *promoting the language directly*
awareness-raising, information and promotional campaigns, visual presence of the language in the environment, language planning,
- d) *socio-economic aspects of the language*
presence and role of the language in economic and social life, languages and economic development,
- e) *culture and media*
cultural events and live arts, circulation of literary, musical and audiovisual works, press, radio and television (*Official Journal of the European Communities*, C 266/15, 2000).

After this brief analysis of the call for proposals, it is interesting to see which linguistic minorities in the European Union were given financial help by the European Commission in 2000. They were as follows: in Germany, Low German, Slovene, Friulian, and Sorbian; in Austria, Croatian, Slovene, Friulian, Frisian, Walser, Ladin, Hungarian, Sorbian, Breton, Alsatian, Catalan, and Romany; in Spain Basque, Breton, Romany, and Galician; in Finland, Sami; in France, Alsatian, Basque, Breton, Catalan, Corsican, Creole, Friulian, Galician, Ladin, Sardinian,

Provençal, and Occitan; in Italy, Croatian, German, Franco-Provençal, Friulian, Ladin, Occitan, Hungarian, Sardinian and Slovene; in Norway, Sami; in Portugal, Mirandese; in Sweden, Finnish; in the United Kingdom, Welsh and Yiddish.

Many of the projects that have received subsidies from the European Commission relate to the field of activity that goes under heading (e), 'culture and media'. From the description of the initiatives financed in 2000, it is evident that a considerable amount of capital has been invested in the publication of volumes of poetry, collections of folk tales, and books on the history of minority language groups and on their folk music or dance. The field of activity which goes under heading (b), 'development of language skills', has also received some attention by the European Commission. Among the projects sponsored are a few concerned with the teaching or the promotion of teaching of the RMLs. The codification of the RMLs has also received some attention, but none of the projects financed in 2000 aimed at promoting the economic and social aspects of the RMLs.

Despite the new orientation in the approach towards linguistic minorities in Europe mentioned in 3.3 above, there is still a tendency to conceive of them in terms associated with traditional and cultural activities, that is, poetic, literary or musical, rather than as having economic and political aspects. There is a need to encourage a move towards the promotion of the economic and social aspects of the RMLs, not only for the benefit of the minority language groups as a European heritage, but for the economic progress and advancement of the European Union.

The fact that the European Commission manages a budget line for this purpose makes one think that it is absurd to devote time, energy, and money to sponsor initiatives that are not particularly useful to achieve these objectives. Maintaining diversity in a united Europe means having these minorities actively involved in the economic advancement of Europe and not left at the margins of the big changes such as the enlargement of the EU and Monetary Union, that Europe is embarking upon. One does not want to undermine the value of teaching, publishing magazines and newspapers, encouraging cultural events, and standardizing the RML for its promotion and safeguarding, but if these initiatives are not backed by a strong commitment to removing the notion of minority language groups as a backward phenomenon, they may be carried out in vain. Instead, such groups must be fully integrated into the economic activities and progress of the EU.

3.6 Future action for the safeguard of minority languages in the European Union

The present position of the many linguistic minorities in Europe is characterized by legal recognition, which has not been followed up by practical action. On a theoretical level, all Member States adopt the principles of protection and promotion of languages in danger of extinction. On a practical level, however, this legal recognition has failed to become reality. We have seen that the Charter on RMLs offers to the Member States several possibilities for finding loop-holes, in order to avoid the application of protection measures. The most urgent step from the point of view of RMLs is, therefore, to transform legal recognition into positive action.

Besides this, minority groups would certainly benefit if national identity were transformed into something less specific than it is at present, so that it includes the minority, national, and supranational levels. Haarmann calls this new notion of identity a multiple identity 'in which the basic needs of national self-recognition would not collide with the assets of a supra-national movement toward integration' (1991: 111-12).

Haarmann's concept of multiple identity does not include the minority level. However, his concept is extremely valid for members of minority groups, in their fight to acquire self-respect and recognition. In this way, being a member of a minority group would not conflict with being a citizen of both a national State and the European Union. Obviously, such a radical change in common perception would not happen spontaneously and there would be the need to educate people in this direction. In the light of multiple identity, Haarmann introduces the concept of prestige planning, that is to increase the prestige of minority languages. This can be achieved in several ways: by promoting the minority language to official use through a correct language planning policy, as has been done with Catalan in Spain; or, in the case of smaller minority languages, by increasing their prestige by stressing factors such as group solidarity and ethnic intimacy (1991: 116). Language planning includes both corpus planning and status planning. Corpus planning involves matters such as the development of an orthography, standardization, and modernization. Status planning changes the function of a language (Wardhaugh, 1992: 347). If an RML becomes the official language of a particular region, it will gain in status. There will be, therefore, efforts to extend its use to different areas such as government, education, and the media. The smaller languages in the EU, which have

insufficient sociocultural potential to be promoted to the level of official language use, would need to increase their prestige for different reasons. Such languages could become prestigious because they are the medium of interaction at a private level and therefore contribute to strengthening the bond between members of a minority group. In these circumstances, factors such as ethnic intimacy and group solidarity would give the minority language a recognition which may be as important as having an official status.

However, in the future, more work on the economic promotion of the RMLs needs to be done at European level. As far as this is concerned, it is essential to realize the importance of the link between language and economic activity. The results would be positive in two areas: the lesser-used languages would acquire a recognized status if they are used as a language in which commercial transactions or business management take place, while employees would be able to meet the demands of two types of clientele if they hired staff who spoke both the dominant language and the lesser used one (European Bureau, 1995: 14). The link between language and economic activity includes several areas: expanding the use of lesser-used languages in the advertising and marketing of products and in the workplace; encouraging the provision of an educational system in these languages with regard to the economic and commercial sectors; stimulating the expansion of the language in relation to services and enterprises; exploring the relations between speakers of lesser-used languages on the basis of a cultural exchange; developing the concept of linguistic cultural tourism (*ibid.*). Lesser-used language communities should be more aware of the potential which linguistic cultural tourism, as it has been termed, has for the economy of a country. Many lesser-used languages have experienced mass tourism. This has brought negative effects on their language, culture and community life. Linguistic cultural tourism is concerned with three interrelated aspects: increasing the use of the RML in the tourist sector, both visually and verbally; persuading more speakers of RML to use it in the tourist sector, especially owners or managers of reception structures; and developing new culturally related or linguistically dependent tourism products and services (European Bureau, 1995: 50).

3.7 Conclusion

At the beginning of the chapter the question of whether linguistic minorities benefit from the existence of the EU was asked. To this question, a positive answer can be given. However, this does not mean that the European Union is the ideal place for minority groups to voice their preoccupations but that the European Union is certainly more willing to listen to the claims made by minority groups than the Member States. For the Union to respond in an effective way to such claims is another matter, and this is a challenge which it will face in coming years. It will be interesting to follow future developments in this area since the 'friendly' attitude of the EU towards multilingualism is a consequence of the Member States' hostility towards pluralism, that is the tendency of the nation-state to favour cultural and linguistic homogeneity. This chapter has shown that the actions to protect the linguistic diversity of Europe derive from the Member States' concern to protect the different national languages spoken in Europe. The safeguarding of the linguistic diversity of Europe has been perceived by minority groups as an opportunity to include the regional varieties spoken in Europe in the protection. Hence, the EU institutions which safeguard the interests of minority groups, that is the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Community's Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, and the Council of Europe, have the delicate task of balancing national and minority interests.

From this analysis of the present situation of RMLs in Europe three main points can be drawn. First, the implementation of legislation, together with a change in the common assumption that a single language is the marker of one nation, are essential steps for the future safeguarding and the promotion of minority languages. Second, giving a more important place to minority languages in economic activity would ensure the prestige and the development of these languages. Third, the European Union itself can also benefit from the preservation of lesser-used languages. These should not be regarded only as part of the cultural richness of Europe; they can, in fact, be valuable resources in their own right and lend an impetus to the economic development of the Union.

CHAPTER FOUR

LINGUISTIC MINORITIES AND DIALECTS IN ITALY FROM POLITICAL UNIFICATION TO THE PRESENT

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the status of dialects and minority languages from political unification to contemporary Italy. It consists of three parts: the first examines the linguistic situation in Italy from political unification until the rise of Fascism; the second gives an overview of the status of dialects and minority languages during the Fascist years; the third considers the contemporary period.

4.2 National language, minority languages, and dialects from unification to 1921

At the time of political unification, a unitary linguistic norm, accepted and spoken by the citizens of the new state, was not established. The fact that there were many dialects spoken in Italy meant that the recently formed country was characterized by linguistic diversity. The presence of alloglot groups added even greater variety to the Italian linguistic situation. The Italian government had to tackle the linked problems of the lack of a norm and of illiteracy. Manzoni's theory, which regarded the Florentine spoken by the educated people as the most appropriate candidate to become the national language of Italy, was the one which mainly influenced the decisions of the political authorities. The controversy between Manzoni and Ascoli on the role of dialects during the process of national language acquisition will be discussed. Finally, the position of some specific varieties, in the years after political unification, will be considered.

4.2.1 The linguistic situation in Italy at unification

In the first census of the Italian population, carried out in 1861, 78 per cent of the population were classed as illiterate (De Mauro, 1963: 35). According to De Mauro, primary education represented the main way of becoming familiar with Italian because in the home dialect would usually be spoken. However, he believes that the

use of dialects in primary schools was quite common. De Mauro refers to the Matteucci survey of 1864-65, to demonstrate that teachers, especially those in rural areas, were unable to express themselves in Italian and therefore used dialects with their own pupils. Another big problem acknowledged in the *Storia* is the low attendance rate of students during these years. In Palermo, the Casati law on compulsory school attendance led to disappointing results. Only 30 per cent of boys and 18 per cent of girls attended school during the first years after unification (De Mauro, 1963: 38). From these figures concerning Palermo, we can conclude that attendance outside cities would be even lower because of farm work and the difficulty of getting to school. Moreover, De Mauro states that primary schools were unable to guarantee a deep and lasting knowledge of Italian. Access to Italian was reserved for those who had attended secondary school:

Non v'è dubbio, dunque, a concludere che in genere la sola istruzione elementare, se a stento riusciva a sottrarre gli allievi all'analfabetismo, non riusciva a garantire un contatto duraturo con la lingua nazionale: nei primi anni dopo l'unità, e in misura ancora maggiore negli anni e decenni anteriori, un reale contatto con la lingua comune e la sua effettiva e definitiva acquisizione erano riservati (o, almeno, lo potevano essere), soltanto a coloro che, dopo le scuole elementari, continuavano per qualche anno gli studi. (De Mauro, 1963: 40)

For the years 1862-63, De Mauro gives an optimistic figure of 8.9 per thousand of the population aged between 11 and 18 years to whom secondary education was offered. These figures, however, do not include Tuscany and Rome. In these areas, the local dialects were quite close to the common language. In addition, the Roman education system was more efficient than that of any other area in Italy. As a result of these two factors, Italophones in Tuscany and Rome numbered respectively 400,000 and 70,000, in comparison with a total of 160,000 in the rest of Italy. Therefore, in the years after unification, De Mauro concludes that about 600,000 citizens were Italophones, which corresponds to only 2.5 per cent of the entire population (De Mauro, 1963: 41).

Arrigo Castellani (1982), however, in his article 'Quanti erano gl'Italofoni nel 1861?', expresses doubts about De Mauro's estimate and uses different criteria to show that the percentage was higher. Castellani takes into account factors such as the number of students attending secondary education in both the private and public

sector, including the number of students in seminaries and military schools. Moreover, he points out that it was common practice in 1861 to educate girls belonging to the aristocracy at home. The number of priests who had studied in seminaries and the number of nuns teaching in primary schools are included in his calculation. Castellani also thinks that the number of Italophones in 1861 should include all those who did not attend primary education but had as their own mother tongue a vernacular spoken in the central part of Italy. These vernaculars were all very close to the Florentine variety which later became the standard language of Italy. Castellani disagrees with De Mauro in his regarding only the Tuscan and Roman vernaculars as very close to the national language: ‘Soltanto, ci chiediamo: perché quello che vale per Roma non dovrebbe valere per Perugia, Orvieto, Ancona, Viterbo, Civitavecchia? In che cosa la lingua spontanea d’un popolano d’Orvieto appare meno italiana della lingua spontanea d’un “Romano de Roma”?’ (1982: 20). Taking these factors into consideration, Castellani concludes that the number of Italophones in 1861 lay somewhere between a minimum of 8.77 per cent and a maximum of 12.63 per cent. He thinks that a percentage of 9.52 correctly represents the Italian situation.

Castellani is therefore more optimistic than De Mauro about the number of Italophones in 1861. In reaching this conclusion, he has used a more scientific approach than De Mauro. While De Mauro gets his data from the not very accurate (according to Castellani) statistical volume ‘Cento anni di vita nazionale attraverso le statistiche delle regioni’, published by SVIMEZ (Associazione per lo sviluppo dell’industria nel Mezzogiorno) in 1961, Castellani uses the more precise and up-to-date *Statistica istruzione secondaria 1862-63*. He also takes into account other factors which appear to be relevant for a more precise idea of the number of Italophones in 1861. However, even if Castellani is right, the number of Italophones in the years after political unification is low. To say that 9.52 per cent of the population was Italophone means that the vast majority of the population of that time was dialectophone. Moreover, in the census of 1861, 205,775 alloglots were recorded: 119,369 speakers of Occitan and Franco-Provençal, 3,649 speakers of German in the Western Alps, 55,453 speakers of Albanian, 20,268 speakers of Greek, and 7,036 speakers of Catalan (Castellani, 1982:14).

The political authorities had to intervene in a situation in which the national language was unfamiliar to the majority of Italians. Italian as a spoken language was a phenomenon alien to the Italian society of that time. Dialects were very vigorous and the main means of oral expression.

4.2.2 *The Manzoni and Ascoli controversy on the role of dialects in the process of standard language acquisition*

One of the first attempts after unification to create the conditions necessary for the diffusion of one language over the whole country was conducted by Emilio Broglio, who in 1867 became Minister of Education. He was in favour of Manzoni's position regarding the much debated *questione della lingua*. Manzoni, after long reflection (going back to 1823, the year in which, in the introduction to his novel *Fermo e Lucia*, he acknowledged the problem of linguistic diversity in Italy and the need for a common language), reached the conclusion that, amongst all the dialects spoken in Italy, the Florentine dialect spoken by educated people was the most suitable candidate to become the national language in Italy (Marazzini, 1999: 161-2). In 1868 Broglio appointed a commission to find ways of spreading Florentine among the Italian population. The commission was composed of two sections: one based in Milan and the other in Florence. Manzoni was the president of the commission and guided the Milanese section (Marazzini, 1999: 164).

Manzoni, however, failed to understand that the economic, social, and cultural conditions of the recently unified Italy made the establishment of a common language a process which still had a long way to go. This was clearly understood by Ascoli, who, for his modern and advanced ideas, has been more appreciated in modern times than he was by his contemporaries (see Marazzini, 1999: 244, note 11). In his Proemio of 1872 to the *Archivio glottologico italiano*, the first journal of modern linguistics published in Italy, Ascoli expressed his distance from Manzoni's approach. He regarded as essential for the establishment of a common language a social and cultural change in the Italian conditions, 'la modificazione grandissima dell'apparato intellettuale della nazione, avrebbe importato per sé medesima, e per la mutata condizione degli animi, un [...] grande rivolgimento pur nell'ordine della parola [...]' (Ascoli, 1975: 22). Paradoxically, the linguist Ascoli suggested a shift

from linguistic to social issues. He realized that a solution to the *questione della lingua* would be found outside language.

How were dialects regarded in the years after unification? In his *Relazione*, Manzoni acknowledged the problem of linguistic diversification and the vitality of the dialects:

Ma tra di noi, invece, i vecchi e vari idiomi sono in pieno vigore, e servono abitualmente a ogni classe di persone, per non esserci in effettiva concorrenza con essi una lingua atta a combatterli col mezzo unicamente efficace, che è quello di prestare il servizio che essi prestano. (1990: 587)

Dialects, however, according to Manzoni, could be used as a starting point for learning Italian. He believed that bilingual dictionaries, with the Florentine equivalent of the dialect forms, would be very useful tools to spread a unitary language in Italy:

Abbiamo accennato in secondo luogo, che i vocabolari degli altri idiomi sarebbero un mezzo efficacissimo per diffondere la lingua del vocabolario destinato a diventar comune. Avremmo quasi potuto dire: un mezzo indispensabile; giacché un vocabolario non comparativo, può bensì insegnare se tali e tali vocaboli appartengano, o no, a una data lingua, può dare di essi una più precisa intelligenza con accurate definizioni, può indicare le loro varie attitudini e i loro accompagnamenti, con esempi cavati dall'uso generale e vivente (com'è nel vocabolario francese citato sopra); ma questi servizi non li può prestare se non a chi conosca già materialmente i vocaboli intorno ai quali gli occorrono quelle altre cognizioni. Ciò che occorre a noi, in una gran parte dei casi, e d'apprendere i vocaboli medesimi; e a ciò servono, come naturalissimi interpreti, i vocabolari degli altri idiomi. Sono il noto che può condurre all'ignoto desiderato, o certamente desiderabilissimo. (1990: 593)

Manzoni's theory had as a consequence among his followers a hostile approach to dialects. These were labelled *malerba dialettale*, that is, dialects were seen as weeds, which had to be eradicated in the shortest possible time. To reach this objective, the Manzonians started to undertake linguistic works such as onomastic and grammatical glossaries, which gave the Florentine equivalent of the dialect forms. They were strongly against deviations from the spoken Florentine, which were quite common in literary texts of that time.

In educational policy, the Manzonian approach was quite successful. Schools adopted the anti-dialect handbooks and primary school teachers were, for some time, unable to teach in their native region and moved elsewhere, in order to prevent them using their own dialect with pupils (De Mauro, 1963: 44).

In 1890, the minister of Education Boselli followed this line, and advertised a competition for the compilation of dialect dictionaries. The competition had two aims: the first, mainly pedagogic, was to create the conditions for dialect speakers to learn the national language. Another objective was more scientific: the dictionaries would be a useful documentation for dialectologists (Benincà, 1988: 16-17).

During these years, a more positive attitude towards dialects can be found in Ascoli, D'Ovidio, and De Sanctis. They were against the anti-dialect views of the Manzonians and saw dialects as witnesses of local cultures which should be preserved rather than destroyed, as they would represent an invaluable asset for national culture. Dialects, according to this approach, had to be studied and compared to the national language, so that this comparison would make the difference between language and dialect clear, and the common language would spread without diminishing the vitality of the dialects (De Mauro, 1963: 361-62).

The attitude of the politicians was generally more influenced by the Manzonian positions than by Ascoli's opinions. However, when De Sanctis became Minister of Education in 1980, he approved the following regulations for Technical Schools:

Poiché nel luogo ove risiede la scuola si parla un dialetto, più o meno disforme dalla lingua, si badi a far rilevare in che principalmente consista questa disformità; non per mettere in dispregio il dialetto, ma per far tesoro di quel fondo, più o meno ricco ma sempre prezioso, che esso ha in comune con la buona lingua. (cited in De Mauro, 1963: 362)

In 1918, the Manzonian approach *dal noto all'ignoto* influenced the Società Filologica Romana, whose president was Ernesto Monaci. Several initiatives were promoted by the Società, such as dialect grammars and dictionaries as well as texts in dialects to be translated into Italian. The idea behind these initiatives was to use dialects as a starting point for learning Italian (Benincà, 1988: 17).

4.2.3 *Dialects and minority languages at unification*

It will be now useful to consider individual cases of dialects and minority languages and their particular situation in the years after political unification. The examples chosen include dialects, strong minority languages, and weak minority languages, that is tongues which have been regarded both as dialects and as minority languages: Sicilian and Piedmontese (dialects), French in the Val d'Aosta (strong minority language), Sardinian and Friulian (weak minority languages).

4.2.3.1 *Sardinian*

The use of Sardinian at school in order to learn Italian dates back to the period before political unification, and precisely to 1720, the year in which the island was taken over by Piedmont and ruled by the House of Savoy, and Italian became the official language. In 1760, the Minister Bogino made the study of Italian at school compulsory and advised teachers to use Sardinian with the Sardophones to introduce Italian: 'agli insegnanti delle prime classi di partire dalla conoscenza e dalla pratica della lingua sarda nelle sue diverse specificazioni dialettali [...] per il progressivo apprendimento dell'italiano' (Sole, 1894: 107, cited in Bruni, 1992: 904). This positive attitude of the House of Savoy towards Sardinian was also due to the desire to oppose Spanish, the language of the island's previous rulers (Pirodda, 1989: 944-45, cited in Bruni, 1992: 904). However, in this period, several initiatives to promote the local culture and language were undertaken. One of these is the work by M. Madao, *Il ripulimento della lingua Sarda lavorato sopra l'origine ch'essa trae dalla Greca e dalla Latina*, which aimed to define the genetic autonomy of Sardinian compared to Italian, through the search for noble classical origins (Dettorri, 1988: 929, cited in Bruni, 1992: 904).

With Italian political unification, Sardinia was slowly inserted into a wider context, in which the importance of the national language assumed a more relevant role. According to the census of 1871, 88 per cent of the total population of Sardinia were illiterate (Sotgiu 1986: 173, cited in Bruni, 1992: 910). However, at the end of the century, there was a more decisive intervention from the political authorities, which made primary school education compulsory in small towns and villages. In 1890, the competition advertised by Boselli encouraged several initiatives in Sardinia such as the publication of bilingual dictionaries (Sardinian - Italian; Italian -

Sardinian) and more specific bilingual glossaries, that is vocabulary relating to fauna, in particular fishes, and flora. Other channels through which the Italian language was spread in Sardinia were the circulation of newspapers and periodicals, mass conscription, the improvement of sea transport, and the presence of non-Sardinian technicians, due to the lack of specialized Sardinian skilled workers.

Nevertheless, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the diffusion of the Italian language was still a long way off in the island. In 1903, a pupil of the second year of primary school wrote:

Ersecizio di lingua

Nomiate tutti gli utensili che si trovano nella vostra cucina

Saggio

La satagna, il tratabaso, saturra, suparestagiu, ispigiarasa, iscasorolasa, suguardaroba, suvoredu, la tavola.

Apart from 'tavola', these are words belonging to the Campidanese variety spoken in Sardinia. 'La satagna' corresponds to the Italian 'la padella' (frying-pan), 'il tratabaso' to 'la grattugia' (grater), 'sa turra' to 'il mestolo' (ladle), 'su parestagiu' to 'lo scaffale' (shelf), 'is pigiarasa' to 'le pentole' (pans), 'is casorolasa' to 'le casseruole' (saucepans), 'su guardaroba' to 'il guardaroba' (wardrobe), 'su voredu' to 'il fornello' (stove). The use of both Sardinian and Italian definite articles should be noted: 'su, sa, is' and 'il, la' (Bruni, 1992: 910).

An important political event of this period was the creation in 1920 of the Partito Sardo d'Azione, whose existence was due to the understanding of the importance of organisation for the future of the island. This awareness came as a result of the large number of Sardinian soldiers involved in the First World War. About 100,000 Sardinians fought in the war. At a socio-political level, the return of the Sassari Brigade, which was mainly composed of farm-workers, resulted in the ex-servicemen's greater attention to the problems of the island. Their participation in this conflict showed them that there was an alternative to either anarchic insurrection or resigned indifference for solving the problems of the island. This alternative was represented by the constitution of a modern political party (Blasco-Ferrer, 1984: 170).

4.2.3.2 Friulian

After political unification, schools represented the main channel for the penetration of the Italian language. However, the language spoken by the teachers was mainly Venetian and this contributed to keeping the oral diglossia Venetian-Friulian rather than favouring the establishment of the national language. Other problems were the lack of teachers and appropriate buildings and the low number of pupils (in 1876, 66 per cent of boys and 46 per cent of girls) attending school. It was a common opinion that ‘la femine savinte je come un cal: tu stas be nome quant che no tu lu as plui’, in Italian, ‘la donna istruita è come un callo: stai bene solo quando non ce l’hai più’ (A. Costantini 1969-70: 38-39, cited in Bruni, 1992: 303).

Mass schooling, however, started in conformity with the principles of the Manzonian linguistic pedagogy. The *Vocabolario* by Pirona of 1871, the newspaper *L’Artiere, giornale pel popolo*, and the Catholic weekly magazine *La Madonna delle Grazie* were all based on the Manzonian pedagogic programmes. Nevertheless, religious education and sermons were conducted in Friulian (Morgana, 1992: 304).

Another initiative to favour the use of Florentine was constituted by the agricultural almanac for young people, *Contadinello* by Del Torre, which gave the Florentine agricultural vocabulary with Friulian equivalents. For the first forty years (1856-95), the almanac was printed in Friulian and was entitled *Il contadinel* (Bruni, 1992: 304). In 1876 Del Torre decided to publish it in Italian: ‘Oggi, meno qualche rara eccezione, non vi è villaggio che non abbia una scuola, e la frequentazione è obbligatoria per tutti. In queste scuole il maestro vi parla in italiano e non in Friulano, e i libri sono in italiano per farvi apprendere appunto la lingua italiana. [...] Sarebbe farvi un torto il continuare a scriverlo in friulano’. From these words, it is clear that the main preoccupation of those years was to spread the national language. The educational aims, however, were bound up with irredentist claims: ‘Il friulano [...] non è che un dialetto della comune madre-lingua italiana per cui la vostra vera lingua è l’italiano. [...] I nostri padri furono friulani, cioè italiani, prima di essere austriaci, e noi siamo italiani del pari benché sudditi austriaci’ (A. Costantini 1969-70: 174-75, cited in Bruni 1992: 304).

As far as education in Friuli is concerned, the method *dal dialetto alla lingua* was used, until the Gentile Reform in 1923. Typical of this method was the study of 1917 by Vignoli, *Il parlare di Gorizia e l’italiano* (Morgana, 1992: 304).

4.2.3.3 Sicilian

In Sicily, the process of Italianization started at the beginning of the sixteenth century, during the Spanish domination of the island. As contacts with the other Italian regions were promoted by the Spanish, Sicily became more involved in a broader context. The participation of the Sicilian elite in the Consiglio d'Italia, a central administrative body created by King Charles the Fifth in 1558 to prevent the development of nationalistic movements, was very important for the diffusion of Tuscan. This variety, in fact, was already familiar to the Sicilian elite and used in administration (Alfieri, 1992: 813).

During the period of Bourbon domination (1734-1860), this process of Italianization continued and expanded. In this phase, we can already witness the use of the method *dal noto all'ignoto* in schools. One of the most successful textbooks was the *Glottopedia italo-sicula* by Innocenzo Fulci, written with the aim of providing a grammar to compare Sicilian and Italian. In the academic year 1823-24 Fulci taught a university course of Italian language, reckoning that it was a priority to 'studiar la lingua propria, che pei Siciliani è l'italiana' and welcomed the decision of the Bourbon king to establish the chair of 'lingua italiana e non già sicola' (Alfieri, 1992: 827). The desire to Italianize the island was also implied in the recommendation to prevent Sicilian children from coming into contact with servants and tutors who were dialectophones.

In 1860, Sicily was annexed to Piedmont. From a linguistic point of view, the general tendency was to accept the Manzonian ideology, which aimed at making the Florentine spoken by educated people the language of all the regions of Italy. In 1859, the Casati law, which made attendance at primary school compulsory and was revised in 1877 with the Coppino law, obtained poor results. The failure of both laws could be attributed to the lack of a liberal middle class and to the fact that, in a poor and depressed society, education was perceived as of little advantage. Moreover, the Piedmontese laws on education did not link literacy to the right to vote. In 1901, 71 per cent of the Sicilian population was still illiterate.

As mentioned above, in the years after unification, there was a general acceptance of Manzoni's position. The only reaction was from the Sicilianists who were in favour of Perticari's theory (Bruni, 1992: 837). He believed in the existence of a common educated vernacular, based on a unitary *lingua romana*, developed from

spoken Latin. According to Peticari, the Sicilian poets at the school of Frederick II had produced the best instances of an educated vernacular based on this common language (Marazzini, 1999: 154). This common literary language could oppose or even replace the role of Florentine. These positions inspired titles of essays for competitions for future primary school teachers such as: *Perché la corte di Federico II lo Svevo si è considerata come la culla della italica favella* (Abate, 1870: 42, cited in Bruni, 1992: 837).

4.2.3.4 Piedmontese

In 1792 the French invaded Piedmont and annexed it to France. French became the official language of Piedmont, replacing Italian. The generally harmonious equilibrium between French and Italian, which had characterized the region since the fifteenth century, was broken, as French became the language of the oppressor, in contrast with Italian, the symbol of resistance to foreign rule (Parry, 1994: 175).

With political unification, the learning of Italian was felt to be a duty to perform towards the newly-formed state. The acknowledgement of the importance of a single language for Italy gave a further blow to the pacific and tolerant bilingualism which had characterized for centuries the relationship with French in the Savoy territories. This enthusiastic approach towards the national language, which was typical of the years of Risorgimento, did not mean that there were no difficulties in using Italian. It is well known that the first king of Italy, Vittorio Emanuele II, used to speak dialect with his Ministers (De Mauro, 1963: 32).

It is also interesting to note that several proposals to use dialect to learn Italian were initiated in Piedmont. In these proposals, the local dialect was regarded as a 'bridge' towards the national language (Marazzini, 1984: 184).

Obviously, the Italian language was, at that time, unknown to the common people. A pedagogic book of these years is *Sentire e meditare. Avviamenti all'arte del comporre*. It is the story of Isolina Martinet, a Piedmontese orphan girl who lived in a religious institution. Here, she was introduced to educational books, which familiarized her with the Tuscan variety. Isolina, therefore, learned to say *biancheria* (linen) instead of *lingeria*; *colazione* (breakfast), instead of *digiune*; *busta* (envelope), instead of *envelope* (Bruni, 1992: 36).

In 1905, the *L'idioma gentile*, by the Piedmontese writer Edmondo De Amicis, was published. The author followed a primarily Manzonian approach. Therefore, forms belonging to dialect or regional Italian were condemned by De Amicis (1905: 45), who advised the readers to use *cassetto* (drawer) instead of the regional form *tiretto*, *cassettone* (chest of drawers) instead of *comò*. De Amicis, however, was also against excessive imitation of Florentine. In *L'amio Enrio*, one of his essays in *L'idioma gentile*, De Amicis ridicules the Florentine accent:

Un giorno, credendo d'aver lasciata la *canna* [...] in un caffè, vi ritornò mezz'ora dopo, e domandò al padrone: — Ha veduto la *mi' anna*?

Quegli, pensando che domandasse se era stata a cercarlo nel caffè la sua signora, benchè gli paresse un po' troppo famigliare quel modo di nominarla, gli rispose di no, perchè signore, in fatti non ce n'era state.

E allora, *l'amio*, rivolgendosi al cameriere: —

Guarda un po' sotto il biliardo.

Immaginate la risata. (1905: 88)

4.2.3.5 French in Val D'Aosta

So far we have seen that, in the years before and after political unification, the achievement of a common language was felt as an important step towards realizing a real union in the hearts and minds of the Italian citizens. The vitality of the dialects was seen as an obstacle to the achievement of this goal. However, apart from dialects, there were several minority languages spoken in Italy (see 4.2 above). The minority group which caused most concern to the political authorities was the French in Val d'Aosta, since they considered themselves French or *Valdostani* rather than Italian: 'Avant 1861, les Valdôtains semblent se considérer de nationalité française, tout court ... et parfois de nationalité valdôtaine' (Betemps, 1979: 51-52, cited in Freddi, 1983: 129). French was the official language of the *Valdostani*, while Franco-Provençal was the local *patois*. Although, after the capital had moved from Chambéry to Turin (1563), there was a gradual shift from French to Italian as the major written language of administration and bureaucracy in Piedmont, French was always officially used in the Francophone territories. In aristocratic circles and at the court of Turin, Italian and French (and Piedmontese) were spoken indifferently until and beyond unification: French was the preferred tongue of Cavour and Vittorio Emanuele II (Woolf, 1997: 402).

In 1861 the deputy Giovenale Vegezzi-Ruscalla wrote the pamphlet *Diritto e necessità di abrogare il francese come lingua ufficiale in alcune valli della Provincia di Torino* (Val d'Aosta, Val di Susa, and Valle Pellice, which all professed the Waldensian religion). The presence of French was defined by Vegezzi-Ruscalla as 'uno sconcio' and 'una macchia alla nazionalità italiana' (Freddi, 1983: 130). This pamphlet created many debates and strong reactions in Val d'Aosta.

Vegezzi-Ruscalla had already acknowledged the problem represented by the linguistic minority in his study 'Che cosa è nazione', in which he wrote that 'la lingua è il certificato delle nazioni' (Vegezzi-Ruscalla, 1854: 9, 15 cited in Bruni, 1992: 34 and Marazzini, 1999: 178). In the following years, he studied the case of the Slavs in Molise and the Piedmontese settlement of Guardia, in Calabria. However, according to him, the real problem was represented by the French-speaking group in Val D'Aosta. In this area, intervention was necessary because of the vitality of French. The use of French could not be tolerated. Otherwise, the German-speaking Walsers, the Albanians, the Catalans in Alghero, and the Slovenians 'quando Istria sarà unita all'Italia' (Vegezzi-Ruscalla, 1861: 34, in Bruni, 1992: 34 and Marazzini, 1999: 177) would also have been able to claim protection.

Vegezzi-Ruscalla, therefore, was concerned with the danger represented by minority groups in the newly-formed nation. In the same way in which the French government had operated in Corsica, these minority groups had to be eliminated. His was not an isolated case of intolerance in those years. The Romantic idea of nation, which linked the concept of 'nation' with those of 'language' and 'territory', had started to gain ground and spread in the western European states.

Amongst the proposals of Vegezzi-Ruscalla to Italianize Val d'Aosta was the building of a railway, which would link the valley to the plain. The railway started to operate in 1886 and was very important for the diffusion of the Italian language: 'le chemin de fer d'Ivrée à Aoste sera la meilleure grammaire de langue italienne pour notre vallée', wrote the Abbé Gorret (Betemps, 1979: 62). In this way, the valley achieved a less isolated position and this new state of things made the valley more accessible to tourists and workers from other parts of Italy. The influence of the Piedmontese dialect became stronger in these conditions and it started to be spoken in the valley. However, the church remained the stronghold of the French language, which was used in the catechism classes and for sermons. In 1909, the *Comité pour*

la protection de la langue française dans la Vallée d'Aoste was created. Active members of this institution were intellectuals who had as their main concern the preservation of their language and culture. The *Comité* had a very important role for the realization of the cultural, political and administrative autonomy of the region (Bruni, 1992: 35), which became a Special Statute region in 1944.

4.3. Attitudes and policies towards dialects and minority languages during the Fascist years

This section will consider the position of dialects and minority languages during the Fascist period. The first part deals mainly with the problems that dialects represented in a totalitarian regime. In general, the attitude towards dialects was negative, as they constituted an obstacle to the realization of linguistic unity, which was one of the main objectives of Fascism. However, the first years of the regime were characterized by a certain tolerance towards the local vernaculars. This tolerance, in later years, was followed by a more rigid stand against dialects, the use of which was banned in all areas of public life. The domestic use of dialect, was, however, more accepted.

The second part of this section focuses on the repercussions of Fascist policies on minority languages. These were regarded as a real threat to the achievement of a unitary language. The idea of 'one language for one nation' was a vital facet of Fascist ideology. It was felt essential to intervene in order to assimilate the minority groups. The areas of intervention regarded both their private and their public life. In private life, measures affected mainly the areas of family names and education, while in public life the areas of place names, public notices, and administration were strongly controlled by the regime.

4.3.1 'Dal dialetto alla lingua'

The Italian linguistic situation during the Fascist years was characterized by the continued lack of a common language and by illiteracy. To overcome illiteracy, dialectophones had to come to terms with another linguistic reality: Standard Italian (SI). The problem of fighting illiteracy was, therefore, strictly related to that of establishing a common language in the whole nation.

One of the main preoccupations of the Fascist regime was to fight illiteracy through the acquisition of SI, mainly through the channel of education. In 1923-34, the local dialects were used in schools as part of the strategy for the acquisition of SI. Giuseppe Lombardo Radice, general director of primary education from 1922 until 1924, was the promoter of the Manzonian method *dal noto all'ignoto*. The method *dal dialetto alla lingua* was introduced by the Minister of Education Gentile through an O.M. (ordinanza ministeriale) of 11 November 1923. As already mentioned, the method was not new, but, for the first time, it was codified in a specific law (Klein, 1986: 40). It became compulsory for the third, fourth, and fifth years of primary school and consisted mainly in translations from the local dialect into Italian, with the double aim of fighting illiteracy and teaching SI.

The Gentile Reform represented an important step for the realization of the ideas that had developed during the *questione della lingua*. Obviously, the teaching method *dal dialetto alla lingua* required adequate books and grammars. Lombardo Radice recommended the grammar *Dal dialetto alla lingua* written by Ciro Trabalza in 1917. In 1925, the Ministerial Commission for school books, whose president was Lombardo Radice, approved the series *Dal dialetto alla lingua*, which included three different manuals for the third, fourth, and fifth year of primary school. This series was published by the Società Filologica Romana, already a promoter of similar initiatives at the time when Ernesto Monaci was its president in 1918 (Klein, 1986: 42)

The use of dialect in school was only allowed in order to facilitate the acquisition of the national language. There was no implied revaluation of the local vernacular. The linguist Benvenuto Terracini warned against the danger of teaching dialect to the pupils:

Si giunse certo qua e là a pretendere d'insegnare ai bimbi il dialetto: p. es. di farlo scrivere: il che è un errore che svisa tutto lo spirito ed il congegno del metodo secondo il quale il dialetto deve presupporsi noto, deve essere un necessario punto di partenza e in nessun caso e sotto nessun pretesto diventare un punto d'arrivo. (1927: 510, cited in Klein, 1986: 43)

The Fascist government was very ambitious in its goal to fight illiteracy and spread Italian through education. Gianni Cugini, whose comments have become a source for the Fascist era, wrote ‘il Governo Fascista affrontò con estrema decisione e proseguì con tenacia rivoluzionaria la lotta contro l’analfabetismo, che del resto è parte soltanto della più fascista delle riforme’ (1933: 679, cited in Klein, 1986:29).

However, to achieve these aims was a different matter altogether. Low family incomes, the condition and location of the school buildings, the low salaries of the teachers, and, above all, the lack of funds, represented a real obstacle to the realization of these objectives.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the attitude towards dialects changed completely. The Fascist Regime had consolidated its position and the nationalistic tendencies had strengthened. In 1931, the use of dialect was banned in the press. There was a specific regulation not to publish ‘articoli, poesie o titoli in dialetto’. The dialects were defined as ‘principale espressione’ of regionalism and ‘residui di divisione e di servitù della vecchia Italia’ (Cannistraro, 1975: 422, cited in Klein, 1986: 52). In the telegram n. 21928 of the first of August 1932, the *prefetti* were ordered to confiscate ‘articoli favorevoli ai dialetti’, in the name of Fascism ‘intransigentemente unitario’ (Raffaelli, 1983: 153-54).

From 1930 until 1945, titles in dialect were not allowed any more in the cinema (Raffaelli, 1983: 20). Educational policy also changed. In 1934, the Minister of Education Ercole banned the use of dialect in schools and increased the hours of Italian language teaching. While, in the first phase of the Fascist regime, dialect was regarded as a starting point to learn the national language, in the second phase of the regime, the use of dialect was completely banned. In the educational programmes of Ercole, instituted in 1934, the exercises of translations from dialect into Italian, which were the foundation of the Gentile reform in 1923, were excluded. Moreover, while the programmes of 1923 talked of ‘nozioni organiche di grammatica italiana, con particolare riguardo alla sintassi e sistematico riferimento al dialetto’, every reference to dialect was removed in the programme of 1934. The shift away from the importance given to dialect for the acquisition of the national language must, in reality, have happened more gradually than it might appear. In 1925, in fact, according to the new instructions of the Minister Fedele, dialect was not allowed in

the examinations for admission to high school. These new instructions are known as Fedele's *ritocchi* to the Gentile reform (Klein, 1986: 53).

However, despite the fact that the use of dialect was no longer allowed in education, it must have been extremely difficult to discard it altogether. This is shown by a circular of 1940, which contains 'istruzioni per l'uso del libro di lettura per la prima classe'. Amongst the exercises suggested is the 'esame delle istruzioni dell'alfabetiere; il bambino impara a dire in modo chiaro e preciso i nomi delle cose o degli animali rappresentati, traducendoli dal dialetto' (Circ. n. 2, 30 dicembre 1940, cited in Klein, 1986: 59).

4.3.2 Sicily and Sardinia

It will be interesting to consider the situation of the two regions on which the survey of this thesis will concentrate: Sardinia and Sicily. Sardinian, at that time, did not enjoy the status of minority language. For this reason, the position of Sardinian is considered in this section rather than in the following sections, which discuss the measures for the assimilation of the alloglot groups during Fascism.

In Sicily and Sardinia, as well as in the rest of Italy, the attempts to censor the use of dialect in public and, to some extent, private life, could not banish the use of the local dialect in everyday oral situations.

In Sicily, the dialect was still used in theatrical performances and in the recreational clubs of the provinces. As for the production of works that encouraged the acquisition of the national language using dialect as a starting point, the *Vocabolario siciliano-italiano per tutti* was written by Trischitta. However, only sixty-four pages were published in Messina between 1925 and 1926 (Bruni, 1992: 839). Although the regime banned the dialect in public contexts, Sicilian was very alive and therefore, it was not realistic to forbid its use. Moreover, the strict Fascist measures, which prohibited every form of association, except those allowed by the regime like *Figli della Lupa* and *Balilla*, and the laws restricting free circulation within the country, in order to encourage the farmers to work the land, did not favour linguistic uniformity (Bruni, 1992: 840).

Regarding Sardinia, Sole (1988: 33) states that Fascism did not affect Sardinian society deeply and influenced mainly the urban areas. This probably explains why information on the status of Sardinian during the Fascist years is scarce. However,

the use of Sardinian in public life was forbidden and poetic competitions in Sardinian were banned. When the Fascist regime prohibited the use of dialect at school in 1934, the monolingual dialect-speaking children were brutally confronted with, and addressed in, an unknown language which was preposterously supposed to be their own (Bolognesi, 1998: 6).

4.3.3 *The position of minority groups in the Fascist period*

Linguistic assimilation affected all the new alloglots in the Italian territories, but it was particularly felt and became more dramatic in Alto Adige. This was probably due to the fact that the German-speaking group felt, more than the other ethnic minorities in Italy, its sense of belonging to a different nation. In 1919, South Tyrol was annexed to Italy. The annexation was conducted in accordance with the secret London Protocol of 1915, with which Italy had been persuaded to join the war against Austria and Germany. In taking leave of Austria, the South Tyrol deputy, Eduard Reut-Nicolussi addressed the Austrian Parliament in this way:

From the words of the Chancellor and the President the promise has rung that you do not wish to forget the linguistic, cultural and historical solidarity which has bound South Tyrol till now to German Austria (shouts of 'Certainly not'). We take you at your word. If we go now into this dark future, so must it be our consolation that we have compatriots and brothers who will not forget us in our needs, who give us in the terrible struggle that now exists that help which stems from our common German love of freedom. (*Stenographische Protokolle der Konstituierenden Nationalversammlung der Republik Österreich*, 1919, cited in Alcock, 1970: 26)

After the annexation, the German ethnic group in South Tyrol was initially guaranteed a large measure of political and linguistic autonomy. However, the Fascist government quickly withdrew this freedom and the years up until the Second World War were characterized by the oppression of the German linguistic minority.

The Fascist regime entered into both the private and public lives of minority groups. As far as private life is concerned, the sectors mostly affected were education and family names. In public life, they were place names, public notices and administration. Each area will be discussed below.

4.3.3.1 Education

Education was certainly the area in which minority groups suffered most. The R.D. (regio decreto) of 1 October 1923, decreed by Minister Gentile, stated that Italian was the only language of education in all the schools of the Kingdom, included those of the recently annexed provinces: 'In tutte le scuole elementari del Regno l'insegnamento è impartito nella lingua dello Stato. Nei Comuni nei quali si parli abitualmente una lingua diversa, questa sarà oggetto di studio, in ore aggiuntive' (cited in Klein, 1986: 72). However, to have additional hours in the mother tongue could be requested by parents at the beginning of the academic year. Obviously, this request put the families concerned in danger of being classified as 'antinazionali' and 'antifascisti' (Salvemini, 1952: 445, cited in Klein, 1986: 72). The aim was to Italianize primary schools by the academic year 1927-28.

As for middle and high schools, the R.D. of 27 September 1923 made teaching in Italian compulsory for alloglot schools, starting from the academic year 1927-28. However, in 1924 minority languages were already regarded, in high schools, in the same way as any other second language and it was compulsory to pass an examination in Italian to have access to high school education. In 1925, the Minister Fedele abolished the possibility of having additional hours in a mother tongue other than Italian for primary schools (Klein, 1986: 74).

These sanctions concerned not only alloglot students but also alloglott teachers. The R.D. of 1 October 1923, n. 2185, gave preference, for the teaching of the minority language, to those alloglot teachers who were qualified to teach Italian. The teaching of Italian in primary schools had to be carried out by those who were 'di buoni sentimenti nazionali e di lingua italiana' (Cronaca, 1928: 521, cited in Klein, 1986: 77).

Fascist educational policy had the double aim of spreading the Italian language in the recently annexed territories, and, above all, of assimilating their ethnic groups. This was clearly stated by the Minister of Education Casati in 1924: 'Il programma d'istruzione non ha solo lo scopo di indurre scolari ed adulti a usare l'italiano come lingua abituale, ma anche di farne degl'italiani per sentimento' (Salvemini 1952: 445, cited in Klein, 1986: 78).

The same approach was adopted by Casati's successor, Fedele who, in 1926, during his official visit to the schools in South Tyrol, declared that 'la scuola ha il

compito d'operare l'assimilazione del popolo alloglotto' (Cronaca, 1928: 525-526, cited in Klein, 1986: 78).

However, in the mid 1930s, as a consequence of the strengthening of the relations between Italy and Germany, educational policy, especially in the South Tyrol, changed. In 1934, the private schools teaching German reopened, in 1935 the teaching of German in primary schools started again, and in 1939, after the agreement between Italy and Germany regarding the possibility for the German-speaking minority group to opt for either German or Italian nationality, German schools were opened again for those who had opted for the German nationality Klein, 1986: 83).

As a result of the strict Fascist policy towards minority groups, in South Tyrol, clandestine schools, known as Katakombenschulen, were created. These schools found wide support in the *comuni* and also abroad. The schools and their teachers were obviously subject to prosecutions, but several schools managed to survive until the end of the regime. Along with Katakombenschulen, the clergy was very active in the teaching of the minority language. This was taught and was also the vehicle of instruction in seminaries and religious institutions. The practice was forbidden but continued nevertheless (Klein: 1986: 85-86).

4.3.3.2 *Family names*

The other sector affecting the private life of minority groups was family names. Names, surnames and noble titles were all Italianized. The Fascist regime did not talk about changing the name and surname of the alloglot population, but of restoring the original forms which had been altered during Austrian rule. Ettore Tolomei, senator and director of the Istituto di studi per l'Alto Adige (Klein, 1986: 73), whose main preoccupation was to make South Tyrol an Italian land, starting with family and place names, wrote about the question in these terms:

V'è la categoria numerosa dei cognomi derivati da nomi di luogo dell'Alto Adige che sono d'origine latina in gran parte, altri d'origine diversa, o ignota, ma tedesca in ogni modo no: nomi di luogo ch'erano stati germanizzati, e ai quali l'Italia restituisce la forma primitiva, lavata, detersa. (Tolomei, 1921: 25, cited in Klein, 1986: 106)

However, Tolomei's ideas became law (L. 24 maggio 1926, n. 898) in 1926. Article 1 of this law states:

Le famiglie della provincia di Trento che portano un cognome originario italiano o latino tradotto in altre lingue o deformato con grafia straniera o con l'aggiunta di un suffisso straniero, riassumeranno il cognome originario nelle forme originate.

Saranno ugualmente ricondotti alla forma italiana i cognomi di origine toponomastica, derivanti da luoghi, i cui nomi erano stati tradotti in altra lingua o deformati con grafia straniera, e altresì i predicati nobiliari tradotti o ridotti in forma straniera. (Klein, 1986: 106)

This 'restitution' was carried out either by changes in the spelling, so that the surname would be spelled according to the Italian phonetic system (for example, Kante became Cante) or by elimination of foreign suffixes (for example, Andrianich became Andriani) or by translation (for example, Vodopivez became Bevilacqua) (Klein, 1986: 108).

So far, we have considered how the Fascist regime affected the private life of minority groups. We will now consider how the regime acted to control their public life.

4.3.3.3 Place names

The R.D. of 29 March 1923, n.800 decreed the use of the Italian language in local place names and included the Italian equivalents of the most important *comuni*:

Agli effetti di cui negli articoli seguenti, sono pubblicati gli uniti elenchi di nomi dei comuni e di altre località delle nuove Province del Regno, visti e firmati, d'ordine Nostro, dal Ministro dell'Interno.

[...] Per i nomi di luogo non compresi negli elenchi uniti al decreto — e cioè per i nomi delle località minori, e delle sedi d'uffici che venissero nuovamente costituiti, ed in generale per tutti i nomi degli enti geografici e topografici non ancora fissati ufficialmente — le Autorità e le Amministrazioni accoglieranno intanto le forme adottate nei Prontuari e Repertori della Reale Società Geografica Italiana. (Art. 1, cited in Klein, 1986: 96)

This law made it compulsory to use, in the new provinces, the Italian forms of the most important local place names. For the others, the bilingual form was allowed, but it had to be preceded by the Italian form. Tolomei was particularly concerned

with place names in South Tyrol, as, unlike the French names used in Piedmont and Val d'Aosta, the German forms differed completely from the Italian:

Possono sopravvivere nelle valli piemontesi Villeneuve, Chatillon, roche, crête, mont, têtê, accanto a Villanova, Castiglione, rocca, cresta, monte, testa; ma nelle valli atesine, cioè a dire venete, ricongiunte alla Patria, non possiamo accogliere dei dorf, schloss, knott, schneide, berg, kopf e via dicendo. (Tolomei, 1916: 22, cited in Klein, 1986: 103)

However, with the strengthening of the Fascist regime at the end of the 1920s, similar regulations on place names were adopted in the French-speaking territories.

Tolomei's views and suggestions about how to achieve the objective of making the territories of the minority groups, and especially the South Tyrol into Italian territories, influenced Fascist policy. In 1906, he had already founded the journal *Archivio per l'Alto Adige*. In his next contribution of 1907, he demonstrated the *latinità* and therefore the *italianità* of South Tyrol. In 1916, his *Prontuario* of the local names of Alto Adige was published. The Istituto di Studi per l'Alto Adige published a second edition of the *Prontuario* in 1929 and a third in 1935. At the end of 1936, Tolomei considered the task of restoring Italian place names in Alto Adige complete (Klein: 1986: 101-02).

4.3.3.4 Public notices and administration

The problem of place names was strictly related to that of public notices. In 1922, the committee of the Società Dante Alighieri in Trento made seventeen requests to the political authorities. The problem of place names and public notices were felt to be the most important areas, in which the Italian Government had to intervene:

5. Introdurre ed applicare con la maggior sollecitudine la toponomastica già concordata dall'apposita Commissione;
6. Imporre la bilinguità in tutte le denominazioni delle vie, nelle insegne e negli avvisi esposti al pubblico, con precedenza e preminenza della lingua italiana. (La Dante Alighieri, in *Archivio per l'Alto Adige*, 17 (1922): 446, cited in Raffaelli, 1983: 109)

In November 1922, Giuseppe Guadagnini was nominated *prefetto* of the Province of Trento. One of his first actions, on 26 November, was to introduce a regulation in which he prescribed the use of Italian in Alto Adige and its priority in bilingual texts,

both in official writings and commercial signs (Klein, 1986: 92). This regulation was followed by another in October 1923, which was even more restrictive in the use of German in public notices:

Nella Provincia di Trento i manifesti, avvisi, indicazioni, segnalazioni, tabelle, cartelli, insegne, etichette, tariffe, orari e in genere tutte le scritte e leggende comunque rivolte o destinate al pubblico, sia in luogo pubblico che aperto al pubblico, anche se concernano interessi privati, devono essere redatti esclusivamente nella lingua ufficiale dello Stato. (Guadagnini, 1923: 15, cited in Raffaelli, 1983: 116)

The language used in administration had to be completely Italian. In South Tyrol, the situation was more rigid. In the Decreto Prefettizio of October 1923, the Prefetto Guadagnini ordered the following:

Per tutti gli uffici statali della Venezia Tridentina, per tutti i corpi consultivi o di giurisdizione amministrativa da essi dipendenti, per il Consiglio di Prefettura, per la Giunta provinciale amministrativa, per il Consiglio e la Deputazione Provinciale e per gli istituti, stabilimenti, uffici, servizi ecc. da essi dipendenti, nonché per tutti i comuni e per gli istituti, stabilimenti, uffici, servizi ecc. da essi dipendenti, la lingua d'ufficio è soltanto l'italiana. (Guadagnini, 1923: 11, cited in Raffaelli, 1983: 116)

The Prefetto of Aosta wanted to apply the same regulation in his city but he did not succeed in obtaining the consent of the Minister of Justice, according to whom 'la Val d'Aosta sarebbe stata trattata in modo diverso dalle terre annesse, nel senso che per i Valdostani, avrebbe lasciato libero l'uso della lingua italiana o della francese'. Perhaps the Minister regarded the German-speaking group more as a threat to the unity of Italy than the other alloglot group in Val d'Aosta (Klein, 1986: 105).

4.4 Linguistic minorities in Italy and their regulation in the present legislation

In this section the present legal status of linguistic minorities in Italy will be considered. The practical measures taken by the Italian authorities to guarantee the protection of minority groups will then be discussed, furthermore, the content of law 482 (1998) for the protection of linguistic minorities in Italy will be analysed.

4.4.1 Article 6 of the Italian constitution

In 1945, with the end of the Fascist regime, the official policy of persecution and Italianization was replaced by one based on the realization of a system in which the same emphasis was given to both the special needs of the minorities and the more general ones of the majority. The Republican constitution came into force on 1 January 1948. Article 6 states: ‘La Repubblica tutela con apposite norme le minoranze linguistiche’ (Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri).

The Commissione dei Settantacinque, the legislative body appointed to write the text of the constitution, wanted to state, through the formulation of this article, that the protection of the minority groups’ interests was not felt by the Italian Republican government to be a mere duty imposed by the winners of the Second World War on the losers, but, on the contrary, was regarded as a necessary step for the achievement of a truly democratic society (Pizzorusso, 1975: 28). When the Italian constitution was at a preparatory stage, however, Meuccio Ruini, the president of the Commissione dei Settantacinque, objected to the formulation of such an article (Pizzorusso, 1975: 29). He regarded it as unnecessary since the principle of the equality of all Italian citizens was already expressed in Article 3: ‘Tutti i cittadini hanno pari dignità sociale e sono eguali davanti alla legge, senza distinzione di sesso, di razza, di lingua, di religione, di opinioni politiche, di condizioni personali e sociali’. Article 3, however, is essential to safeguard the interests of minorities but, taken on its own, is not enough.

Article 6, in fact, integrates and specifies the two other important principles of the equality of all citizens and of pluralism expressed in Articles 3 and 2 (La Repubblica riconosce e garantisce i diritti inviolabili dell’uomo, sia come singolo, sia nelle formazioni sociali ove si svolge la sua personalità, e richiede l’adempimento dei doveri inderogabili di solidarietà politica, economica e sociale) of the Italian Constitution. These two articles guarantee the minority groups the same rights as all the other Italian citizens but do not allow them to take the necessary steps to maintain their own cultural and linguistic heritage. Article 3 carries out what Pizzorusso calls ‘a negative protection’, that is, it forbids the persecution of and discrimination against minority groups, while Article 6 carries out a ‘positive protection’, that is, it allows these groups to secure their linguistic and cultural continuity (Pizzorusso, 1975: 39-40).

4.4.2 Ways of realizing the protection of minority groups in Italy

Despite the formulation of an article acknowledging the special needs of minority groups, in Italy many minorities have been excluded from any kind of protection. However, there are a number of them whose demand for the adoption of practical measures, which would fulfil the principle expressed in Article 6, was met. The rights these ‘recognized’ minorities have been granted so far are discussed in the following sections.

4.4.2.1 Self-government of their territory

In article 116 of the Italian Constitution the five regions of Sicily, Sardinia, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, and Val d’Aosta are declared Special Statute regions. Each of these regions is characterized by the presence of linguistic minority groups. The fact that these regions enjoy Special Statutes means that they have a higher degree of autonomy than the rest of the other Italian regions. However, the type of autonomy is not identical for all six regions but varies according to the case (Freddi, 1983: 94). In Valle d’Aosta, for instance, the legislative situation is such that the regional government has effective decision-making power as regards the protection of French, while in Sardinia, until the approval of law 482 (1998), administrative autonomy was not matched by linguistic autonomy.

4.4.2.2 The right to create political parties or similar associations

Maintenance of minority languages is often connected with the presence of political movements, such as the Partito Sardo d’Azione, and the Union Valdôtaine. These movements, which within the European Parliament join to form a federalist group, model themselves on the examples of linguistic and economic regionalization given by the German-speaking population of South Tyrol and the speakers of Slovene in Friuli Venezia Giulia (Zuanelli, 1991: 291).

In South Tyrol, the Südtiroler Volkspartei played a very important role from 1958 as it became the guiding force for autonomist movements both on a cultural level and on a political/administrative level (Pizzorusso, 1975: 131-32).

4.4.2.3 *Cultural autonomy*

The institution of a school system which gives priority to teaching in the minority group mother-tongue is of prime importance for cultural autonomy. In South Tyrol, Valle d'Aosta, and the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, bilingualism is strongly supported by the school system. In these areas, pupils are taught in the minority language as well as the national language, in order to achieve a balanced bilingualism. In Valle d'Aosta, the teaching of French is coordinated by the Centre Pédagogique de Coordination pour l'Enseignement de la Langue Française en Vallée d'Aoste (Freddi, 1983: 144).

Other important factors for the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of these minority groups are the existence of cultural associations and the availability of media in the minority group language. The minority language is also partially used in the celebration of religious ceremonies.

4.4.3 *Protected and neglected minority languages*

In section 4.4.2 it was mentioned that, in Italy, many minority languages have been excluded from any kind of protection. Article 6, therefore, has not been implemented for all the existing minority groups.

The problem was acknowledged for the first time by Tullio de Mauro in his *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita* (1963: 16-18). At that time, the main complaint was about the differences which characterized the socio-economic and linguistic situation of the various minorities. While some of them enjoyed linguistic autonomy and socio-economic power, others were living in depressed regions and in a state of social and linguistic weakness.

In 1971, De Mauro was commissioned by the Chamber of Deputies to survey the ethno-linguistic minorities in Italy. The result of the survey was presented at the International Conference on Minorities, which took place in Trieste in 1974 (Petrilli, 1992: 99). In the report, De Mauro confirmed the situation he had already lamented in 1963. While some minorities such as the Germans living in Alto Adige/South Tyrol or the French in Valle d'Aosta were safeguarded through special laws and international agreements, others such as the Germans living outside South Tyrol, the Albanians, or the Greeks lacked any kind of protection. A direct consequence of this was that the number of German speakers was increasing, while the number of

speakers of Albanian, Greek, Friulian, Ladin, and other minority languages was decreasing. De Mauro noted also a significant reduction in the number of dialect speakers. The drop was due to the pressure exercised on these languages and dialects by standard and regional Italian and to the migrations of a large part of the population living in depressed areas in search of better opportunities for their lives. De Mauro's survey was followed by discussions and initiatives both at a political and academic level.

At an academic level, several conferences were organized and in 1976 a new magazine called *Minoranze*, published by the Centro internazionale Escarré, commenced publication. Some linguistic debates of that period are characterized by strong feelings of resentment. Sergio Salvi, for instance, saw in the advent of the opulent society and the Italian economic miracle, and in the levelling of the different cultures coexisting in Italy, the main factors that contributed to alter the living and linguistic conditions of the minority groups. He gave the example of Sardinian, which faces the possibility of extinction and, in Salvi's opinion, should become the national language of Sardinia (Salvi, 1975: 78). Salvi's position was quite extremist and in favour of a monolingual solution of the problem.

A more realistic approach came from De Mauro who underlined that a valid policy of intervention has to be based on the awareness that:

- No language is superior to another
- The spread of standard Italian has determined the decline of both dialects and minority languages
- The Italian government has failed to put into practice the principles expressed in Articles 3 and 6 of the Italian constitution. (De Mauro, 1977).

Later, Francescato (1982: 7-8) underlined the need to take into account the distinguishing features that characterize each minority group. As each minority group situation is different, a different solution has to be found for each of them. Thanks to this new awareness, several studies of specific situations have been carried out. The main contributions of those years were by Tullio Telmon on Franco-Provençal (1982); Kurt Egger on German in South Tyrol (1978); Anna Giacalone

Ramat on German outside South Tyrol (1979); Leonardo Sole on Sardinian (1988); Fabio Chiocchetti on Ladin in the Dolomite region (1987); Giuseppe Francescato on German in South Tyrol (1977), Friulian (1991), and Slovene (1982); Alberto Sobrero on Greek (1982); E. Mascitti Migliorini on Albanian (1982).

4.4.4 Some considerations on law 482 (1999) for the protection of the linguistic minorities living in Italy

The bill 612 (1991), which eventually became law 482, provoked a strong reaction in the press and among a group of intellectuals. Although this bill was approved by the Chamber of Deputies, it was never debated and amended by the Senate. The lack of approval by the Senate was due to the fall of the Italian government and the consequent announcement of general elections.

The bill caused outbursts of disapproval in the press, reacting to what seemed to be a dangerous concession in favour of the use of dialects in schools and public posts. Some of the most significant titles state: ‘Il dialetto a scuola, che sbaglio. La babele delle lingue divide la sinistra. Così somigliamo alla Jugoslavia’ (Massimo Novelli, *La Repubblica*, 21 November 1991: 14); ‘Maestri di dialetto ed è subito guerra. Così il Paese torna al passato’ (Giorgio Battistini: *La Repubblica*, 22 November 1991). The bill was interpreted as protecting some dialects and discriminating against others and a threat to the unity of Italy. The other fear was the growing power of the Northern League, formed in February 1991 (Bonsaver, 1996: 105), and separatism. Moreover, the recent break-up of Yugoslavia and other former Communist countries was an additional cause for concern.

The headlines are inspired by the reaction of five Turin intellectuals, Valerio Castronovo, Gian Emilio Rusconi, Massimo Salvadori, Nicola Tranfaglia, and Saverio Vertone, who, despite the fact that they had always been very close to the political left wing, wrote a letter of appeal to the left-wing parties, asking them to boycott the law. Their position is easily understood in this statement: ‘Perché la difesa del dialetto è stata mai una battaglia della sinistra? Certo che le minoranze vanno tutelate, è regola di ogni democrazia. Ma la salvaguardia di quelle che si chiamavano le lingue tagliate non può avvenire attraverso l’uso istituzionale dei dialetti. Certo che si devono studiare e difendere usi, costumi, subculture, folklore e quant’altro appartiene al patrimonio culturale d’una collettività: ma che c’entra

inventarsi la maestra di dialetto?’ (*La Repubblica*, 22 November 1991). The five intellectuals saw the bill as protecting some dialects and discriminating against others, and as a threat to the unity of Italy: ‘questa proposta di legge ci preoccupa perché va nella direzione di una pericolosa rinascita del localismo. E in una nazione come la nostra dove non c’è un forte senso di coesione nazionale, i municipalismi e i particolarismi portano acqua al mulino dello sfascio e del degrado del paese’ (ibid.).

The reaction of the five intellectuals ‘che militano o che hanno militato nella sinistra’ (ibid.) is rather surprising. In their protest against the bill, they showed some confusion when they referred to the concepts of language and dialect: ‘È ormai davvero persa la distinzione fra lingue e dialetti. Se si continua così, verrà il momento in cui gli abitanti di Mondovì, di Bra o di Bergamo, vorranno veder riconosciuto lo status di lingua al monregalese, al braidese e al bergamasco. A conti fatti, l’unico dialetto che è rimasto in Italia è proprio l’italiano’ (*La Repubblica*, 21 November 1991). It is difficult to understand what is meant by asserting that the distinction between language and dialect no longer exists. Were they referring to the vitality of the Italian dialects and the fact that the widespread use of standard Italian is limiting their use and affecting the ability of people to speak them? If so, why did they seem so concerned that this law might create the conditions for granting the status of language to the dialects spoken in Mondovì, Bra, and Bergamo? The intellectuals also stated that the only dialect remaining in Italy was Italian. This denial of the existence of the many dialects spoken in Italy sounds like an attempt to convince others and themselves that the bill was inappropriate for Italy, where only Italian is spoken. But the intellectuals did not seem genuinely convinced about the disappearance of dialects in Italy, if they still talked about monregalese, braidese, and bergamasco and, on top of that, argued that one day these dialects could even acquire the superior status of language.

The attacks of the press and the opposition of the five intellectuals were regarded by the linguist Tullio De Mauro as a very serious episode of intolerance. ‘In cento anni di vita culturale italiana, a parte le campagne xenofobiche e razzistiche di età fascista, è forse l’episodio più grave di intolleranza per le culture e tradizioni diverse, di sordità a un diritto elementare come quello linguistico’, he wrote (1996: 441). In an attempt to clarify the aim of the bill, the linguist wrote an article in *La Repubblica*, entitled ‘Niente paura, restiamo italiani’ (*La Repubblica*, 28

November 1991). In this article, De Mauro suddenly and unexpectedly made a clear-cut distinction between language and dialect, and explained that the bill had nothing to do with the Italian dialects but concerned only the thirteen minority languages spoken in Italy: ‘Molti [...] hanno protestato credendo che la legge riguardasse i dialetti italiani, dal piemontese ai siciliani. [...] La legge 612 nei suoi 18 articoli riguarda non i nostri molti dialetti, ma le tredici minoranze aventi come lingua nativa una lingua diversa sia dall’italiano sia da uno dei tre grandi blocchi dialettali italiani o, meglio, italoromanzi’. De Mauro simplified the controversy, reducing it to an opposition of language versus dialect and making clear that the bill protected languages but excluded dialects.

Furthermore, De Mauro classified Piedmontese and Sicilian as Italian dialects, and Sardinian, Friulian and Ladin among the minority languages spoken in Italy. Michele Cortelazzo, in a letter to *La Repubblica* (9 December 1991) objected to this clear-cut distinction and argued: ‘Con quali argomenti, al di là del puro atto legislativo, si possono porre su piani così diversi sardo e friulano da un lato e ogni altro dialetto dall’altro?’. It should be said, however, that De Mauro’s clear-cut distinction, as Parry puts it (1994: 181), rests more on a pragmatic than on a linguistic conviction: for the last twenty years he and others had been trying to persuade the Italian Parliament to make some provision for minority linguistic groups, equal to those in other European communities. It would have been counterproductive to attempt to include all the regional ‘dialects’ of Italy.

It is worth also mentioning the positions taken by the linguists Raffaele Simone (1992) and Tristano Bolelli (1992) with regard to the 1991 Bill. Simone’s point of view is summarized in his statement: ‘La legge è giusta; peccato che non ci sia più quasi nessuno a cui applicarla’. A position similar to that of Simone was taken by Bolelli (1992: 9), who wrote about ‘la volontà dei parlanti, che, in generale, non vogliono essere emarginati’. Bolelli argued that the Greeks and Albanians in Italy wished to be integrated into the Italian linguistic system, rather than acquiring a better knowledge of their language of origin.

Bolelli and Simone might be right, especially when Simone underlined that the bill 612 arrived too late. However, integration into the majority group language need not imply lack of knowledge of the language of origin. Initiatives can be taken

to ensure the linguistic and cultural continuity of these minority groups, as long as access to the majority group society is open to them.

In 1999, the bill was re-presented to the Italian Parliament and became law 482. This time, there were no debates and controversies in the press. Law 482 concerns the protection of twelve minority languages: Albanian, Catalan, German, Greek, Serbo-Croat, Slovenian, French, Franco-Provençal, and Occitan as well as three varieties spoken only in Italy and classified as Romance languages: Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian. According to the law, these minority groups have the right to use their language in council sittings and public administration, in nursery and primary schools, but also in secondary education, on request of the students concerned. The use of the minority language in courts is only allowed if translation into Italian is available. The minority language is allowed in the regional RAI programmes and on road signs. Those who have changed their surname into Italian may adopt again their original surnames. If asked, the communes have to publish official documents in the local language. The matter is regulated by the Regions, which are able to accept the applications made by communities representing at least 15 per cent of the total population of the commune requesting protection of the minority language (Law 482 (1999) 'Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche', <http://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/994821.htm>, [accessed 20 July 2004], text of the law included in Appendix A]).

The content of law 482 is interesting in several ways. Firstly, it gives an idea of how the Italian political class intend to proceed in order to protect the minority groups living in the Italian territory, that is, which strategies are adopted and which measures are regarded as crucial to safeguard the language and culture of these groups. Besides this aspect, some attention should be given to which languages are listed in the law. The fact that Sardinian, Friulian and Ladin are included in the protection is also controversial for reasons which shall be explained later on in this section.

In the law, the measures aiming at safeguarding the minority languages concern the areas of education, media, and administration. The realization of these measures is of paramount importance for the cultural and linguistic continuity of the minority groups. The use of the minority language at school is particularly important for the identity of the minority and for the development of an intellectual elite that

uses the language. Education in the minority language is a reliable indicator of how far the state is willing to accept the interests of the minority. However, while language planning and schooling can facilitate existing social trends, they cannot be a successful counter to social and economic forces (Paulston, 1994). In simpler terms, this means that the efforts of the governments to safeguard a minority language can be successful only if the minority groups are determined to retain their own language and culture. In the case of Italy, the languages listed in the law, will only benefit from such a law if the groups concerned are willing to extend the use of their language in the areas of education, media, and administration. Usually, the most attractive incentive for language maintenance is strictly related to the economic and social spheres. Chances of social promotion and economic advancement are very important factors in determining the maintenance of the minority language. In South Tyrol and Valle d'Aosta, for instance, economic incentives play a very important role in the process of acquisition and maintenance of German and French. In these areas, fluency in the minority language is essential to obtain a job in the public sector.

The fact that Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian are also listed among the languages entitled to protection can cause some problems. Only recent classifications (Freddi, 1983: 23; Gensini, 1982: 387-88; Grassi, Sobrero, and Telmon, 1997: 86) include Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian among the minority languages spoken in Italy. Previously, these were regarded as Italian dialects. Grassi, however, raises objection to this new category of 'Romance languages'. The linguist states that the distinction between 'dialetti' and 'lingue minoritarie' is 'artificiosa e, al limite, mistificante', since the functional relationship of both groups with the standard language is the same. Moreover, Grassi asserts that the process of national standardization, a major criterion for distinguishing 'language' from 'dialects', is also lacking in many of the other cases, for example Friulian and Sardinian (in Parry, 1994: 180). Another linguist, Tullio Telmon, in an interview which can be read in Appendix F of this thesis, points out that Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian are described in the text of law 482 as 'minoranze linguistiche storiche'. The adjective 'storiche' introduces a distinction between these varieties and the Italian dialects: 'direi che tanto il sardo quanto il friulano sono ugualmente lingue neolatine come l'abruzzese, il napoletano e gli altri dialetti. Ciò che li distingue è l'aspetto del diverso orientamento storico culturale'. According to Telmon, while the Italian

dialects ‘sono vissuti in un bacino di italianità, in altri casi, come in quello del sardo, questo non è avvenuto: il sardo a causa della latinizzazione più precoce da un lato e conservatività dall’altro, il friulano per vicende storiche, in particolare per l’occupazione germanica’. Friulian, according to Telmon, ‘è un esempio tipico di un orientamento linguistico culturale diversificato rispetto agli altri dialetti italiani’. He states that the different cultural orientation of Sardinian, Friulian, and Ladin ‘ci consente probabilmente di giustificare alcune scelte’. The Italian dialects, according to Telmon, however different from each other, ‘continuano ad essere italoentrici, orientati sull’italianità culturale, economica e di riflesso linguistica. Telmon, therefore, thinks that the ‘orientamento linguistico culturale diversificato’ of Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian justifies, to some extent, the choice of including them in the protection.

4.5 Conclusion

The sociolinguist Cobarrubias has created a model in which the official positions of minority languages are classified (Cobarrubias - Fishman, 1983: 71-74):

1. Attempting to kill the language
2. Letting a language die
3. Unsupported coexistence
4. Partial support of specific language function
5. Adoption as an official language

If we apply Cobarrubias’s model to illustrate the position of local and regional varieties during the years following political unification, the outcome would probably be a situation in between option 2 and option 3. During those years, there was an effort to introduce the national language in all state controlled activities. The official authorities, however, could not monitor the everyday language. Local or regional varieties were, therefore, the normal linguistic code spoken in familiar and informal contexts.

The first option is representative of the position of the minority languages spoken in Italy during Fascism. The authorities seemed to believe that, by abolishing all outward signs of ‘minority identity’, they would succeed in making the members

of ethnic minorities into Italians. Local place names and surnames were Italianized. Italian became the sole language of instruction. The aim of the school was that the young generation should grow up speaking and feeling Italian. As for dialects, the regime censored their use and from 1933 their existence was ignored (Tosi, 2001: 7). Option 3 represents the position of dialects before 1933 and option 2 the one after 1933.

In 1945, the Fascist policy of persecution and Italianization was replaced by one based on the realization of a system in which the same emphasis was given to both the special needs of the minorities and the more general ones of the majority. Article 6 of the Republican Constitution guarantees the protection of minority groups living in the Italian territory. The article, however, was applied, until the approval of law 482 (1998), only to a few 'strong' minorities, that is, supported by foreign governments. Option 5, therefore, describes the present position of minority languages. As for dialects, they were covered by Article 3 of the constitution, which refers to linguistic equality (Moss, 2000: 108). Moss states that the legislative body appointed to write the text of the constitution 'saw no need to be specific about dialects since they took the common view that the process of retreat of the dialects would continue apace until the dialects eventually, and perhaps quickly, went away'(ibid.). Dialects were no longer seen as a danger to the unity of Italy and it was taken for granted that people would spontaneously adopt the national language. Moss thus writes that the more enlightened position on the dialects of the constitution, compared to previous official policies, can be viewed from a different angle and 'also be seen as one of benign neglect' (2000: 109). Although option 3 describes the official position towards dialects in Republican Italy, the recent reevaluation of local or regional varieties, which will be discussed in the following two chapters, could point to an improvement in their status. Option 4 of Cobarrubias's model could thus describe the position of dialects in future years.

CHAPTER FIVE

LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY IN MODERN ITALY

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this present chapter is to show that there is a perceived link between local or regional linguistic varieties (as mentioned in Chapter 1, the neutral term ‘variety’ is used to cover both ‘dialects’ and ‘languages’) and local or regional identities. During recent years, there has been a concern for the status of these varieties, which are gradually disappearing. The fear of losing the local tongue and, together with it, local identity, is a key factor in determining a positive attitude towards these varieties. This positive attitude generates positive actions, aimed at safeguarding, and possibly increasing, knowledge of these tongues. Sections 5.4, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.2.1, 5.4.3, and 5.4.4 will, therefore, be dedicated to assessing ways of safeguarding these varieties at risk.

5.2 Initiatives in the post-unification period

Before examining initiatives to safeguard local or regional varieties in the contemporary period, it will be useful to provide some historical perspective by looking briefly at earlier studies and initiatives. A brief synopsis of linguistic studies, the use of the local varieties in literary productions as well as periodicals, and promotional activities will be given.

As for linguistic studies, the years following political unification were characterized by the production of works on the varieties spoken in the Italian territory. The fear of losing the linguistic heritage of the Italian regions, threatened by the expansion of the national language, partly explains the phenomenon (Stussi, 1993: 47). From 1845 dates the *Vocabolario dei dialetti della città e diocesi di Como*, by Pietro Monti who noted ‘quanta utilità verrebbe da un Vocabolario de’ dialetti di Lombardia, e di tutta Italia, che notasse le derivazioni delle parole, le

identiche e affini nelle lingue antiche e moderne, e le accompagnasse de' più antichi esempi che ci forniscano le pergamene e le opere a stampa' (cited in Stussi, 1993: 44-5). In 1871, Mussafia wrote his *Darstellung der romagnolischen Mundart*, described by Ascoli as '[la] prima analisi compiuta che di un dialetto italiano la scienza possa vantare' (cited in Stussi, 1993: 44-45). In 1873, the Gorizian linguist Ascoli studied Friulian language questions in his pioneering *Saggi Ladini*, while Pirona published an important *Vocabolario Friulano* (Bruni, 1992: 304). In Abruzzo, at the end of the nineteenth century, a group of intellectuals, concerned with the future of Abruzzese, started publishing dictionaries of Abruzzese and translations into dialects, such as the *Vocabolario dell'uso abruzzese* by Gennaro Finamore, published for the first time in 1880 and again in 1893. Giuseppe Savini wrote two editions of *La grammatica e il lessico del dialetto teramano* (1879 and 1881), and translated into Abruzzese the *Captivi* by Plautus. Of the purpose of this translation, published in 1884, Savini wrote: 'Ha creduto il traduttore che al popolare latino di Plauto corrispondesse meglio il popolare dialetto che l'aulica lingua' (Savini, 1884: 7, cited in Bruni, 1992: 618). These two initiatives are described by Bruni as 'testimonianze dell'importanza che la cultura tradizionale e il dialetto stavano assumendo negli ambienti abruzzesi più avvertiti e pensosi della propria identità municipale' (Bruni, 1992: 618). In Liguria, in 1885, Girolamo Rossi wrote the *Glossario medievale ligure* and Giovanni Flechia published the *Rime* composed by the Anonimo Genoese (Bruni, 1992: 72). In this period Padre Luigi Persoglio proposed that Genoese should be promoted to the rank of official language and that courses in Genoese should be introduced at university level (Toso, 1990: IV, 39, cited in Bruni, 1992: 72). Another important publication of the end of the nineteenth century (1898-99) is the *Studj Liguri* in which the Genoese Ernesto Giacomo Parodi looked at ancient documents in Latin, in order to show the linguistic continuity from Latin to Ligurian. A scientific study of the Southern dialects is represented by *Fonologia del dialetto di Sora* written in 1920 by Clemente Merlo (Stussi, 1993: 46).

Besides linguistic studies, dialect poetry and theatre characterize the post-unification period as well as the one preceding unification. As for poetry, the Milanese poet Carlo Porta (1775-1821) regarded the dialect as 'l'idioma di un'intera società in via di intenso, fecondo rinnovamento politico e intellettuale'. The Roman poet Giuseppe Gioacchino Belli, in his introduction to *I Sonetti*, composed mostly

between 1830 and 1836, stated his intention of ‘lasciare un monumento di quello che è oggi la plebe di Roma’ as well as ‘la sua lingua, i suoi concetti, l’indole, il costume, gli usi, le credenze, i pregiudizi, le superstizioni, tutto ciò insomma che la riguarda’ (Gensini, 1980: 53). In Campania, Salvatore di Giacomo stands out as the leading Neapolitan dialect poet. Besides being a fine lyric poet, Di Giacomo (1860-1934) was also an exceptional playwright and prose writer (Haller, 1986: 360). The popular Bolognese poet, journalist, narrator, and playwright Alfredo Testoni (1856-1931) was the main representative of Bolognese dialect theatre and in 1888 founded his own theatre company, the *Compagnia Bolognese* (Haller, 1999: 180 and Stussi, 1993: 48)

Local periodicals written in dialect were also frequent during those years. In Abruzzo, articles in Abruzzese represented a very interesting initiative in favour of the local variety. Capezzali describes the phenomenon in this way:

Una presenza quasi immancabile, almeno nella gran parte dei giornali aquilani, quella della rubrica dialettale. La cronaca si stempera nella colorita espressione popolare, laddove una tradizione non scritta fornisce espressioni e termini mille volte più ‘centrati’ ed appropriati [...]. Che il dialetto sia stato considerato sempre [...] una importante componente del costume sociale, della cultura e della vita degli aquilani, è dimostrato [...] anche dalla generale attenzione al fenomeno linguistico in tutte le sue sfumature e implicanze filologiche. (1976: 39-41, cited in Bruni, 1992: 619)

The tone of the articles is rather politicized, since they express the claims made by the working class to improve their living conditions. The following is an extract from the article by Chiappu de mpisu (fictitious name of the author) on the rebellion of the washerwomen outside the church of San Bernardino, in L’Aquila:

La rivoluzziò delle lavannare a S. Berardinu. Venardi de lla settimana passata, per ordene de j’assessore dell chiaiche [chiaviche’, ‘fogne’] sporche, tutu ju corpu de le guardie [‘guardi’] di cità ... jirno [‘andarono’] a mmette [‘mettere’] j’asstiu [l’assedio’] alle scalette de S. Berardinu. (*Avvenire*, 11 February 1904, cited in Capezzali, 1976: 40-1 and Bruni, 1992: 619)

Another case of resistance to the penetration of the national language is the publication of about ten periodicals in Genoese between 1868 and 1883 (Bruni, 1992: 70). The linguistic choice was justified in this way:

A certidun ghe sa-a porsa strana a nostra idea d'ùn nêuvo giornale, da-o momento che ghe n'è zà tanti, e ciù stravagante decciù quella de pubblicalo in zeneize. Quanto a-a primma obbiezionn noî credemmo che l'accrescimento da stampa periodica o no segge mai mǎ: do resto o pubblico o ne mostriâ presto a so accoglienza, s'emmo avuo un'idea gramma ô bonna. Quanto a-a seconda, o dialetto o l'è efficaciscimo a diffonde in te masse tante veitae che vestie da forma do nazionale linguaggio, ciù nobile certo ma meno capîa, non saievan (cosa che fa verghêugna, ma che in realtae a l'existe) ben inteize e giustamente appressae. (*O Cittadin*, 1871, cited in Bruni, 1992:70)

A certuni sarâ sembrata strana l'idea di un nuovo giornale, dal momento che ce ne sono già tanti, e ancor più stravagante quella di pubblicarlo in genovese. Quanto alla prima obiezione, noi crediamo che l'incremento della stampa periodica non sia mai male [...] Quanto alla seconda, il dialetto è efficacissimo per diffondere tra le masse tante verità che rivestite dalla forma della lingua nazionale, più nobile certo ma meno compresa, non sarebbero (cosa che fa vergogna, ma che in realtà esiste) ben intese e giustamente apprezzate. (Bruni, 1992:70)

The publication of the monthly journal *A Compagna* started in 1928 and ended in January 1933. In that year, the Fascist regime banned all activities to promote regional or local varieties. The publication of the magazine, however, started again in 1950.

As for activities to promote the local varieties, several associations were created during the post-unification period. One of them is the Circolo Filologico Milanese, which was founded in Milan in 1872 with the aim of promoting the study of foreign languages and civilizations as well as the study of the local variety, literature, and culture. The Circolo is very proud of being one of the oldest associations of this kind in Italy:

LA STORIA

IL CIRCOLO FILOLOGICO MILANESE è la più antica delle associazioni culturali della città e una delle prime sorte in Italia.

Fu fondato nel 1872 con lo scopo di "promuovere e diffondere la cultura e particolarmente lo studio delle lingue e delle civiltà straniere", come recita il primo articolo del suo statuto.

Il Filologico vanta una grande tradizione nella storia culturale milanese. Ente Morale per Regio Decreto del 1905, premiato nel 1962 con la Medaglia d'Oro di Benemerenzza del Comune di Milano, oggi il Circolo è riconosciuto Ente Culturale di interesse regionale con Decreto del 1995. (<http://www.filologico.it/chisiamo.htm> [accessed 17 July 2004])

The journal *A Compagna*, referred to previously, is published by an association of the same name. 'A Compagna' started acting in favour of the promotion of Ligurian in the first decade of the twentieth century:

Fu nel primo decennio del nostro secolo che alcuni nostri concittadini si resero conto, o almeno intuirono, che profondi mutamenti nelle abitudini e nei costumi si stavano maturando, mutamenti molto probabilmente derivanti da un lato dalla conseguita unità nazionale, dall'altro dagli effetti della rivoluzione industriale che aveva vivamente inciso nel tessuto sociale. I due fattori, in sé benefici, o almeno ineluttabili, tendono a creare una società indifferenziata dove scarso spazio sarebbe stato concesso a quei valori legati alla tradizione che formavano fino ad allora i connotati identificativi di una città raccolta per secoli in un centro storico che ormai si dilatava verso le colline e verso il mare a seguito della vasta operazione urbanistica attuata dal Barone Andrea Podestà nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento. (*Il Secolo XIX*, 29 November 2000, cited in <http://www.acompagna.org/recensione.htm> [accessed 5 May 2000])

In the post-unification period, however, the safeguarding of local varieties did not take place equally in all the Italian regions. In Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Piedmont, for instance, it is difficult to find evidence of actions aimed at promoting the local varieties. The scarcity of initiatives in favour of Friulian may well find an explanation in Morgana's words:

Nelle varie iniziative culturali del secondo Ottocento rientrano anche la Società per la lettura popolare a Trieste, e una notevole fioritura della letteratura educative e di divulgazione in italiano. Ma soprattutto la spinta verso la cultura e la lingua italiana trova una potente motivazione nelle tensioni irredentiste della borghesia e nella affermazione di una identità linguistica e culturale nell'ambito delle varie etnie che compongono il litorale austriaco. (1992: 304)

As for Piedmont, Marazzini writes about the 'crisi del dialetto' in the post-unification period. In 1899, the Fiat company was founded and Turin became the 'capitale del movimento operaio italiano' (1992: 37). Marazzini (*ibid.*) states that, at that time, 'la lingua italiana era concepita come uno strumento per la lotta di classe, uno strumento di cui occorreva impadronirsi'.

From these examples, we can see that, in many Italian regions, the initiatives to safeguard the local or regional languages had started already at the end of the nineteenth century. However, the problem of safeguarding the local variety became a central issue again in the twentieth century, when the effects of Italianization began to have an effect on Italian society.

5.3 Local or regional varieties and local or regional identity

In contemporary Italy, local and regional varieties play an important role in expressing local loyalties. In general, speakers of these varieties use them not only because of their potential for expressiveness, but also as a way of emphasizing bonds with a particular community and feelings such as familiarity and closeness to relatives and friends. A local variety can become the most evident way of asserting the importance of one's identity, meaning one's attachment to one's land, one's friends and families, one's personal memories and local history.

Once the link between local or regional varieties and local or regional identities is established, the safeguarding of local varieties acquires a particular importance, as a way of safeguarding, and possibly strengthening, local identities. This is particularly true for Italy, in which the development and the spread of a Standard norm has inevitably led to the decline of dialects and regional varieties. Within the last hundred years Italy has evolved from a basically monolingual, dialect-speaking country to a bilingual and monolingual Italian-speaking country (Haller, 1986: 35), because of changing socio-economical and political circumstances. After political unification, the first step to favour the spread of a Standard language was the fight against illiteracy, which was reduced by enforcing mandatory education (De Mauro, 1963: 59). In the post-war period, industrialization, urbanization, and migrations within the Italian territory have favoured the acquisition of SI. Moreover, the mass media have greatly contributed to the spread of a Standard norm. The present linguistic situation is usually described as a linguistic continuum, ranging from the dialects, to the regional forms of Italian, and SI (Berruto, 1999: 155-56). The linguistic competence of Italians varies according to their age, education, social class and geographical collocation. Dialects, in general, are more vital in rural and peripheral areas and among the older generation than in urban centres and among the younger generations.

The current concern for varieties under threat is expressed in many websites and also in the Italian press. One example is this statement by Michela Grosso on the Piedmontese website www.arpnet.it/~noste/nascita.htm:

L'identità di un popolo è costituita dalla sua cultura e si esprime attraverso la sua lingua naturale. Il linguaggio naturale è dunque la massima espressione del popolo, anzi è l'essenza dell'anima del popolo stesso. La vita di un'etnia continua fino a che continua ad esistere e ad essere parlata la sua lingua. Se questa lingua muore, il popolo non ha più possibilità di esistenza. La lingua piemontese è dunque l'espressione dell'identità del popolo piemontese.

(www.arpnet.it/~noste/nascita.htm [accessed 1 July 2004])

Another statement about Piedmontese is taken from *La Repubblica*, 29 November 2000:

Il Consiglio Comunale ha approvato a larga maggioranza un ordine del giorno per il riconoscimento da parte dello stato della lingua piemontese [...]

‘Il piemontese possiede una grafia normalizzata, una Koinè sovradialettale e ha espresso una letteratura imponente – ha spiegato il consigliere comunale del gruppo misto, Pietro Molino – è un dialetto riconosciuto fin dal 1981 fra le lingue minoritarie europee, inoltre più di ogni altra lingua regionale presenta delle innovazioni che lo staccano dal resto della tradizione linguistica italiana. Per questi e per molti altri motivi non è affatto chiaro il motivo per cui dovrebbe non essere incluso nell'elenco delle lingue meritevoli di tutela da parte dello Stato’.

(www.repubblica.it/quotidiano/repubblica/20001129/torino/02idicia.html).

From these two quotations, we can observe the following points: the emphasis on the link between the identity of the people and the language they speak; a great concern about the present situation of the variety, in this case, Piedmontese; the willingness to make efforts to safeguard the variety; and lastly, the reference to the variety in danger as a language rather than a dialect. The case of Piedmontese is not isolated in Italy. There are several varieties that have recently been classified as autonomous languages rather than dialects of the Italian language. The first lines of a site dedicated to Neapolitan read:

Quante volte ci siamo chiesti se il napoletano fosse una lingua o un dialetto? [...] L'italiano ha una matrice latina [...] E il napoletano? La sua ascendenza non è latina bensì greca [...] Con l'unità d'Italia comincia il lento ed inesorabile processo d'erosione, le parole della lingua napoletana si perdono per strada e l'espressione linguistica si omologa sempre più alla lingua sciacquata in Arno di manzoniana memoria. Concludendo possiamo dire che se il napoletano è un dialetto lo è pure l'italiano; e se l'italiano è una lingua lo è pure il napoletano. (Clara Matteis, <http://digilander.iol.it/jotis/artnap/napoletano.htm> [accessed 8 July 2004])

This statement has points in common with those on Piedmontese. Neapolitan is a language, and therefore should be treated with the same dignity given to the national language. There is a shared concern for the survival of these languages (in the case

of Piedmontese: ‘se questa lingua muore’; in that of Neapolitan: ‘l’espressione linguistica si omologa sempre più alla lingua sciacquata in Arno’).

Neapolitan and Piedmontese are not the only examples of varieties for which claims are made for linguistic autonomy and about which worries are expressed regarding their preservation. Articles, books and more recently websites report the views of writers who are very sensitive to issues such as the safeguarding of local identity, language and culture and show uneasiness at the idea of losing this local dimension. Another example is that of the Ladini in the Dolomites. Mateo Taibon has written an article in which he shows his discontent with the present situation of Ladin (<http://ines.org/apm-gfbv/ladin/dossier/ladin-it.html> [accessed 5 July 2004]). This article contains many views and ideas in common with those found in the previous quotations on Piedmontese and Neapolitan, even though its tone is more controversial. The abstract of the article starts in this way:

I Ladini – una comunità linguistica ai limiti dell’estinzione: la pluridecennale politica di assimilazione mostra le sue fatali conseguenze. La sistematica diffamazione di chi si impegna per la propria minoranza.

The fact that the Ladins represent a minority living in the Italian territory is clearly stated. This emphasis on local identity is accompanied by a great concern for the future of this minority language, whose survival is endangered. This concern is clearly stated in the final part of the article: ‘Se questo sviluppo proseguirà [...], in capo a due o tre generazioni il ladino sarà una lingua morta’.

In the section entitled ‘Le componenti storiche’, the fact that Ladin is a language rather than an Italian dialect is discussed extensively:

Il ladino è una lingua a sé e non un dialetto italiano. [...] I nazionalisti italiani, soprattutto nel periodo fascista, hanno definito (e definiscono tuttora) i Ladini come Italiani. Secondo questa tesi, il ladino non sarebbe una lingua autonoma, ma un dialetto italiano imbarbarito, come non ci si è dimenticati di aggiungere.

The author’s argument that Ladin constitutes a language rather than a dialect is based on a brief comparison between some morphological features of Italian and Ladin:

Tuttavia ad un'analisi scientifica seria la tesi secondo cui il ladino sarebbe un dialetto italiano non regge. Per esempio il ladino utilizza la *-s* nella seconda persona singolare e plurale dei verbi (ladino 'tö as' – tu hai) e la stessa desinenza nel plurale dei sostantivi (ladino 'les ciases' – le case) – una caratteristica che non è presente in alcun dialetto italiano.

Taibon's view does not seem take into account the fact that all non-Tuscan dialects differ in their phonology, morphology and syntax from Standard Italian.

The recognition of a variety as a minority language must have as a starting point the claims, made by the groups speaking this variety, for linguistic autonomy. The speakers want, for various reasons, to have a language that is different from the national language, a language that is an outward sign of their specific identity. This perception of their own variety as a way of differentiating themselves from the mainstream, this link between language and identity, is of paramount importance for achieving concessions of linguistic autonomy. Such claims can create several practical problems to central governments.

Varieties such as Piedmontese, Neapolitan, Ladin, whether they are termed languages or dialects, are well known and accepted varieties in Italian society. A concept that is quite new, however, is the existence of a 'lingua padana', i.e. a grouping of the varieties spoken in the Northern part of Italy, which have recently been claimed to constitute an autonomous system. Gilberto Oneto, in his chapter 'L'invenzione della Padania: la rinascita della comunità più antica d'Europa', argues that Padanese is a Gallo-Romance language along with French, Walloon, Occitan, Portuguese, Galician, Catalan, and Arpitano. He concludes that the languages spoken in Padania are 'sisters' of these languages and merely 'cousins' of Tuscan and Italian. Oneto maintains that Padania, the controversial land of the leaders and supporters of the political party Lega Nord, has an autonomous *koinè* and strong links with other parts of Europe that have nothing to do with Italy:

Se ne ricava che le lingue parlate in Padania sono da considerare 'sorelle' del Francese, dell'Occitano, del Catalano e delle altre parlate Gallo-romanze; con il Toscano e l'Italiano esse hanno invece un meno intimo rapporto di 'cuginanza'. Indipendentemente dalle varie interpretazioni sulla struttura dei rapporti fra le sue parlate, la Padania costituisce così una *koinè* autonoma, grandemente differenziata al suo interno in forti peculiarità locali ma decisamente caratterizzata da elementi comuni e indubbiamente diversa da ogni realtà circostante [...] Si tenta di negare l'idea stessa di Padania, nascondendo la sua forte peculiarità linguistica e la sua più stretta parentela con altre parti d'Europa che nulla hanno a che vedere con l'Italia. (1997: 65)

It is clear that Oneto is using the language issue to legitimize demands of political and territorial autonomy. However, what he claims about ‘Padanese’ has an element of truth. Since the dialect spoken in Florence has become the norm in Italy, the common perception is that Piedmontese, Ligurian, Venetian, Neapolitan, and so on are dialects of Italian. In reality, like the Florentine dialect, they all derive from Latin. However, what Oneto argues for Padanese, could also be argued by somebody speaking a Southern dialect such as Neapolitan or Sicilian. Neapolitans and Sicilians, however, seem to be quite happy in regarding their regional variety as a dialect of Italy and not as a language. They do not see their regional identity as being in conflict with their national identity. They, therefore, do not use their variety to advance claims for political autonomy. However, separatist groups have been quick to understand that language is a powerful weapon, as it can be used as symbol of a distinct identity. Therefore, the link between local language and local identity and the consequent concern for the local tongues which are now disappearing, seems to create the conditions for new groups to claim linguistic autonomy. The following statement by Oneto, in his article ‘Lingue, dialetti e particolarismo’, in which he discusses the issue of a ‘lingua padana’ illustrates this point:

Per dare speranza (e, in questo caso, voce) alle nostre istanze di libertà, identità e indipendenza e per consentire alle nostre parlate di sopravvivere e prosperare bisogna accettare una comunanza linguistica (che esiste nei fatti), studiare azioni complessive e coordinate e bisogna continuare a raccogliere il maggior numero di informazioni sulle nostre tradizioni linguistiche, le cui particolarità devono essere documentate e fatte conoscere.

(www.lapadania.com/1999/novembre/21/211199p12a4.htmLingue, dialetti e particolarismo [accessed 5 July 2004])

It is clear that Oneto is not only addressing issues of identities and languages at risk, but is also encouraging the start of positive actions to promote the ‘lingua padana’ or ‘padanese’. This supporter of ‘padanese’ is also acting as the defender of another repressed minority: the Occitans. An article by Oneto, ‘Occitania e Padania, nazioni negate’, refers to the book written by Sergio Salvi in 1973 ‘Le Nazioni Proibite’ on the Occitan minority as ‘la storia di un popolo oppresso quanto il nostro dallo Stato centralista’. He draws comparisons between the unfortunate destiny of the Occitan minority and the Padanian minority:

Quello dell'Occitania è un destino molto simile a quello padano. Se la Padania è la più grande nazione negata d'Europa in termini di numero d'abitanti, l'Occitania lo è per estensione geografica: 197.000 chilometri quadrati che vanno dall'Atlantico al Piemonte. Come la Padania non ha avuto una storia unitaria se non limitata a brevissimi scampoli di tempo, come la Padania non ha una sua lingua uniforme ma piuttosto un insieme di lingue regionali molto simili fra di loro, come la Padania è stata la vittima di un vicino prepotente e demograficamente esuberante, come la Padania ha riscoperto in tempi recenti la propria voglia di libertà. (<http://old.lapadania.com/1998/ottobre/28/281098p18a1.htm>, [accessed 21 July 2004])

This defence of the Occitanic minority by a supporter of the 'Padanian minority' sounds like a deliberate move to acquire credibility and status. The fact that the 'Padani', themselves a controversial minority within the Italian state, are acting as the protector of a better acknowledged minority, the Occitans, increases the self-assurance of the Padani and gives them more credibility in public opinion. Another reason why Oneto is embracing the Occitanic cause may well be an attempt to attract to the Lega Nord the votes of the Occitanic minority scattered in the Piedmontese valleys:

Oggi il movimento occitanista è fortissimo in materia di rivendicazione culturale e di riaffermazione identitaria ma è praticamente inesistente sul piano politico, vittima del suo peccato originale marxista. [...] Una larga fetta del popolo occitano rivolge il suo consenso alla Lega Nord ma non riesce a portare all'interno del Movimento la sua voce occitanista. Vittime di antichi e sterili legami con la sinistra politica, gli intellettuali dell'Occitania padana non hanno avuto finora il coraggio di inserire le istanze della lor piccola comunità nel grande progetto di libertà dei popoli padani [...] Gli Occitani devono costruirsi un ruolo all'interno del progetto padanista. (<http://old.lapadania.com/1998/ottobre/28/281098p18a1.htm>, [accessed 21 July 2004])

In Val d'Aosta, the local patois, Franco-Provençal, is a very important feature characterizing the *valdostana* identity (Woolf: 1997). In the Euromosaic website, Franco-Provençal is described as a Gallo-Roman variety of neo-Latin spoken alongside other languages, such as French and Italian, in the Valle d'Aosta. The document draws attention to the possible future extinction of the language: 'the dispersal of the language community is causing the language to die out both in terms of its use and its function'. The French-Italian bilingualism is regarded as a factor determining the weakening of Franco-Provençal:

Paradoxically, the Special Statute covering the Valle d'Aosta, which permits Italian-French bilingualism, by giving preference to the standard form of French, leaves room for Franco-Provençal only in unofficial use and informal initiatives. Although Italian-French bilingualism has increased a little, this has happened at the expense of bilingualism with Franco-Provençal.

(<http://www.uoc.edu/euromosaic/web/homean/index1.html> [accessed 3 July 2004])

However, the initiatives to revive the use of Franco-Provençal, such as the creation of theatre groups staging plays in dialect, the creation of several libraries and the annual 'Concours Cerlogne' (a type of school competition that is organized in the region once a year, including an exhibition of the projects that pupils have carried out during the year on the local environment, technologies, and culture; see <http://www.uoc.edu/euromosaic/web/homean/index1.html> [accessed 3 July 2004]) are regarded as 'really helping to increase the sense of pride of the people of the Valle d'Aosta'. Therefore, the fact that these initiatives are carried out in the local patois and that there is an effort to strengthen the link between land, language and people seems to validate Woolf's theory that Franco-Provençal, rather than French, could become the means of denoting that one belongs to the *valdostana* community.

The focus of this first section has been the connection made, whether deliberately or not, between local varieties and local identities. In this context, we have seen that the safeguarding of local varieties becomes a way of maintaining and strengthening local identities. Hence the concern for those tongues, usually non-standardized, which are under threat or even disappearing. The loss of the mother tongue is perceived as the loss of the identity of the people. This concern about the future of the local tongues is also creating the conditions for the emergence of new minorities and endangered varieties. The next sections will examine the attempts to safeguard the threatened varieties.

5.4 Assessment of the methods employed to safeguard the local variety

Before discussing the attempts carried out to safeguard these varieties at risk, some considerations will be offered on how problematic it can be, in contemporary society, to make such attempts. The endangered varieties are, in fact, often non-standard and usually employed in oral and informal situations. In modern Italy a common language, used by everybody and in all sorts of domains, ranging from formal to familiar, has become a reality. And yet people are paradoxically rediscovering the

importance and the value of the local variety. Now that a common language has at last established itself in Italy, at the expense of the other tongues spoken in the Italian territory, people want to slow down or even reverse this tendency. Is it possible to do this and thus ensure a future for local varieties?

Anna Bordoni di Trapani wrote an article ‘Dai dialetti alla lingua: un viaggio senza ritorno?’ (December 1997), in which she analyses the relationship between dialects and Italian, from political unification to contemporary Italy. Bordoni di Trapani advocates that it is indeed possible to revive these varieties:

Di qui il bisogno diffuso e profondo di rivitalizzare le comunità locali: certo non giova allo scopo il recupero nostalgico di valori, riti e costumanze irrimediabilmente superati e perduti. Occorrono fantasia, creatività, riflessione critica, disponibilità al dialogo e al confronto delle idee, per arrivare alla progettazione consapevole di una nuova rete di relazioni comunitarie, concrete e operanti nel tessuto sociale, tese a conservare, valorizzare, promuovere, scoprire le risorse dell’ambiente fisico e umano che ci circonda. Solo così le singole comunità potrebbero affondare nuove radici nel territorio, ridare un senso e sapore al vivere insieme e ricostituire la propria nuova identità culturale. E i dialetti locali, grazie alla loro reattività di lingue ancora vive e capaci di trasformazione, potrebbero forse diventare il loro strumento più naturale di espressione e riconoscimento.

(www.popsi.it/not/ARTICOLI/SOCIETA [accessed 6 May 2000])

Hence Bordoni di Trapani stresses that the local community has a key role in the aim of safeguarding the local dialect. The community has to find a new way of living together and reconstituting its own identity. The revaluation of local identity is therefore of paramount importance for the promotion of the local tongue. As the socio-economic conditions linked to the active use of dialects have changed, the safeguarding of the local tongue has to start from the people in the community, who have to find new ways and meanings, which make competence in the local variety something still valid and applicable in modern society.

In the next section, we will consider which initiatives are regarded as important for safeguarding and reviving the local tongue. Although these varieties often lack a standard form and are usually employed in oral contexts, several initiatives have been undertaken lately with the objective of increasing knowledge of these varieties. We will see that the same types of strategies are employed for different varieties.

5.4.1 *Teaching the local variety*

One method is to increase the knowledge of the language. The claim behind this type of initiative is that these varieties need to be treated as languages, and therefore their phonology, grammar and syntax need to be studied and learned. A growing number of organizations have recently started to offer courses in the local variety for children and adults. An example of a particularly active organization is the Genoese association A Compagna (see section 5.2), founded in 1923. One of the first members of A Compagna, Amedeo Pescio described the organization, in May 1925, in these terms:

Sarà dalla *Compagna* che i venturi dateranno loro origini e si ricercheranno nel tempo; da questo appello lento e sereno, ma così importante e significativo e solenne che al fonte perenne appura le gocce che rivolano all'avvenire; da questo *fatto* che i superstiti d'una gloriosa Stirpe si riconoscono, si contano, si riconforta noi; da questo *patto* di fratellanza, d'amore, di solidarietà che non ha ragione d'idee e propositi di parte, né mire che ad altrui contrastano il giusto, bensì dal sangue, dal cuore, dalla terra, dal tempo. (<http://www.acompagna.org/wit/italiano.htm> [accessed 3 July 2004])

The appeal to common roots, the sense of belonging to a noble community that prides itself on a glorious past, the solidarity that derives from collective experiences are of paramount importance for the creation of such organizations. Its members are described as sharing this strong attachment to their native land and origins:

A questo punto una domanda legittima: chi fa parte di A Compagna? Tutti coloro che si trovano nelle condizioni previste dall'art. 5 dello Statuto, ma soprattutto coloro che sentono in un certo momento della loro vita, prepotente, il bisogno di amare la propria città, il proprio paese, come si ama una donna, come si ama la madre. Allora si è veramente maturi per entrare ne A Compagna, non per essere socio di un'associazione come tante altre, ma per un'esigenza vitale, per vivere compiutamente e coscientemente la propria terra, la propria origine. (www.acompagna.org/wze/ [accessed 3 July 2004])

An initiative of A Compagna, which has attracted a certain degree of interest in the Italian press, are courses in Genoese for children of all ages, from nursery to middle schools. An article by Pierpaolo Bozzano, entitled 'Il genovese in classe, la ripetizione dai nonni' starts:

INGLESE di prima lingua, genovese di seconda. Tocca ad una scuola privata di San Fruttuoso promuovere il primo vero ciclo di lezioni agli allievi, dalle materne alle medie. Per i più piccoli canzoncine e filastrocche, per gli altri esercizi grammaticali e dettati, senza dimenticare la ricca letteratura in dialetto. Compiti a casa? Conversazione coi nonni, per chi può. (*La Repubblica*, 3 December 2000, www.repubblica.it)

The lessons in Genoese are run in the Istituto Gianelli (a private school in San Fruttuoso) and involve all the children attending the school. The programme is differentiated according to their age. Very young children are taught only songs and nursery rhymes in Genoese but more commitment is required by primary school children, who have to embark upon the task of learning Genoese vocabulary. Pupils in middle schools are expected to learn to speak and write in Genoese. At present not many children are thought to understand Genoese. The views of Franco Bampi, vice-president of A Compagna, are reported by Valeria Prini, in her article 'Cominciano domani i corsi dialettali all'istituto scolastico Gianelli. Per imparare la lingua dei nonni':

Franco Bampi, docente alla facoltà di Ingegneria e vice presidente di 'A Compagna', ha recuperato testi, immagini e poesie da proporre ai suoi alunni.

«Il nostro dialetto è nato come lingua parlata, ma, nel corso dei secoli, è fiorita una vera e propria letteratura genovese - racconta il professor Bampi - a partire dal tredicesimo secolo, a cui risalgono le celebri 'Rime' dell'Anonimo Genovese. Oggi, purtroppo, questo patrimonio è ignoto alla stragrande maggioranza delle persone. Così abbiamo deciso di tutelarlo noi e, soprattutto, di tramandarlo alle nuove generazioni. Il dialetto è la lingua dei nostri nonni, che ne sono i depositari; imparandolo si rivaluta il ruolo degli anziani nella società». (*Corriere Mercantile*, 30 November 2000)

Bampi is thus linking the problem of teaching and learning a variety used mainly in oral situations with the need to study the linguistic heritage of earlier generations. How effective this strategy can be, is debatable. In modern Italy, increasing knowledge of a dialect through the enhancement of the value of literary texts may prove difficult. These texts are the product of a past that, very often, does not arouse the interest of the younger generation, at least, not to the point of learning the language of that past. Bampi stresses that Genoese enjoyed in the past the same prestigious position that English has nowadays: 'E pensare che ai tempi delle crociate — tuona Bampi orgoglioso — il genovese era come l'inglese di oggi. Lo parlavano tutti' (Bozzano, 'Il genovese in classe la ripetizione dai nonni', 12 March 2000,

La Repubblica, www.repubblica.it). There is a pride in teaching these varieties that reminds their speakers of a glorious past and also a hint that, if they once held a prestigious position, this can happen again nowadays, with the will and the solidarity of the people concerned.

Similar initiatives to safeguard Milanese and its literary heritage have been undertaken by the Circolo Filologico Milanese, which offers courses on Milanese literature in Milanese. The Circolo has ‘una sezione di Cultura Milanese, che propone diverse iniziative per mantenere viva la lingua meneghina’ and offers ‘nuove lezioni di letteratura del Novecento in milanese’. In 2000, courses were run by Prof. Claudio Berretta and took place once a week. They were taught in Milanese and were based on a study of Milanese theatre and poetry, represented by authors such as Giovanni Barrella, Luigi Medici, Delio Tessa, and Emilio Guicciardi, the main representatives. The courses are described as ‘ottime occasioni per riallacciare i legami con la lingua milanese, una lingua dalle forti e radicate tradizioni, anche letterarie’

(‘Nuove lezioni di letteratura del Novecento in milanese’, *La Padania*, 12 January 2000, <http://old.lapadania.com/index4.htm>).

The Circolo Filologico Milanese also offers courses in Milanese dialect and its literature. They are run by Cesare Comoletti and consist of a detailed study of Milanese grammar and phonetics. It is worth noting the syllabus of the two courses offered, the first (Corso A) designed for beginners and the second (Corso B) for a more advanced level, in order to show how serious is the commitment of the teaching staff:

Corso A

Programma delle lezioni:

- a) Introduzione: finalità del corso. Presentazione libri di testo. Origini ed evoluzione del dialetto.
- b) Fonetica: gli accenti; i suoni vocalici; le consonanti; i digrammi.
- c) Grammatica: gli articoli e le preposizioni articolate; i sostantivi maschili e il loro plurale; i sostantivi femminili, il loro plurale e la loro formazione dal maschile; i nomi alterati (accrescitivi, diminutivi, ecc.); l'aggettivo qualificativo ed i suoi gradi; i pronomi personali, gli avverbi; i verbi in generale e le loro particolarità nel milanese; i verbi ausiliari ‘essere’ ed ‘avere’; le quattro coniugazioni regolari.

Corso B:

Programma delle lezioni:

- a) I verbi irregolari, difettivi, ecc.
- b) Sintassi della proposizione e del periodo.
- c) Metrica: il verso e le sue particolarità; i diversi tipi di composizione.
- d) Traduzioni: i vocabolari ed il loro uso corretto; esempi di traduzioni; esercitazioni orali.

Durante le lezioni del Corso B di base, verranno fornite nozioni sulla storia, sul folklore, sulle leggende cittadine.

Sono ammesse iscrizioni separate per i due corsi di base. Le lezioni, tenute in dialetto milanese sono integrate da conversazioni con gli allievi, letture (anche da parte degli allievi) di prose e poesie dialettali di autori antichi e moderni, dettati, composizioni e traduzioni anche estemporanee. (<http://www.filologico.it/> [accessed 3 July 2004])

The Circolo Filologico Milanese also offers courses of English, French and other prestigious languages spoken in the world. Therefore, the fact that the Circolo, alongside English, French and German, offers the possibility to learn Milanese, gives Milanese a status that is similar to that enjoyed by French or English.

The courses in Milanese language and literature have attracted the attention of the Italian press, which has reported opposing views on them. Obviously, the organizers of the courses regard them as very important initiatives to protect Milanese. Nanni Svampa, one of the organizers of the courses, is quoted in an article entitled ‘Svampa professore di dialetto per il Comune “La mia idea? Fare tanti corsi: poesia, letteratura, storia della città. Parliamoci chiaro: qui si tratta di salvare una lingua”’. To the question of how dialect can be taught, Svampa answers:

‘Parlarlo non basta, c’è un equivoco di fondo. Per conoscere il dialetto bisogna imparare anche a leggerlo e a scriverlo. Al Gonzaga ho provato a fare un dettato e lì cominciavano i casini: pochi lo parlano, pochissimi lo leggono e nessuno lo scrive’. (Gian Guido Vecchi, ‘Svampa professore di dialetto per il Comune “La mia idea? Fare tanti corsi: poesia, letteratura, storia della città. Parliamoci chiaro: qui si tratta di salvare una lingua”’, *Corriere della Sera*, 3 November 2000)

According to Svampa, Milanese is a language whose future survival is at risk. The local people have to take positive actions to revive the language. The teaching of the dialect and the study of an important literary production that also needs safeguarding, are regarded as valuable initiatives to preserve the language. However, others are

very sceptical about the feasibility of these courses. An earlier article by Gian Guido Vecchi, entitled ‘Il dialetto rinasce in politica ma gli studiosi lo bocciano: non si parla più’, included the view of the poet Giovanni Raboni:

‘Da decenni c’è un grande interesse per l’espressività dei dialetti, il Milanese ha dato grandi poeti come Porta, Tessa e ora Loi, però nel tempo è diventato un esercizio disperato: non mi risulta ci siano molti lettori in grado di capirlo [...] A differenza di Venezia o Napoli, qui nessuno lo parla più. Io appartengo alla generazione di passaggio: i miei genitori lo parlavano, io lo capisco soltanto, i miei figli neanche quello perché non lo parlo io. La storia va avanti, tenere in vita artificialmente dei dialetti non è né intelligente né possibile’. (Gian Guido Vecchi, ‘Il dialetto rinasce in politica ma gli studiosi lo bocciano: non si parla più’, *Corriere della Sera*, 18 October, 2000).

Raboni stresses that the vitality of Milanese is highly endangered, comparing its situation to that of dialects such as Venetian or Neapolitan, but sees the revival of the dialect as an artificial exercise, as the historical conditions that once favoured the use of dialects have changed. In the same article, Gennaro Barbarini, professor of Italian Literature in the University of Milan, shares the position of Raboni:

‘Un attimo. Dipende se si vuole recuperare il dialetto come lingua della comunicazione o come lingua letteraria. Il primo è un caso disperato, salvo forse in provincia. L’italiano è diventato una forma di promozione sociale, molto ha fatto anche la tivù. Piuttosto vale la pena di salvare il Milanese come lingua letteraria: ma allora è come studiare il latino’.

Barbarini distinguishes between two levels: that of the dialect as a literary language and that of the dialect as a language used for communication. He thinks that the Circolo Filologico Milanese is making a hopeless attempt to revive the dialect for communication purposes, as the pressure exercised by the national language is too strong to allow any room for the Milanese dialect. Barbarini seems to be a little more optimistic about the situation of Milanese in rural areas, but in general he thinks that Milanese can only be revived as a literary language.

So far, the attempts to teach local varieties regarded as dialects have been considered. Regarding the teaching of minority languages, attention will be given to some of those guaranteed protection following the approval of law 482 (1999). One of them is Friulian. The teaching of Friulian is promoted by the Società Filologica friulana, founded in 1919. The website of the association gives details of its courses:

CORSI PRATICI DI LINGUA FRIULANA

Da Ottobre 2003 a Maggio 2004 si tengono **CORSI PRATICI DI LINGUA FRIULANA** in diversi comuni della Regione. L'attività dei corsi pratici, coordinata dal sig. Eddi Bortolussi, consiste essenzialmente nello studio della grammatica e della grafia della lingua friulana al fine di favorirne il più possibile la lettura e la scrittura. Non è peraltro trascurato l'approfondimento di aspetti storico-culturali, letterari e delle tradizioni popolari; a tal proposito, in armonia con i corsi, si organizzano lezioni aperte, ossia conferenze alle quali tutti possono partecipare, e visite guidate in luoghi di particolare interesse storico-artistico della regione. (<http://www.filologicafriulana.it/homepage.htm> [accessed 12 July 2004])

Moreover the association has been promoting teacher-training courses at all levels since 1950. At present the Friulian language is starting to spread in other sectors, too: in 2001 the Società Scientifica e Tecnologica Friulana (a scientific and technological association) and important initiatives have also been started in the socio-economic sector and in the Health Services Units

(<http://www.provincia.udine.it/English/Home/Territory/The%20Language/index.asp> [accessed 12 July 2004]).

The teaching of Friulian in schools was officially introduced with law 482. However, some teachers had already been using the Friulian language in nursery, primary and junior high schools, aided by the support of local institutions. In the pre-registrations for the 2002-3 school year almost 60% of parents (30,000 children) asked for the Friulian language to be taught and over 1,000 teachers declared their availability to teach the language. The University of Udine has recently started up teacher training courses for the Friulian language. Other associations are also offering training courses in the Friulian language and in the official spelling rules, which were fixed with the Regional Law 15 (1996). The University of Udine, together with the *Regional Observatory of the Friulian language and culture*, has promoted courses for lexicon graphics, translators, journalists and teachers.

(<http://www.provincia.udine.it/English/Home/Territory/The%20Language/index.asp> [accessed 12 July 2004]).

The *Comprensorio* of the Val di Fassa, together with the Istituto Culturale Ladino ‘Majon di fascegn’, has been running a literary programme since 1995. It offers courses in the local varieties of the Ladin language to both Ladin speakers and non-Ladin speakers. There are courses for beginners and advanced learners. Each course lasts for six weeks for a total of thirty-six hours, with lessons two or three times a week. The courses are open to all, but aimed particularly at people working in the local administration and at school teachers. They are also aimed at candidates for jobs that require a knowledge of the Ladin language. A certificate of competence in Ladin language constitutes an extra qualification for jobs in the public sector, and represents a reason for obtaining precedence in such employment (<http://www.istladin.net/> [accessed 14 July 2004]).

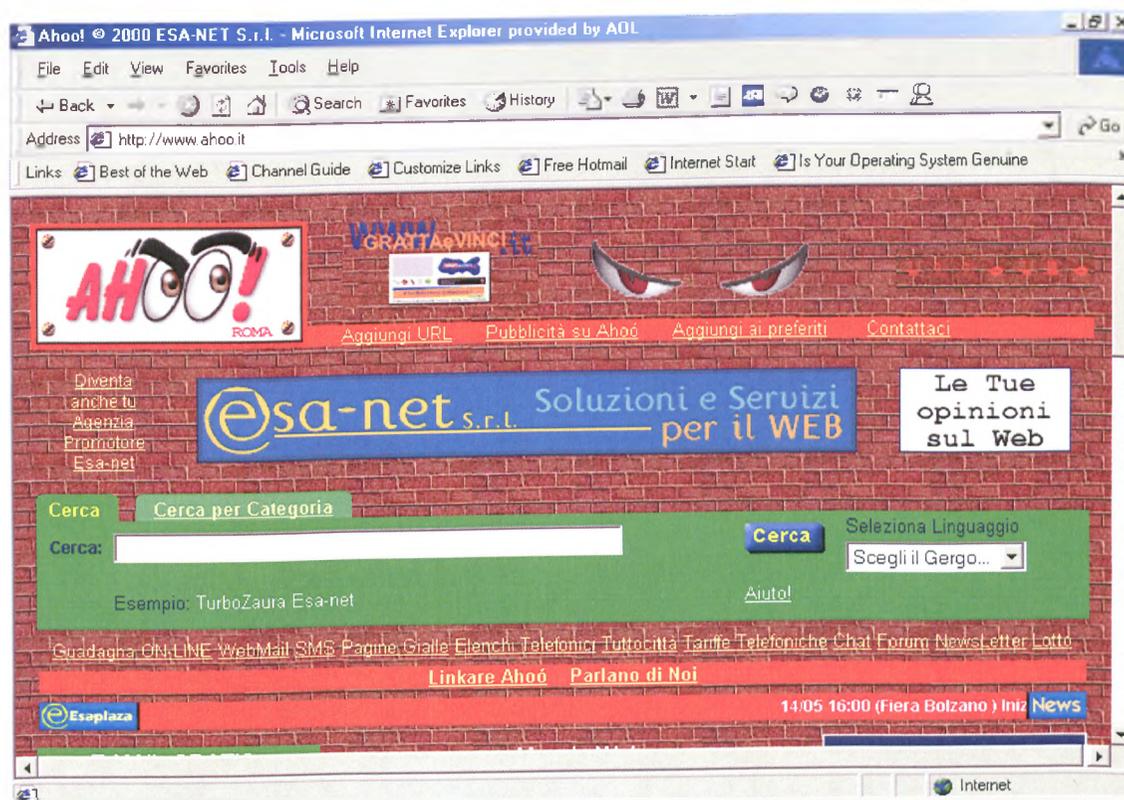
5.4.2 *The safeguarding of local varieties online*

Together with Italianization, more recently globalization has given further concern to those who feel that they are losing their local dimension. Progress in technology has transformed the world into a ‘global village’. The internet has had a key role in making it possible to give all sorts of information about distant places and people. Furthermore, the increased use of electronic mail has enabled us to write, chat, and exchange opinions with people who speak a different language from ours, people whom we will never meet. Every day, millions of surfers access the internet and use English as their means of expression. Knowledge of English is becoming essential in order to have access to the wealth of information that the internet provides. A consequence of this situation for the dialects and local tongues spoken in Italy is that their fight for survival has to take into account not only the dominant role of Italian but also the advance of English as a global language.

However, there is another aspect of globalization. This aspect is more positive and allows the internet to serve as a powerful tool to preserve dialects. In contemporary Italy the internet can become the tool for the expression of the differences and the linguistic peculiarities of the people, the living archive of the richness and the cultural and linguistic variety that is present in Italy. The internet gives the possibility to dialect speakers, or all those who are concerned about the situation of a particular variety, of creating different types of websites. As we shall

see, in one site, searches can be conducted using a local variety instead of Italian. Others attempt to teach and spread the variety in question. There are also literary or cultural sites and others that provide a forum in which speakers compare their ideas and views. Online, the safeguarding of local languages, either the most popular ones or those less known, is not only possible, but also extremely easy thanks to the versatility that is characteristic of this medium.

With the search engine Ahoò! (<http://www.ahoo.it>), it is possible to do searches or enter the various sections of the site through the local linguistic medium selected. Therefore, if, for instance, the Neapolitan dialect is selected, instead of the usual icon ‘help’, one will find ‘aiutateme’, or ‘Addo ‘sta dinte e’ categorie’ instead of ‘cerca per categoria’.



Another use of the internet is the creation of websites for those concerned about the future of their varieties. The website Al Grop Furlan (<http://www.gropfurlan.org/>) has been created to safeguard Friulian. This site represents a useful tool for Friulians throughout the world. The Friulian people, like many other rural communities, have been forced by poverty, overpopulation and lack of industry, to emigrate to other

parts of Italy and, very often, abroad. In addition to the 600,000 Friulians in Friuli, there are several Friulian communities worldwide. There are about 30,000 living in the Toronto area, the fourth largest community of Friulians in the world, after Udine, Pordenone, and Gorizia. There are other large communities in Canada, Argentina, Australia, France, Germany and the United States. There are also many Friulians in Northern Italy. For so many Friulians scattered all over the world, the creation of a website that allows them to get in touch, exchange opinions, and give suggestions, is an important element giving unity to people who are geographically distant. The main objectives behind the creation of this site are stated in the home page:

Jentrade

'Libars di scugnì là' intitolava il poeta Leonardo Zanier un suo famoso libro. In questo titolo vi è tutto il dramma di un popolo legato in maniera estrema alla propria terra ed alla propria cultura.

La universalità e la mancanza di distanze o confini geografici che caratterizzano INTERNET, possono dare una risposta decisa al bisogno di comunicazione che ha un popolo come quello friulano, diffuso in tutto il mondo a causa della forte emigrazione cui ha dovuto sottostare in tempi di povertà estrema. Questo sito è a disposizione di tutti i friulani e dei *fogolâr furlân* del mondo, una pagina contenente tutti i loro indirizzi, per permettere e favorire lo scambio di idee ed informazioni e delle pagine in cui potranno essere presentate le loro iniziative. (<http://www.gropfurlan.it> [accessed 4 July 2004])

The website has a forum through which all the Friulians in the world can get in touch with their fellow-countrypeople. This 'virtual' unification of the Friulians should encourage them to reconsider the value of their own language and culture, and, therefore, to take steps for future action. How much the Friulian language will benefit from this type of initiatives cannot be established in advance. However, several messages written by the users of this website are in Italian, English and, sometimes, Portuguese. There are few attempts to write in Friulian, like in the following extract:

Bun Di,

soi di Ruvigne dongje san Denel. I viv e lovorì in gjermanie e ormai a son quasi 40 ains che soi chi. Soi sigurissim che sbalgji tant a scrivi in furlan, e cun chel?

Intant a mi plas tant di ve cjatat chest forum par ce c'ale un toc di paes. cirerei di passa da tant in tant e fami viv. Bon fantats, steimi ben mandì. (Luciano: 8 May 2004 [accessed 4 July 2004])

The other important aspect of this site is that it allows the local Friulian clubs known as *Famee Furlane* (Furlan Families) or *Fogolar Furlan* (Furlan Hearths), (there are over fifty of these worldwide among the largest communities), to establish links with each other, and, therefore, allows them to exchange views and ideas on the promotion of Friulian.

5.4.2.1 The amis de Lenghe Furlane in Toronto

The same website has a page called *Altri Liamentz*, which gives contacts and useful information on other websites, associations, and various initiatives conducted to promote Friulan. Through this page one can link to the website of the *Amis de Lenghe Furlane - Friends of the Friulan Language (Toronto)*. This site shows how the use of the internet allows the Friulian group to make the public aware of the current situation of Friulian and how this group intends to promote Friulian. The importance of a site for Friulians is recognized by the Friulians in Toronto, along with the necessity of taking practical steps aimed at the safeguarding of their tongue. The home page of the site is quoted below:

Amis de Lenghe Furlane - Friends of the Friulan Language (Toronto)

Who Are We?

We are a group of people based in Toronto, Canada who are trying to promote and preserve the Friulan language.

Cui sino?

O sin un grop di int basas in Toronto, Canada che j chirin di preserva la lenghe Furlane.

We look forward to your comments and suggestions please e-mail us. We want to improve the site but need your help. Feel free to print off pages from our site for your friends without internet access. If you know about other Friulan sites or groups let us know. Every month this site gets better so please come back. (<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Styx/9982/index.htm> [accessed 5 July 2004])

As we can see, the main part of the text is written in English; there is a limited attempt, though, to use Friulian. English is also the main language used in the other pages of the site. The *Amis de Lenghe Furlan* welcome suggestions to improve their site and also want to diffuse knowledge of the existence of the site. Moreover, they are willing to establish contacts with other Friulian sites.

Furthermore, this website gives valuable information regarding the type of actions regarded as necessary to protect Friulan. There is a page called 'Language', in which the issue of whether Friulian is a language or a dialect is addressed. The answer to such question is seen as very straightforward and allows no uncertainty regarding this complex issue:

Language
Is Friulan a Language or a Dialect?

Friulan is a language. It is a Romance language meaning that it is descended from Latin. It belongs to the Rhaeto-Romance group. [...] In Italy there are many minority language groups such as Catalans, Greeks, Albanians. However only Ladin, Friulan and Sardinian are languages that are unique to Italy. [...] Some linguists classify these [Venetian, Sicilian, etc.] as dialects others as languages. [...] When we say Friulan is a language we do not claim to be superior or that our language is superior. We are only repeating the fact that linguists believe that the differences between Italian and Friulan are so great (for example plurals in Friulan are create by adding an 's' while in Italian the ending vowel is changed to another vowel) as to require Friulan's classification as a separate language.

Below is a comparison of Friulan, English, Italian and French:

Friulan	English	Italian	French
Un	One	Uno	Un
Doi	Two	Due	Deux
Omp	Man	Uomo	Homme
Femine	Woman	Donna	Femme
Cjan	Dog	Cane	Chien
Gjat	Cat	Gatto	Chat
Cjamese	Shirt	Camicia	Chemise

The main argument given to support the fact that Friulian is an autonomous language, rather than an Italian dialect, is its linguistic distance from SI. Friulian is also compared to other standard languages, French and English, possibly to demonstrate that it is distant not only from Italian but also from other recognized national and standard languages, and therefore deserves the same status and recognition. The status of Romance languages is given to Friulian together with Sardinian and Ladin, while more uncertainty is allowed for Venetian or Sicilian.

In the website of Amis de Lenghe Furlane, it is also possible to assess what kind of actions the Friulians in Toronto are willing to pursue for the safeguarding of Friulian. In the bilingual page (English and Friulian) entitled 'Ideas for the Future',

the actions regarded as essential for this purpose are in the areas of the media and education for children and adults. An important role is also given to the Church.

As far as the media are concerned, the concern is that currently 99 per cent of everything Friulians read, hear on the radio, or watch on TV is in Italian. The group regards it as necessary to give people more content in Friulian. However, they do not have poetry and great literary works in mind as they think that most people do not read these things in any language. What is regarded as necessary is daily newspapers, entertainment magazines, soap operas, sports programmes, comics, and so on, things that people will read not because they love Friulian but for entertainment, the same reason for which they read or watch things in any language. There should, therefore, be young Friulian journalists with the professional skills to attempt these things. Toronto has a population of three million but supports three daily English newspapers as well as daily newspapers in Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, and Korean. There are probably over a hundred newspapers. All of these serve communities smaller than the population of Friuli.

As far as education is concerned, the Amis De Lenghe Furlane think that it is necessary to introduce Friulian into schools, first of all to give more prestige to the language, and secondly to create a literate population that will read the books, newspapers and magazines mentioned above. The present situation is that of few readers with not much to read. An increase in one will lead to an increase in the other. They do not advocate that all schooling should be done in Friulian. However, they would like to start with three to five hours per week and expand from that. In Toronto, the French language is mandatory in primary school. There is also a heritage language programme where the languages of immigrants are taught for free by the government after school or on Saturdays. Depending on demand in a given area, over twenty languages are offered, including Italian, Greek, Portuguese, Serbo-Croat, Chinese, and Korean. If such consideration is given to many small groups of recent immigrants, they do not think it is too much to ask the same for Friulians. This page also advocates adult literacy in Friulian and education of non-Friulians. Lastly, it considers the role of the Church. Each parish, by a vote among parishioners, should decide whether it wants masses in Friulian or Italian.

The measures that the Friulians in Toronto would like to undertake to safeguard Friulian are targeted to reinforce the usual areas that minority language speakers regard as essential for the future preservation of their language: education, the media, and the Church. In the history of the repression of minority groups, such as the French-speaking group in the Val d'Aosta and the German-speaking group in the South Tyrol, the Church has played an important and active role in the safeguarding of the repressed minority language. The Friulian group in Toronto, however, does not seem to have any links with political parties or associations that make of the language issue one of their battlefields for the achievement of a higher degree of autonomy for their region. It would be interesting to see whether the Friulians in Toronto expect to gain some kind of legal recognition, following the approval, in Italy, of law 482, which guarantees the right to adopt special measures to minority groups so far excluded from protection, including Friulian. It is clear, however, that the heritage language programme is a possibility the group is considering for the defence of its own interests. The last thing that should be said about this Friulian community in Toronto is that it is acting from abroad to preserve what is regarded as a minority language in Italy. It will be interesting to see which contributions the community in Toronto, together with the many others resident abroad, will bring to the Friulian language and if, through the use of the internet, Friulians all over the world will be able to reconstitute the idea of a *Patria Friulana*, and how this Friulian identity will be seen by the Friulians in relation to their Italian and also American or Canadian identity.

5.4.3 *The linguistic aspect of the websites*

Section 5.4.1 discussed the initiatives to safeguard local varieties through the teaching of their grammar, phonology and syntax. In those courses, the teaching is carried out in the traditional way: through language classes. This section will examine the many sites that promote the teaching and learning of local varieties online. It should be said, however, that the majority of these websites promote varieties regarded as dialects. The number of websites teaching the varieties that have acquired the status of minority language after the approval of law 482 is insignificant. A possible explanation for this could be that the promoters of Friulian, Ladin, Occitan, Franco-Provençal and the other varieties listed in law 482 might find

this exercise rather amateurish. Thanks to legal recognition, it is possible to promote these varieties through a more traditional and systematic approach. Section 5.4.1 has shown that the teaching of Friulian happens not only in private institutions but also at schools and universities. There are teacher-training courses and sometimes, like in the case of Ladin, fluency in the minority language is an essential requirement for obtaining a job in the public sector. The situation of varieties regarded as dialects is different. Their promoters do not have the same options that the supporters of minority languages have, therefore, they may well want to exploit the internet for increasing the chances of promotion of their varieties.

A website teaching the language and culture of a local variety is ‘Al sît bulgnais’, <http://www.bulgnais.com> [accessed 9 July 2004]). The website is bilingual: everything is written in Bolognese and Italian. The aim of the website is the promotion of Bolognese and this is stated in the home page:

The screenshot shows the website 'Al Sît Bulgnais' in a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The address bar shows 'http://www.bulgnais.com/'. The page content includes:

- Header:** 'Al Sît Bulgnais' in red and 'Il Sito Bolognese' in blue.
- Navigation:** 'Prémma pàgina' (with a coat of arms icon) and 'Pagina iniziale'.
- Section:** 'Nuvità - Novità' with a feather icon.
- Recent Updates:**
 - Giorgio Filippi
 - Dau casàtt vidéo in bulgnais - Due videocassette bolognesi
 - Fotografi ed Bulàggna - Foto di Bologna
- Quote:** 'Am për un bèl Sît as gira pulid, l'é pèn ed nutèzzi ai é dâl primèzzi.'

The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, several open windows (including 'Chapter Five 300604 ...'), and the system tray with the time '22:28'.

Bänvgnó al prémm sít bulgnais dla Raid däl Raid, dedichè a tòtt i bulgnîs, zitadèn e ariùs ed tòtt i lè, e anc ai linguèssta e ai imigrè ch'i in vòlen savair de pió, e pò naturalmànt ai bulgnîs ch'i an dscurdè la lāngua di nunón, mo ch'i la vòlen turnèr a inparèr!

Benvenuti al primo sito bolognese di Internet, dedicato a tutti i bolognesi, cittadini, rustici e montani, nonché ai linguisti e ai forestieri che vogliono saperne di più, oltre naturalmente ai bolognesi che hanno dimenticato la lingua degli antenati ma vogliono riapprenderla!

In this website, emphasis is put on the phonetic system of Bolognese, which differs from that of standard Italian:

In italiano spesso non si sa se pronunciare la *s* sorda come in 'sasso' o sonora come in 'sbarco'. Ad esempio, 'rosa' vorrebbe la *s* sonora e 'dinosaurio' sorda, però al Nord la *s* intervocalica è sempre sonora, anche in 'dinosaurio', mentre al Sud è sempre sorda, anche in 'rosa'. Ci sono poi parole come 'casa' che possono essere pronunciate in entrambi i modi. In italiano questo non è molto importante, data la mancanza di coppie minime che si distinguono per la sonorità della *s*. In bolognese al contrario la distinzione è fondamentale:

	<i>s</i> sorda		<i>s</i> sonora
<i>Cusén</i>	cuscino	<i>cusén</i>	cugino
<i>spusè</i>	sposato	<i>spusè</i>	sposato
<i>scusèr</i>	scuotere	<i>scusèr</i>	scusare

Regarding the promotion of Bolognese through online courses, the website includes the following page:

Al Bulgnais - Il bolognese

[Al dialàtt bulgnais - Il dialetto bolognese](#)

[I dialètt dla pruvénzia - I dialetti della provincia](#)

[Äl règol - Grammatica](#)

[I sòn - Fonetica](#)

[Äl paròl - Lessico](#)

[Urtugrafi - Ortografia](#)

[Difaïsa - Tutela](#)

[Paròl nòvi - Neologismi](#)

[Vocabolèri - Vocabolari](#)

The guestbook has access to information on Bolognese and its dialects and there are also attempts to codify this variety through the description of its grammar, phonetics, and vocabulary. It is worth mentioning that the page *Paròl nòvi – Neologismi* has a rather comprehensive glossary related to computing terminology. The following is an extract from the page *Paròl nòvi – Neologismi*:

Vdån adès un glusèri dāl paròl dl’informàtica druvè in ste sît: - [Vediamo ora un glossario dei termini informatici utilizzati in questo sito:](#)

computer-conpiùter, zarvlàn, calcolatàur
cursor-frazza dal pundghèn
file-documànt
font-caràter
Internet-la Raid dāl Raid
home page-prémma pàgina
link-ligàm
mailing list - léssta ed distribuziàn; zircolèr eletrònica
guestbook-lìber di visitatùr
Millennium Bug-Bigàt da Milenèri

The online teaching and learning of Genoese is also possible, thanks to the site ‘Zeneize’ <http://www.zeneize.net/index.html> [accessed 9 July 2004]. In the page *lèngua*, one can learn about *grafia*, *funulugìa zeneize*, and *verbi zeneixi*. The page *lèngua* is written in four different languages: English, Italian, French, and Genoese. The following is an extract from the English and Genoese versions of the page *grafia*:

A grafia in U
a grafìa òfisiàle de zeneize.net !

The U-spell
the official spelling system of zeneize.net

- A transcrisiun funettica d’e pòule a l’è ripurtaa tra barette (//) inte l’alfabetu **IPA**. The phonetic transcription is written between slashes in the **IPA** alphabet
- Clicæ inscee pòule blœ pe sentî a prunúnsia d’**u grande Marzari**. Click on the blue words to hear the pronunciation of **the great Marzari**

The following quotation gives an idea of the effort and dedication needed to create these pages, in which there is an attempt to achieve a unified spelling system:

U: a l'è **bivalente**.

Quande a l'è atacaá á 'n'atra vucale a pœ ese **vucallica** /u/ opyre **semivucallica/semicunsunántega** /w/ a l'è **vucallica** cu'l'acentu **circunflessu** opyre doppu 'na vucale lunga. [clicca pe d'i ezenpi](#)

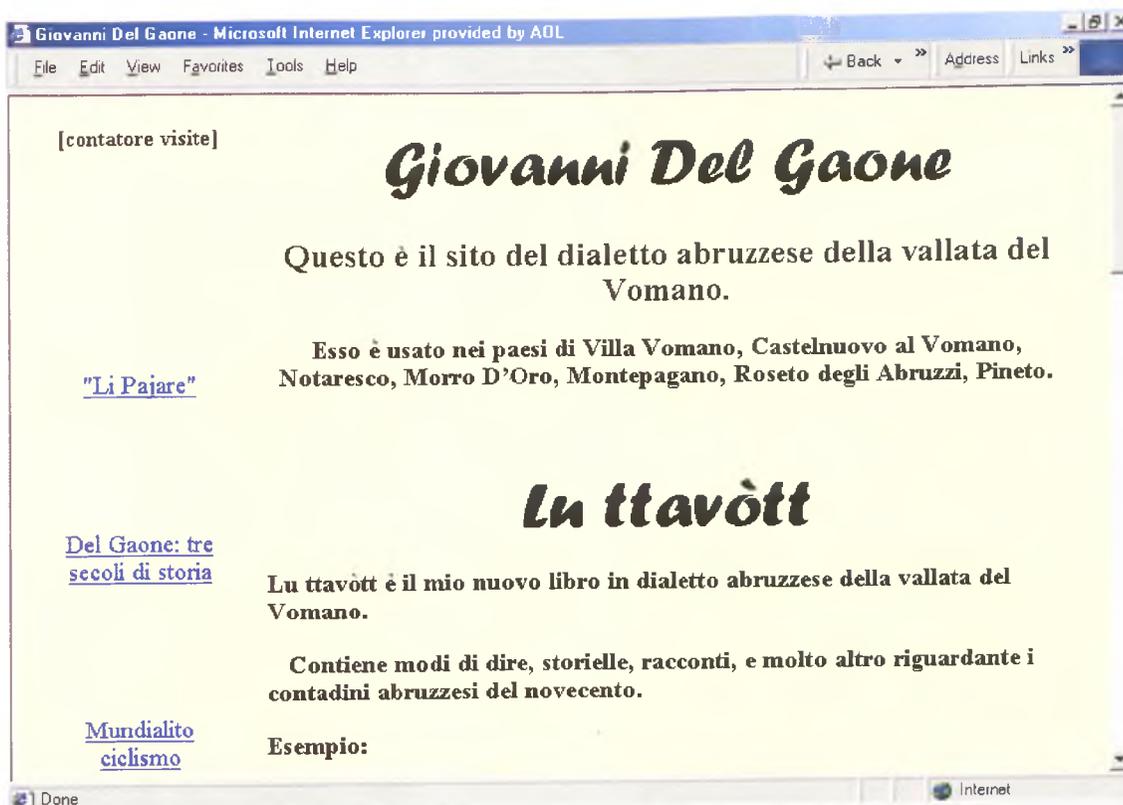
"scûu" /'sku:u/, "lûi" /'lu:i/, "demûa" /de'mu:a/, "alûa" /a'lu:a/, "câu" /'ka:u/,
"vœu" /'vø:u/

A l'è **semivucallica/cunsunántega** **sensa acentu** doppu 'na "o" cyrta opyre davanti a'n'atra vucale. [clicca pe d'i ezenpi](#)

"luâsu" /'lwa:su/, "quattru" /'kwattru/, "demuâse" /de'mwa:se/, "[vidduu](#)"
/'viddwu/, "[spasufia](#)" /spa'swi:ja/, "[dui](#)" /'dwi:/

Another example of a prestigious dialect which can be learned online is Milanese. The website 'El Milanese' (www.elmilanes.com [accessed 5 July 2004]) is described as the portal of the Milanese language and culture. It offers a course in Milanese that is structured very similarly to those in Genoese and Bolognese. Piedmontese can also be learned online, thanks to the interactive Piedmontese distance learning on the Web (<http://www.nostereis.org/Lingua/FRAME.HTM> [accessed 20 July 2004]). It is organized by the association Nòste Rèis (Nostre Radici), founded in 1988, and is targeted at those Piedmontese people who have emigrated and forgotten their regional language.

Online, it is also possible to learn the language of dialects that are much less known than Venetian, Milanese, or Genoese; dialects that are less popular and the numbers of whose speakers is lower than those of more famous dialects. For example, one can learn the dialect spoken in Val d'Agri in Lucania through the website 'Adamo Racconta' (<http://web.tiscalinet.it/adamoracconta/> [accessed 8 July 2004]). The website Del Gaone (www.delgaone.it [accessed 8 July 2004]) explains the meaning of words such as *cipicchije*, *lagnire*, or *ddaddi* and gives information on the local history and culture of the Abruzzese valley Vallata del Vomano.



A page of this site, called 'lu vucabbularije', lists 800 Abruzzese words, translated and explained in Standard Italian, for example:

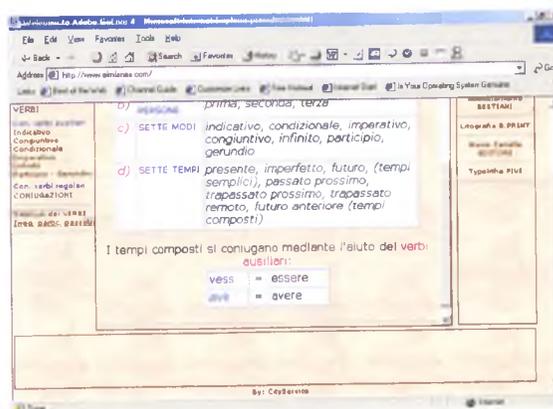
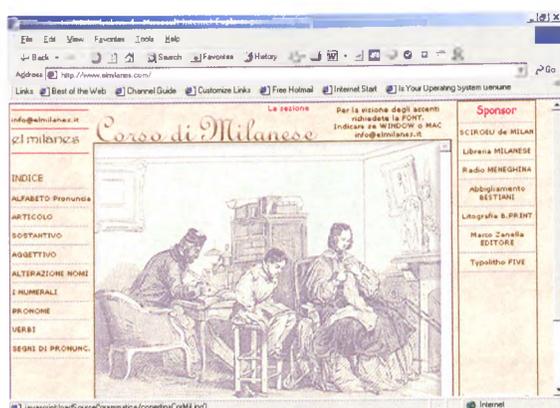
vaccile: catino usato per lavarsi, bacinella.
vammàce: ovatta, bambagia.
vandijòle: convulsioni.
varòscene: rigurgito.
varvâie: bargiglio, doppio mento.
vâsce: bacio.
vasinicòle: basilico.
vattachjrchje: strumento per battere i legumi.
vavischije: fiocchi di neve che sporadicamente cominciano a cadere

The Dizionario Aquilano (http://www.geocities.com/blue_dragon_it/sin.html [accessed 8 July 2004]) is an electronic dictionary of Aquilano, the dialect spoken in l'Aquila, the capital of the Abruzzo region. Another example of an electronic dictionary is the Lizzano dictionary (<http://www.ba.infn.it/~zito/dialetto.html>, [accessed 22 July 2004]), intended to safeguard the language of Lizzano, in the Salento.

5.4.4 The cultural aspect of the websites

An important aspect of these websites is the promotion of the cultural aspect. In these websites, in fact, one can read about the local culture and history of a specific area.

The website 'El Milanese' (www.elmilanes.com) contains texts of folk songs, jokes and recipes in Milanese. In sites such this, there may well be an attempt to experiment with the local tongue, in other words to show that it is suitable for a variety of uses, ranging from more formal situations, such as the teaching of grammar and literature and the study of local history, to more familiar contexts, such as jokes, proverbs, short stories, songs, and recipes.



It is not surprising that the creation of this site has been welcomed by the Lega Nord newspaper *La Padania*. The Lega, in favour of a strong form of federalism in Italy, has indicated the Milanese dialect as the most authoritative of all to provide a common language to Lombardy (Bonsaver, 1996: 103). This controversial promoter of the Milanese language and culture has regarded 'El Milanese' as an important step for the safeguarding of Milanese:

Un nuovo sito Internet per gli appassionati di cose meneghine
In rete arriva la Milano da riscoprire e da salvare
 di Vittoria Colonna

«La libertaa de fà e de desfà no gh'è danee che le possa pagà; e l'è mej on'onza de libertaa, che tutt l'or del mond» ('la libertà di fare e disfare non c'è somma di denaro che la possa comprare, ed è meglio un grammo di libertà che tutto l'oro del mondo', traduzione nostra). È un proverbio milanese che racchiude un grano di saggezza popolare e di buon senso, ma che può essere letto anche come un'esortazione a salvare e a tramandare le nostre tradizioni, unica cosa che in un mondo che rischia di diventare sempre più senza radici può aiutarci a restare davvero liberi. Questa è solo una delle tante perle che si possono trovare sul portale generale della lingua milanese, www.elmilanes.it, da poco operativo ma già punto di riferimento

telematico per tanti appassionati di cultura, idioma e usanze meneghini. L'idea è nata dall'esperienza e dalla passione di Sergio Bolzoni e Marco Zanella per Milano e la sua storia, in collaborazione con una serie di sponsor tra i quali la Libreria Milanese (che da anni pubblica interessanti libretti su tutti gli aspetti della cultura e delle vicende passate cittadine) e Radio Meneghina, e si presenta come un pot-pourri di tutto il Milano-scibile: dalle barzellette ai proverbi, dalle poesie alle canzoni (tutto rigorosamente "in lingua"), dai libri alle vecchie storie. (<http://www.lapadania.com/2000/novembre/09/09112000p12a1.htm> [accessed 4 July 2004])

In the website 'Al sît bulgnais', there is a page called 'Dâu casàtt víddeo in bulgnais - Due videocassette bolognesi' where one can read reviews of Bolognese records and cassettes in Bolognese. Moreover, the page 'Lîber nûv - Libri nuovi' gives access to book reviews in Bolognese. The books are usually on Bologna and Bolognese, and are often written in Bolognese. However, there are also works that are not related to Bolognese culture, like the translation of *Le Petit Prince* by Antoine Marie Roger de Saint-Exupéry. The following is an extract from the review of the book:

E così disponiamo ora di questa storia famosa, a volte triste e sempre poetica, in una versione interamente bolognese, con una traduzione anch'essa poetica, anch'essa malinconica, ma con un carattere secondo noi che nemmeno l'originale francese può vantare (va detta un'altra cosa importante: il libro è stato tradotto direttamente dal francese). Osservate ad esempio cosa succede quando il Piccolo Principe chiede all'Affarista cosa se ne faccia di tutte le stelle di cui rivendica la proprietà:

*"A i tégnn drî. A li cãnt es a li tãurn a cuntèr", al gé l afaréssta. "L'è una brîga. Mo a sãn un òmen sêri!".
Al prãnzîp fangén al n èra gnanc sudisfât*

An attempt is also made to use Bolognese in a non-literary context: the page 'I dirétt umàn in bulgnais — I diritti umani in bolognese' contains the translation of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Bolognese:

DICHIARAZIÂN UNIVERSÈL DI DIRÉTT UMÀN

Preànbol

Tgnó cãnt che arcnósser la dignitè ch'l'è patrimòni ed tòtt i cunpunènt dla famajja umèna e i sù dirétt, prezis e ch'i n s pòlen brîsa zèder, l'è al fundamânt dla libartè, dla giustézzia e dla pès int al mánnd;

While 'Al sît bulgnais' offers an Italian version of all the pages, the cultural pages of the website 'Zeneize' are really challenging, since they are entirely written in

Genoese. The page *atualtiæ* has a variety of articles written in Genoese. The topics of the articles vary, some of them are related to the Genoese language and culture, but others are more general. The following is an extract from the article *Atenti à l'inflyensia*:

Tytti i anni, inte questu perîudu, u mundu u s'aspeta che 'na catastrufe a sciamme fœa daa

Cinn-a:

à intervalli de 11 anni, o zy de li, l'è sucessu de lungu cusci.

Òua semmu in ritardu.

Ma nu se sa se e prubabilitæ séggian cumme quelle de'n tittulu de bursa troppu insciou, che cuu pasâ d'i giurni l'è senpre ciy fâççile ch'u deryye, o se séggian cumme quelle de'na sérrie furtynaa de nummi d'u semenâiu, che, statisticamente, a puriêiva cuntinuâ, cumme nu.

'Il portal de lenghe furlane' (<http://www.lenghe.net/> [accessed 10 July 2004]) is another example of a very challenging website to promote the Friulian language and culture. However, beside the Friulian version, there is also an Italian version. Although there is no description of the Friulian grammar, lexicon, and phonology, as in the case of the Bolognese and Genoese websites, *Il portâl de lenghe furlane* includes articles in Friulian organized under different headings: *Lengue*, *Atualitât*, *Friûl*, *Culture*, and *Rubrichis*. In *Culture*, one can read reviews of books on the Friulian language and culture. Of particular interest is the review of the book *Difesa dell'italiano* by Lucio D'Arcangelo. The review entitled *Un libro contro la 482 e il friulano* attacks the position of the author of the book who is against the legal recognition given by law 482 to Friulian. The following is an extract of the review, which can be read also in Friulian:

Nel libro, pubblicato recentemente dalla "Ideazione editrice", viene criticata molto aspramente la legge 482/99 ed in particolare il riconoscimento di friulano e sardo. Ma su cosa si basano queste considerazioni? Naturalmente su una totale mancanza di approfondimento degli aspetti linguistici e sociolinguistici che hanno portato la gran parte degli studiosi a considerare il friulano una vera e propria lingua (fra i quali i curatori della Mostra sulla lingua italiana di Firenze). Infatti l'unico studioso citato è Giovan Battista Pellegrini, dell'Università di Padova, noto per i suoi scritti contrari alle politiche linguistiche per il friulano e – non si capisce ancora il perché – insigne componente del Comitato di redazione della Società Filologica Friulana. A questo punto, proponiamo che sia data la tessera onoraria della Filologica anche al Ministro Gasparri...

The page *Atualitât* includes articles strictly connected to the issue of the promotion of Friulian or other minority languages spoken in Europe. The website has numerous links with the associations and organizations involved in the safeguarding of Friulian.

The website ‘Cultura y Intendënza Ladina’ (<http://www.provinz.bz.it/intendenza-ladina/cultura/index.html> [accessed 15 July 2004]) gives useful information on official bodies and associations (Intendënt, Culaburadëures de Dipartimënt y Ispetëures, Diretëures de Ripartizion, and Culaburadëures de Ripartizion) involved in the promotion of the Ladin language and culture. However, the website does not include pages describing the culture of the Ladin people and seems more orientated in emphasizing the commitment of the local authorities to promote the Ladin language and culture. The page Scuola ladina describes the schooling system aimed at protecting Ladin in Alto Adige and the page Cultura Ladina, which is available only in Ladin, includes a brief description of ‘istituzions’ and ‘manifestazions cultureles’.

An example of a more literary website is ‘Confederazione delle Arti’ (<http://www.confederazioneartedi.com/letteratura%5Clinkcult.htm> [accessed 10 July 2004]). Through Confederazione delle Arti, one can link to the website of the Poeti Bresciani. A group of friends in Nigoline di Cortefranca, in Lombardy, driven by a strong attachment to their native land, have created this site that is rich in written texts and audio files of the main Brescian poets. A similar site is ‘Poeti Romagnoli nel dialetto di Longiano’ (<http://mysiteciaoweb.it/longiano> [accessed 12 July 2004]), which contains texts of the poets who wrote in the dialect of Longiano, a small village between Santarcangelo and Cesena, in the Romagna. The local varieties are also taught through texts of songs, such as the site on Fabrizio De Andrè, the popular Genoese singer. The site enables one to learn the correct Genoese pronunciation, as the user can sing, together with De Andrè, his most popular songs in Genoese.

A Dumenga
 Re La Re La
 Quan-du a dumenga fan u giu cappellin neuvu,
 Sol Re Sol Re
 neuvu vestiu, cu 'a madama madama 'n testa o belin che
 La7 Re
 festa o belin che festa.

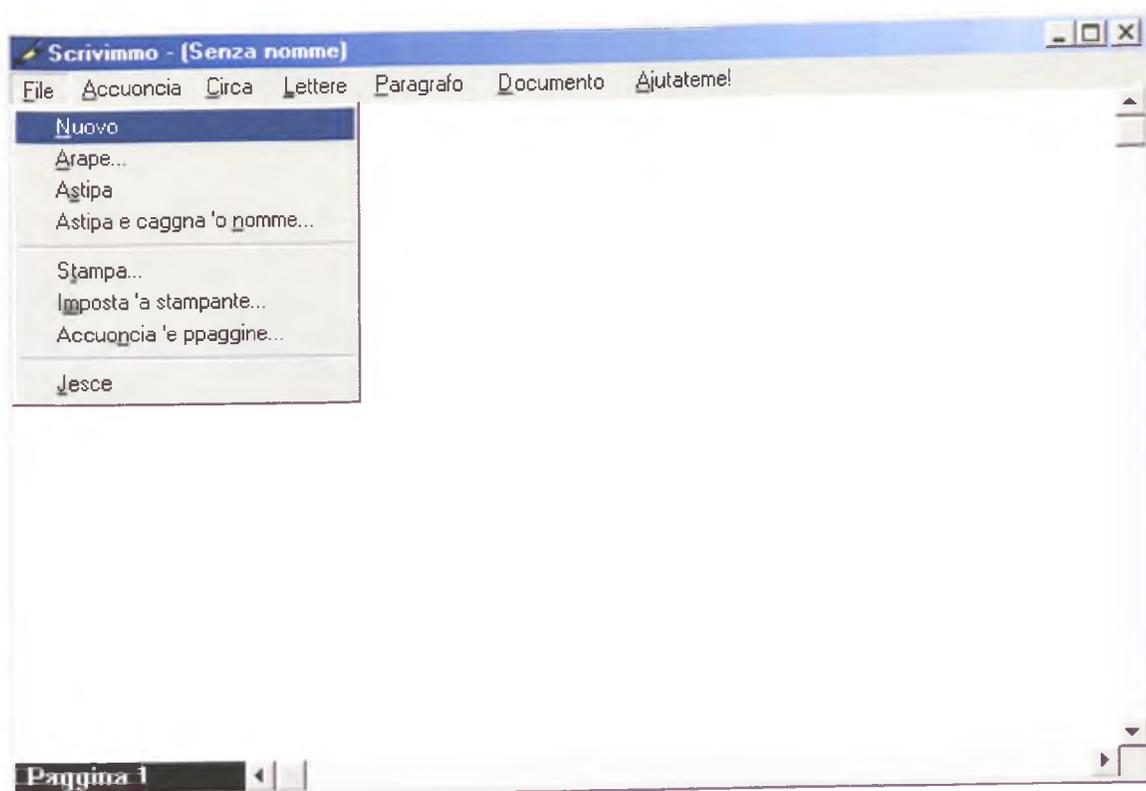
(<http://deandre.freeweb.supereva.it/accordi/a.htm?p> [accessed 12 July 2004])

Another interesting attempt to protect a dialect is the Neapolitan version of ‘Write’, a simple Microsoft Windows word processor, available to download through the website (<http://www.wintricks.it/software/scrivimmo.html> [accessed 4 July 2004]). This initiative is due to the reaction of a Neapolitan emigrant in Milan who, in 1995, reacted to the supremacy of the English language in the technological world:

I computer parlano inglese, e più si diffondono, più si trasforma il modo di parlare e scrivere dei cittadini del villaggio globale fin quasi a diventare un gergo incomprensibile a chi con l’informatica, e per età o per quieto vivere, non vuole avere nulla a che fare. Difendere dialetti e perfino l’italiano è una battaglia persa? Non è detto. Certo, portare il dialetto nel computer non è un’impresa da tutti. Nessun Milanese, per esempio, avrebbe il coraggio di scrivere un software in vernacolo. Eppure, proprio a Milano, così vuole la leggenda, un emigrante ha tradotto l’ormai famoso ‘Write’ (il semplice wordprocessor di Windows) in napoletano: è nato così ‘Scrivimmo’ (‘Altro che inglese: Internet ora parla napoletano’, *La Repubblica*, 12 May 2000).

In ‘Scrivimmo’, all the menu bars have been translated: ‘Apri’ becomes ‘Arape’, ‘Salva con nome’ is ‘Astipa e caggna o nomme’. The name of the menu ‘Modifica’ has been translated as ‘Accuoncia’. ‘Taglia e Incolla’ becomes ‘Tagli’ e Azzicca’. ‘Inserisci’ is ‘Nfizza na’ cosa’, ‘Annulla’ is ‘Sfaje l’accunciamiento’. Moreover, the Help Menu has been entirely translated into Neapolitan, often with expressions that are not a simple transposition of words: the guide to the software is called ‘Comme s’ausa stu coso’ (Come si usa quest’affare), which is not a rigorous expression typical of the computing world, but can be easily understood, by Neapolitans at least.

Apparently ‘Scrivimmo’ has become very popular amongst the Neapolitans who have access to the internet. In 1995, the use of the internet was not so widespread as today, and therefore the success of ‘Scrivimmo’ was restricted to very few. Nowadays, however, it is used by many of the Neapolitans scattered not only throughout Italy but also in the rest of the world.



Can dialects become technological languages? Can this strategy, in the long term, be useful in the safeguarding of the local languages? It is almost impossible to predict such things. This attempt may or may not be successful. In a few years' time, 'Scrivimmo' and similar initiatives could become less popular or even disappear, or their popularity might even increase. But it has to be said that established national languages are struggling to survive in the technological world, because of the dominant role of English. What of these local languages, then, that are the product of gradually changing contexts? Will the dialects find a new function in the technological world? This could be a challenge for the local languages to face in the future. Can local varieties fulfil a different role and be used to refer to technology rather than to the rural world? The websites examined in this section, as well as in the previous one, have in common the strong desire to spread knowledge of the many Italian local and regional languages, traditions and cultures. The fact that so many endangered tongues and cultures are taught through the internet is particularly important for the varieties spoken by a very small number of people. These online courses make it possible to teach and learn local varieties that otherwise would not stand any chance of being taught and learnt, as in the cases of the dialects

of the Val d'Agri or the Vallata del Vomano. The internet thus offers the possibility of safeguarding even those that are particularly at risk. Moreover, these websites give a stronger position to these lesser-known varieties. If more prestigious varieties like Milanese, Bolognese, or Genoese can be taught online, if there are people interested in knowing more about these languages and cultures, there may well be people willing to make efforts to preserve the lesser-known local languages and cultures whose survival is perceived as being particularly at risk.

5.5 Publications and competitions

Two other initiatives carried out by local organizations to promote their own varieties are publications and competitions. The Circolo Filologico Milanese, in addition to its courses in Milanese language and literature, offers the possibility of participating in a competition of Milanese poetry and prose, the Concorso di Poesia e Prosa in milanese. The Genoese association *A Compagna* is involved in the publication of the periodical *A Compagna* that is intended to promote Genoese as well as to provide useful information on the Ligurian and Genoese society (<http://www.acompagna.org/bol/bol.htm> [accessed 12 July 2004]). The publication in which the Genoese association takes most pride is the *Bibliografia dialettale ligure*, a volume that collects everything written in or about Genoese or Ligurian. The association is also involved in the organization of competitions to promote the linguistic and folkloristic heritage of Ligurian. The competition 'Premio Luigi De Martini' was established in 1978 and has been well received by its participants. The 'Premio Luigi De Martini' is named after a former president of the association who died young in 1975. Prizes are awarded to those who distinguish themselves in works aimed at the preservation of the linguistic and folkloristic heritage of the region. Several prizes have so far been granted in Liguria and also abroad, as in the case of Prof. Hugo Plomteux in Louvain (Belgium). Other prizes have been awarded to Prof. Giulia Petracco Sicardi in Genoa, Pio Carli in Sanremo, Dott. Emilio Azaretti in Ventimiglia, Dott. Vito Elio Petrucci in Genoa, Prof. Augusto Cesare Ambrosi in La Spezia and to the Folkloristic Group 'Città di Genova' (<http://www.acompagna.org/storia.htm> [accessed 12 July 2004]).

In the Marche, in the area of Urbino, the association Pro Urbino has advertised the competition 'Renzo De Scrilli', to promote the production of poetry written in the local dialect and also linguistic research on the dialect spoken in the Urbino area:

BANDO DEL III CONCORSO DI POESIA DIALETTALE DELL' AREA
URBINATE

Visto l' interesse suscitato dalla precedente manifestazione di poesia dialettale [...] la Pro Urbino bandisce [...] una nuova edizione comprendente un premio di poesia dialettale e un premio di ricerca linguistica sul dialetto dell' area urbinata. [...] Il concorso è articolato in due sezioni:

1- [...] testi poetici [...]

2- [...] una ricerca dialettale consistente nella raccolta sistematica di termini tecnici (autenticamente dialettali), espressioni, modi di dire, proverbi, motti, battute, [...]. (<http://www.abanet.it/urbino/poesia.htm> [accessed 12 July 2004])

In the area of Sondrio, in Lombardy, the Concorso Mazzoleni-Passerini has been advertised by the Consorzio B.I.M, together with the local monthlies *'l Gazetin* and *Valchiavenna*, to promote the production of theatrical texts, written in the local dialect:

B A N D O

I mensili *'l Gazetin* e *Valchiavenna* [...] bandiscono una edizione speciale del *Premio provinciale di poesia e prosa*, Concorso alla memoria dei poeti dialettali Pierangelo Mazzoleni (Chiavenna 1909 - 1987) e Renzo Passerini (Morbegno 1924 - 1994), dedicata al **Teatro dialettale**.

Al Concorso può partecipare chiunque. Il Premio è riservato a soggetti teatrali di qualsiasi genere e struttura (commedia, atto unico, *sketch*, teatro-danza, etc.) scritti in uno dei dialetti della provincia di Sondrio. (<http://labos.valtellina.net/p1999.htm> [accessed 12 July 2004])

In 2000, the first prize was awarded to Renato Bertolini and Agostino Bianchini, for their play *L'è nasüü sitimii*. The jury justified its choice in this way:

La commedia in tre atti dà uno spaccato della vita dell'antica Campo Tartano mediante l'uso del tipico dialetto locale, ricco di locuzioni idiomatiche e di immediata freschezza sia nella scelta dei vocaboli sia nell'attenzione ad un'espressione non contaminata dalla lingua italiana.

The Cenacolo Dialettale Mantovano ‘Al Fogolèr’ founded in 1972 is another example of a local association, promoting in this case the language and culture of Mantua, through publications and competitions. The Cenacolo believes in the rediscovery and revaluation of the folklore, to encourage the practice of reading and writing in Mantuan:

Claudio Quarenghi (all'epoca Presidente del Cenacolo) ha affermato: "Al Fogoler" è una associazione culturale fondata nell'anno 1972, i cui associati (al momento, ben cinquantadue) si prefiggono di tutelare, divulgare e salvaguardare la parlata dialettale mantovana, nelle forme scritte e parlate, attingendo dalla guida pratica *lesar e scrivar in dialet* le regole necessarie per la corretta scrittura dell'idioma mantovano.

(<http://www.inventarti.it/FOGOLER%20impegno.htm> [accessed 12 July 2004])

This Cenacolo has also been involved in the publication of numerous anthologies, a grammar of Mantuan, *Scrivar e lèsar in dialet* (1979) by L. Giovetti, A. Facchini, F. Ferrari, and C. Quarenghi and also emphasizes the importance of creating opportunities for interaction between neighbouring communities. The emphasis put on the importance, for the safeguarding of the local language, of possibilities of exchanges between nearby districts, may well hint at the issue of establishing a *koinè*, accepted and spoken in an area including not only the city of Mantua but also its province and possibly the whole region of Lombardy. The Cenacolo also advertises a poetry competition, Premio di Poesia Dialettale ‘Costantino Canneti’, in which the participants have strict instructions to write the poems in the dialect spoken in the province of Mantua.

The Società Filologica friulana is involved in the publications of three periodicals: *Ce Fastu?*, *Sot la Nape*, and its annual supplement *Strolic*. *Ce Fastu?* collects contributions in the areas of linguistics, philology, folkloric traditions, and history and art on the ethnic and cultural entity of the Friuli. The periodical is edited by Giovanni Frau and Gian Paolo Gri. *Sot la Nape* has been published since 1949 and is the Bulletin of the Società. It is edited by Pier Carlo Begotti. Its annual supplement *Strolic* falls within the Friulian tradition of the *lunari di fine anno* and outlines predictions for the following year. The Società Filologica friulana is also actively engaged in the publication of many volumes like the *collane di Racconti tradizionali*, *Storia dell' arte popolare*, and *Toponomastica* (<http://www.filologicafriulana.it/homepage.htm> [accessed 14 July 2004]).

The Ladin Cultural Centre, which is a branch of the Autonomous Province of Trento, was set up in 1975. Its function is to safeguard and promote Ladin culture and language. Its work involves collecting, organising and studying material referring to Ladin economy and language; to folklore and mythology; and to local costumes and customs. In section 5.4.1 the promotion of Ladin through the Centre's teaching activities for children and adults have been discussed. Since 1977 the Centre's documentary activities have been published in the journal *Mondo Ladino*. There is also a parallel series, *Mondo Ladino Quaderni*, which is published for schools. Other publications include reference books, dictionaries, collections of texts, illustrated books for children, catalogues, audiovisual aids – a total of over 100 titles. The centre cooperates actively with the main cultural centres in the Ladin-speaking Dolomites and also those in Friuli and in the Swiss Grisons. It liaises with other linguistic minority groups in Italy and in Europe (<http://www.istladin.net/eng/prestop.html> [accessed 15 July 2004]). The website *Cultura y Intendènza Ladina* (<http://www.provinz.bz.it/intendenza-ladina/cultura/index.html> [accessed 15 July 2004]) advertises competitions to promote cultural activities in Ladin:

Domandes de contribut por la cultura ladina por l'ann 2004

Balsan – I formulars cun les spiegaziuns por fa domanda de contribut por ativitès, investimènc', ativitès educatives culturales en general, y por i artisc', por l'ann 2004 po gni sègn desc'iarià da internet sot www.provinz.bz.it/intendenza-ladina. Le terminn por de jò les domandes è le 2 de forà 2004.

Regarding publications, it is worth mentioning the initiatives of individuals, like the *Grammatica del dialetto napoletano* by Pirro Bichelli (Pégaso, 1974). In the introduction the author reveals his desire to arrive at a Standard form of Neapolitan, a *koinè*.

È forse inopportuno e irrazionale lo studio gramaticale di un dialetto, dato che questo dovrebbe essere solamente un linguaggio parlato. Ma il dialetto napoletano, come del resto quello di altre zone d'Italia, ha avuto dei veri e propri letterati, i quali, specie negli ultimi tempi, hanno fornito una imponente produzione scritta, tanto che, trattando del dialetto napoletano, non è possibile riferirsi soltanto a un linguaggio parlato. Vero è che le opere letterarie in dialetto napoletano sono state composte senza alcuna regola formale, con divergenze grammaticali e soprattutto ortografiche, che potrebbero ritenersi giustificate solo per scrittori di epoche diverse, in relazione all'evoluzione del linguaggio nel tempo. Non è ammissibile che autori contemporanei, in riferimento, per esempio, al costrutto della lingua italiana 'in paradiso' pongano in dialetto uno '*n paraviso*' (Ferdinando Russo) e l'altro

'mparaviso' (Edoardo De Filippo). Non è raro il caso di una parola scritta in due modi diversi nella stessa opera e nella stessa posizione rispetto altre parole del discorso. Così Salvatore Di Giacomo, per la preposizione *de* (di) elisa innanzi all'articolo femminile *'a* (la), pone *d'* nel IV sonetto della collana « A San Francisco » (*d''a funa* = della fune) e *r'* nel VII sonetto della stessa collana (*r''a Sanità* = della Sanità (<http://www.librerianeapolis.it/pages/Schede/GrammB.html> [accessed 4 July 2004]))

The issue of teaching a local variety is linked by Bichelli to the need to find a single norm for that variety.

It is also worth mentioning here another study that investigates attitudes towards the local varieties spoken in Italy: *I dialetti e l'Italia* by Walter Della Monica (1981). The book has the aim of 'documentare in un unico insieme l'opinione di coloro che hanno partecipato all'inchiesta, su uno dei fenomeni più estesi, diffusi e resistenti del nostro Paese, com'è l'uso dei dialetti' (Della Monica, 1981: 11, cited in Grassi and others, 1997: 262). The survey was carried out on a sample of eighty-one respondents (literati or linguists). The attitude of the sample towards local varieties was generally positive, even though there were some extreme positions like that expressed by Prezzolini:

Non tutti i dialetti hanno un valore culturale, per la nazione almeno. [...] Ora ci sono dei dialetti che accompagnarono una civiltà originale; per esempio Napoli. Inutile ricordare la letteratura napoletana di Basile e Salvatore Di Giacomo, la canzone napoletana, l'opera napoletana, Pulcinella e ... la caffettiera napoletana. La perdita del dialetto napoletano, e forse peggio, il suo imbastardirsi sarebbe una disgrazia per l'Italia, maggiore, molto di quella della perdita dei dialetti molisani. (Della Monica, 1981: 113, cited in Grassi and others, 1997: 263)

This study on initiatives conducted by local bodies and organizations in order to diffuse knowledge of the local or regional variety, has shown that there are a number of competitions of this sort. In almost every province, if not every centre, of the Italian territory, there seem to be many activities in this field. *Concorsi di poesia e di prosa dialettale* seem to be advertised everywhere in Italy.

Before discussing the value of these attempts and also the impact on the future of the linguistic varieties concerned, it is important to distinguish two levels at which the language can operate: the literary level and the social level. A language can fulfil literary functions and social functions, but does not have to perform both at the same time. Standard Italian, for instance, had a literary function for many

centuries but became language with a wide social function only in the middle of the twentieth century.

In modern Italy, however, the situation of dialects has dramatically changed. As more and more people use Italian for a variety of situations, ranging from more formal to familiar and colloquial, the dialects seem to be gravitating nowadays towards a similar position to that of Standard Italian before the twentieth century: they are becoming a literary language and not a social language. Now that they are losing their vitality, there are attempts to revive them through the production of literary texts (Haller, 1986 and 1999). How successful this attempt can be is debatable. To promote a language, which is not sufficiently spoken or little employed in the other functions that the society requires, through the production of a body of literature, can become an artificial and not very productive exercise. Moreover, it can reinforce the belief that the use of these local varieties can be admitted only in certain type of contexts, the rural and folkloristic. This belief is not at all beneficial for the variety at risk. It can, in fact, be counterproductive, as it can affect the status and the prestige of the dialect and therefore lead to a negative response from the local community. In this way, the revival of local or regional tongues can become only a nostalgic and hopeless attempt to recall a patrimony that is in reality lost forever.

5.6 Legal status

Demands for linguistic autonomy are often matched by specific laws aimed at enhancing the status of these varieties and promoting their use through special regulations. In this section, some regional laws for the protection of local or regional varieties and cultures will be considered. In Piedmont, regional law 26 (1990) *Tutela, valorizzazione e promozione della conoscenza dell'originale patrimonio linguistico del Piemonte* was passed in the Piedmontese Regional Assembly in April 1990 (<http://camera.mac.ancitel.it/lrec> [accessed 15 July 2004]). The aim of the law is stated in Article 1:

Finalità generali

1. La Regione Piemonte, nello spirito degli artt. 3, 6 e 9 della Costituzione, in attuazione degli artt. 4, 5 e 7 dello Statuto regionale e nell'ambito delle competenze di cui agli artt. 42 e 49 del DPR 24 luglio 1977, n. 616, tutela e valorizza l'originale patrimonio linguistico del Piemonte e ne promuove la conoscenza.
2. La Regione considera tale impegno parte integrante dell'azione di tutela e valorizzazione della storia e della cultura regionale, e lo informa ai principi della pari dignità e del pluralismo linguistico sanciti dalla Costituzione.

The law provides financial support in the following areas: education, diffusion through the press, radio and television, creative arts, publishing, library collections, academic research, and cultural activities (Parry, 1994:183). Regional law 26 (1990) was modified and integrated by regional law 37 (1997) (<http://camera.mac.ancitel.it/lrec> [accessed 15 July 2004]). This more recent law recognizes and promotes the Piedmontese language as one of the four autoctonous languages of Piedmont, together with Walser, Occitan and Franco-Provençal. While regional law 26 (1990) for the protection of the Piedmontese linguistic heritage makes no specific reference to a *lenga piemontèisa* and gives Piedmontese no legal or official status (Parry, 1994:183), regional law 37 (1997) refers to Piedmontese as a language. It seems, therefore, that, at regional level, Piedmontese has improved its status during the years.

In another Italian region, Emilia-Romagna, regional law 45 (1994) *Tutela e valorizzazione dei dialetti dell'Emilia Romagna* protects the varieties of the region in their written and oral manifestations (<http://camera.mac.ancitel.it/lrec> [accessed 15 July 2004]). Article 1 states:

La Regione Emilia - Romagna, in attuazione delle finalità statutarie in materia di promozione del patrimonio storico e culturale del proprio territorio, tutela e valorizza i dialetti di origine locale nella loro espressione orale e nel loro utilizzo letterario, presenti e riconoscibili in porzioni del territorio regionale, coincidenti o no con circoscrizioni amministrative e subregionali.

Article 3 lists the type of initiatives supported by the region:

1. studi e ricerche;
2. realizzazione di sussidi all'attività didattica;
3. iniziative scolastiche tese a valorizzare i dialetti della regione nelle loro varie possibilità espressive;
4. corsi di formazione e di aggiornamento, seminari e convegni;
5. iniziative editoriali, discografiche, audiovisive, multimediali ed espositive;
6. costruzioni e incremento di fondi bibliografici e/o archivi sonori;
7. manifestazioni, spettacoli, trasmissioni radiofoniche e televisive, produzioni artistiche che trattino dei dialetti della regione;
8. ricerche e studi sulla toponomastica.

Regional law 32 (1990), 'Norme per lo studio la tutela la valorizzazione e l'uso sociale di alcune categorie di beni culturali e in particolare dei dialetti e delle tradizioni popolari della Liguria', aims at the protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Liguria region (<http://camera.mac.ancitel.it/lrec> [accessed 15 July 2004]). Article 1 states:

La Regione promuove coordina e favorisce la **tutela** la **conservazione** la **valorizzazione** e l'**uso sociale** dei beni culturali linguistici etnomusicali e delle tradizioni popolari presenti nel territorio regionale.

Article 2 lists the areas of intervention that may receive financial support:

- a) **patrimoni linguistici** autonomamente riconosciuti in porzioni del territorio regionale in quanto legati alle **tradizioni storico-sociali** del territorio stesso sia nella loro **espressione orale** che nelle **forme letterarie** in essi espresse;
- b) rime popolari, filastrocche, fiabe, proverbi e ritornelli, ricordi e memorie riguardanti anche l'alimentazione e la medicina popolare, il tutto espresso in lingua o in dialetto in forma orale o scritta ma inedita;
- c) canti e musiche strumentali tramandati in forma orale e danze popolari di tradizione documentabile;
- d) feste, riti e credenze giochi e passatempi popolari.

A comparison between the text of regional law 32 (1990) and that of regional law 45 (1994) 'Tutela e valorizzazione dei dialetti dell'Emilia-Romagna' show that the position of the varieties spoken in Liguria and Emilia-Romagna is very similar to that of Piedmontese before the approval of law 37 (1997): in the text there is no specific

reference to a Ligurian or Romagnol language and the dialects of Emilia-Romagna and Liguria do not enjoy any official status.

Regarding Ladin, the situation is rather complicated since Ladin is spoken in two different regions: Trentino Alto-Adige and Veneto. Trentino Alto-Adige is a Special Statute region. This means that the minority languages spoken in the region have official status and special provisions are made to protect them. The Ladins in the province of Bolzano, however, enjoy a higher form of linguistic protection than that the Ladins in the province of Trento (Pizzorusso, 1975: 217).

In Veneto, the Ladins live in the areas of Livinallongo and Ampezzo. Until the approval of law 482 (1999), they did not enjoy any protection of their linguistic and cultural heritage at national level. In Veneto, however, regional law 73 (1994), ‘Promozione delle minoranze etniche e linguistiche del Veneto’ (<http://camera.mac.ancitel.it/lrec> [accessed 15 July 2004]), promotes the linguistic and ethnic minorities of the Veneto region. Article 1 states:

La Regione riconosce nelle comunità etniche e linguistiche storicamente presenti nel Veneto, le quali aspirano ad un approfondimento delle ragioni della loro identità e allo sviluppo della loro cultura in tutte le sue manifestazioni, un segno di vitalità per la stessa civiltà veneta e uno stimolo al suo arricchimento.

Article 2 concerns the areas of intervention:

Per le finalità di cui alla presente legge, la Giunta regionale è autorizzata a concedere annualmente contributi agli organismi di cui all'articolo 3 per la realizzazione di iniziative riguardanti:

- a) la tutela, il recupero, la conservazione e la valorizzazione di testimonianze storiche che legano le comunità al proprio territorio;
- b) lo sviluppo della ricerca storica e linguistica, la pubblicazione di studi, ricerche e documenti, l'istituzione di corsi di cultura locale, la valorizzazione della lingua e della toponomastica;
- c) la costituzione e valorizzazione di musei locali o di istituti culturali specifici;
- d) l'organizzazione di manifestazioni rivolte alla valorizzazione di usi, costumi e tradizioni proprie delle comunità.

Article 3 specifies the official bodies entitled to financial support:

- Per la concessione dei contributi di cui all'articolo 2, possono presentare domanda:
- a) la Federazione tra le Unioni culturali dei Ladini dolomitici della Regione Veneto;
 - b) un comitato rappresentativo delle associazioni culturali cimbre regolarmente costituite, dei Sette Comuni dell'altopiano di Asiago, dei tredici comuni della Lessinia e della zona del Cansiglio;
 - c) un comitato composto dalle rappresentanze della comunità germanofona di Sappada;

d) un comitato rappresentativo delle associazioni culturali friulane del portogruarese regolarmente costituite.

d bis) associazioni culturali regolarmente costituite di eventuali comunità etniche e linguistiche storicamente presenti nel Veneto diverse da quelle di cui alle lettere a), b), c) e d) prevalenti in un determinato territorio.

Regarding Friulian, the first official acknowledgement of the Friulian language dates back to 1996 when it was approved by regional law 15 (1996) (<http://camera.mac.ancitel.it/lrec> [accessed 15 July 2004]).

Article 1 states the objective of the law:

La regione, per esercitare una politica attiva di conservazione e sviluppo della lingua e cultura friulana quali componenti essenziali dell'identità etnica e storica della comunità regionale, con la presente legge detta i principi fondamentali dell'azione volta alla realizzazione di tale politica.

Article 2 states:

Tutela della lingua friulana

Il friulano è una delle lingue della comunità regionale. La regione Friuli – Venezia Giulia considera la tutela della lingua e cultura friulane una questione centrale per lo sviluppo dell' autonomia speciale.

In article 4, there is a specific reference to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and to the fact that the region approves and reinforces the principles stated in the Charter.

In Friuli, regional legislation to promote Friulian seems to be matched by practical actions to safeguard it. Following the ratification of regional law 15 (1996), the spelling standard devised by professor Xavier Lamuela, which had been already approved by the provincial authorities of Udine, Gorizia and Pordenone, was adopted as the official spelling standard of the Friulian language. In the website 'Academie dal Friûl'

(http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/union/1702/html_eng/course/spelling.html [accessed 20 July 2004]), Sandri Carrozzo explains that some negotiations between Lamuela and the Società Filologica Friulana were needed, however, in order to reach an agreement:

This decision was taken on the grounds that the Lamuela spelling was more consistent than its competitor, the spelling adopted by the Società Filologica Friulana, and would be easier to learn. However, the Società Filologica appealed against the decision of the Region, maintaining that their spelling was more widely employed by Friulian authors. The two parties eventually found an agreement in late 1997: the Lamuela spelling was partially modified to accommodate suggestions made by the Società Filologica Friulana, who withdrew their appeal. The new spelling standard for Friulian could now be effectively used by all. (http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/union/1702/html_eng/course/spelling.html [accessed 20 July 2004])

This section has shown that regional legislation can be used to protect local or regional varieties. In Friuli, there is a link between regional law and linguistic normalisation. Although this approach could prove to be successful for the promotion of Friulian and other varieties spoken in Italy, it could also be the wrong step forward for different situations. Linguistic normalisation could not be easily accepted if the variety that is being promoted does not conform to the variety used in everyday life. Having to accept, and acquire, literacy in this new form may well be perceived as an alienating element by the speakers (Hoffman, 1996: 106).

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, several ways of promoting regional varieties have been assessed. The promotion of the local tongue is carried out in several ways in Italy. There is a growing number of organizations concerned about the future of local or regional varieties. One form of safeguarding is represented by the attempts to increase the knowledge of these languages in the community by encouraging people to study them. For this reason, courses for children and adults, where the local variety is taught, are currently offered. Another important initiative is represented by attempts to use the local tongues in the technological world. Technology and, above all, the internet, is also increasing the possibility of teaching these varieties through virtual courses and, moreover, is giving the chance to establish links between speakers of the same variety who are geographically distant. The promotion of the local variety through competitions and publications has also been discussed.

These actions have to be set in a context that sees the reinforcement of local identities as an important issue. The concerns and fears of losing local identities, in a world subject to rapid changes and globalization, are quite strong. In contemporary Italy, there are two opposite tendencies. One is the willingness to become European

citizens, the opening towards other languages and cultures. This means minimizing differences and emphasizing similarities. In general, there is a positive attitude towards the idea of a European identity. The opposite tendency is to see the local or regional level in conflict with the national level. This factor of *campanilismo* is not new in Italian society. It is interesting that the positive attitude towards the European dimension does not seem to have removed the inclination, in many people, to give the local or regional identity a central role in their lives.

The other issue to consider is whether or not, in contemporary Italy, it makes sense to protect and increase the knowledge of these local varieties. SI is employed in many situations and regional forms of Italian, i.e. Standard Italian that has come into contact with local varieties, are gradually replacing the dialects. There are, however, several examples in the world showing that it is sometimes possible to revive a language. The speakers' attitude towards their variety can play a very important role in determining the future of that variety.

To give a different example from the Italian situation one can examine briefly the Spanish linguistic situation. In Spain, regional languages were barely tolerated during much of Franco's long rule. They could not be used as official languages in their areas, nor did they receive any kind of support, so that, by the end of the Franco era, real concern was felt regarding their continued survival. The native languages of Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia were suppressed and often seen as dialects, the languages of the uneducated rural populations (Hoffman, 1996: 94).

The approval of Spain's new democratic Constitution in 1978 marked the formal transition of the country from a highly centralized state to a quasi-federal one marked by cultural and linguistic pluralism. The Spanish State is organized into seventeen Autonomous Communities. Decentralization has made it possible for regional diversity to become developed and institutionalized through legislation passed by the autonomous governments. Language planning in Spain has been successful: Catalan is fast becoming the language of the Principality of Catalonia, and in the Basque Country the decline of the Basque language has been arrested (Hoffmann, 1996: 96).

In Galicia, however, language planning has been less successful. Galician is not strongly associated by its speakers with arts and intelligentsia. Promoters maintain that there were times in Galicia's history when Galician was less socially

stigmatized and seen more positively as symbol of Galician identity. However, the present situation is different. Young middle-class speakers tend to use Castilian Spanish, to improve social mobility. Moreover, disagreements about finding an acceptable standard variety of Galician do not help to persuade those who already speak a dialect variety of Galician to accept the officially promoted version as the prestigious norm (Hoffmann, 1996: 104).

Therefore, the Galician example shows that the speakers' attitude towards their variety plays a fundamental role not only in the recognition of the linguistic autonomy of that variety, but also for a successful language planning policy. There are situations in which the speakers of a particular variety are granted linguistic autonomy, as they have previously made some claims for it. However, even if they have the legislative means to preserve their language, they do not manage to implement a correct language planning policy.

In this chapter, we have seen that the initiatives to revive the varieties endangered are mainly of a linguistic nature. However, there have been attempts to use the 'dialect' issue to obtain political consensus. Guido Bonsaver (1996: 103) states that the promotion of local languages and cultures was given some prominence in 1984 in the first political programme of the *Lega Lombarda* (which eventually merged with the *Liga Veneta* and the Piedmontese, Ligurian, Tuscan, and Emilian leagues in 1991 and became *Lega Nord*). During 1992 general elections, however, when the *Lega Nord* began as a party to be reckoned with, its leader, Umberto Bossi, announced his decision to renounce his battle on the issue of local languages. He gave two main reasons: the Lombard dialects would never be recognized as languages, since they were not spoken in another country; the issue of local languages and cultures had been exploited for years by the Italian Communist party, therefore, it would not guarantee sufficient identity to Lega politicians (Bonsaver, 1996: 104). Bonsaver's view on Bossi's decision is that 'at the moment of facing the national scene, Bossi understood the limitations of a cultural battle based on local values' (1996: 104) and therefore changed tactic.

At this stage one may well argue: 'What shall we do with this increasing number of varieties claiming some form of linguistic autonomy? Shall we accept their claims or just ignore them?' Democratic governments have generated two conflicting attitudes: one favouring linguistic uniformity, in the name of the right to

self-determination of a nation, on the basis of its distinctive language; and an opposite attitude, tending to keep plurilingualism and linguistic diversity (Lepschy, 1994: 6-7). This opposite trend expresses a great concern for 'endangered' languages.

Giulio Lepschy, in his article 'How Many Languages Does Europe Need?' (1994: 12), points to a third type of attitude towards minority languages, which he calls 'non-interventionist'. Lepschy writes that this approach 'promotes linguistic freedom and leaves all idioms to fend for themselves: let a hundred flowers bloom and coexist happily, and if some are stronger than others, let them prevail, and if some are weaker than others, let them succumb'. Lepschy goes back to his personal experience in Venice and confesses that his attachment to Venetian is due to the fact that 'it represented speech, and that it coexisted in a sort of symbiosis with literary Italian'. Literary Italian represented Lepschy's and his friends 'other language, the one of written word, of books and schooling'. Therefore, he would have found the idea of having to study 'Venetian at school, learning history, chemistry and mathematics, through the medium of Venetian, or of reading the classics of English, Russian and perhaps even Italian literature in Venetian translation, engaging perhaps, but rather bizarre' (1994: 13-14). Lepschy, to the question of 'How many languages does Europe need?', answers: 'as many as there are, as spoken languages. People should not be deprived of their speech. But please, as few as possible, as written standards, languages of culture to be used for scholarly and scientific publications' (1994: 14).

It is true that it would often be unrealistic and out of place to start conversing and writing at a scholarly level, suddenly using a linguistic medium that has never been employed in these type of situations. However, the examples of Catalan and Basque in Spain show that it is possible to revive a language or to widen the range of its functions, if some specific socio-cultural and economic conditions are present. Towards the end of Franco era repression of the regional languages, there was a massive shift away from Catalan and Basque, since the two languages had not been used for a variety of functions or in the media. Language planning in Spain has been successful. The Basque language, which was spoken mainly in rural areas, became standardized by the late 1960s and is now spoken, read and written by a growing number of people of the middle class.

The last point which I would like to mention in this conclusion is about language planning. Language planners have to be careful not to repeat the same mistakes committed during the time of the establishment of national languages. Promoting a language in our society cannot be done through unrealistic or anachronistic solutions. Different perspectives have to be taken into account, including the rights of those who do not speak the local or regional variety and do not wish to acquire it.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SAFEGUARDING OF SARDINIAN AND SICILIAN IN CONTEMPORARY ITALY

6.1. Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to investigate what has been done at a practical level to safeguard and encourage Sardinian and Sicilian. Research in the field has shown that the areas in which the promotion of Sardinian and Sicilian takes place concern:

- the creation of websites that attempt to teach the local variety and spread the local culture
- the formulation of regional legislation
- the attempts to create a standard
- the teaching of the local language in schools and websites
- the production of official documents in Sardinian and Sicilian
- studies on the languages
- competitions aimed at promoting the use of the local language in literary contexts

The chapter will serve as an introduction to the following two chapters, in which the linguistic competence of a sample of Sardinian and Sicilian respondents and their attitudes towards the promotion of Sardinian and Sicilian will be analysed.

6.2 Sardinian

In the following sections, the initiatives to promote Sardinian are identified.

6.2.1 Websites and electronic sources

The first attempt to use the internet as a way of safeguarding Sardinian was carried out by Antonio Chessa who wrote a ‘Petissione pro sa limba sarda’, the text of which

was spread mainly through electronic mail (Mensching, 1999: 177). In 1995, another attempt was that of Sandra van der Geer, who used the internet, to give publicity to her publications on Sardinian. Moreover, the Centro di Ricerca, Sviluppo e Studi Superiori in Cagliari has been collecting, for many years, electronic links on Sardinian from all over the world (Mensching, 1999: 178).

One of the most important initiatives to use the internet as a way of safeguarding Sardinian was initiated in 1994 by Guido Mensching. He created a site, 'Limba e Curtura de sa Sardigna', or, by its English title, Sardinian Language and Culture (<http://www.lingrom.fu-berlin.de/sardu/> [accessed 25 July 2004]), which was originally an experiment. However, Mensching soon got a great number of e-mail responses, particularly from speakers of Sardinian. Therefore, he decided to make a project of it. At present, the project is running as a co-operation between the Free University of Berlin and the University of Cologne (Multilinguae, Multimedia and Minority Languages International Congress, 8-9 November 2000, Donostia - San Sebastian, www.gaia.es/multilinguae [accessed 22 July 2004]). The following is an extract from the project home page:



**Universidade
Libera de Berlinu
Free University of
Berlin**

Departimentu de Filolozia
Romànica

**Universidade de
Colònia
University of
Cologne**

Protzessamentu de Datos
Linguísticos



**Limba e curtura de sa
Sardigna
Sardinian Language and
Culture**

The aims of the project are:

- to provide **information** about the Sardinian language
- to serve as an international forum for **discussing** issues concerning the language
- to **collect linguistic data** with the aid of the Sardinian speaking Internet community
- to **document** the language and its texts
- to **archive** and **analyse** the linguistic data retrieved (Multilinguae, Multimedia and Minority Languages International Congress, 8-9 November 2000, Donostia - San Sebastian, www.gaia.es/multilinguae [accessed 22 July 2004])

Mensching states that ‘ultimately, the Internet site serves to **reinforce the linguistic consciousness** of speakers and learners of the language. This goal is achieved, among others, by making Sardinian the language of the website itself and of the discussion forum’ (Multilinguae, Multimedia and Minority Languages International Congress, 8-9 November 2000, Donostia - San Sebastian, www.gaia.es/multilinguae [accessed 22 July 2004])

Discussion

There are 2500 messages, an average of 35 messages per week, and 150 subscribers to the list. Most of them are located in Sardinia but there are also Sardinian emigrants living all over the world. They all use Sardinian, which seems to be a natural consequence of the use of e-mail. There are discussions about Sardinian orthography.

Collection of linguistic data

The messages are all archived, and therefore the mailing list contributes to the documentation of the Sardinian language. They can be considered a huge corpus of rather spontaneously produced written Sardinian, the first corpus of its kind. Mensching’s group in Berlin has begun to evaluate the messages with respect to the various levels of the language system and its pragmatic use.

Documentation

Sardinian Text Database (STD)

This is a collection of texts classified according to the linguistic varieties and listed together with the names of the depositors.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the linguistic data is the linguistic analysis and the description of Sardinian. The aim is to proceed from a purely manual processing to the automatic processing of linguistic data.

It is interesting to note that only a minority of users of the website are Sardinians living abroad, who want to communicate with the Sardinians living in Sardinia. This means that the interest in the language is in only a few cases due to the feeling of homesickness or distance from the native land. According to Mensching, the reasons why this website attracts Sardinians living in Sardinia should be sought in the nature of electronic mail. Electronic mail represents a more spontaneous way of communicating than traditional mail. An electronic message is usually written in the working or leisure environment, without the need for paper and pen and it is sent by clicking on an icon, rather than by walking to the post-box. Moreover, the senders are aware that the electronic messages, once read, can be easily deleted. Therefore, the language used in the electronic messages is very similar to the *code parlé* (Mensching, 1999: 188). Mensching, therefore, claims that the medium of e-mail has an ‘orality effect’ on the users, who regard it as a medium for familiar communication. This would explain why the authors of e-mails choose to use Sardinian, without being asked to do so. However, Grimaldi and Remberger (www.spinfo.uni-koeln.de/mensch/grimaldi_remberger.html), even though they acknowledge the ‘orality effect’ of the medium of e-mail, give different reasons to justify the use of Sardinian in the electronic messages:

Probably the most important reason is simply the one that people saw their language being considered important enough to be used for an official website and even interesting enough for foreigners to learn: therefore, they feel that they could also overcome their lack of confidence and write in Sardinian themselves. (Grimaldi and Remberger, www.spinfo.uni-koeln.de/mensch/grimaldi_remberger.html [accessed 25 July 2004])

Grimaldi and Remberger quote one of the typical ‘first’ messages of sa-Limba, the mailing list of ‘Limba e Curtura de sa Sardigna’, showing which factors might act as a drive to use Sardinian in the electronic messages:

No isco dai cando est naschida custa mailing list, no isco mancu cantos semus. Ma sa curiosidade de iscriere in sardu est meda! [...] Cherzo ringraziare Guido chi m'ada dadu sa possibilitade de iscriere in sardu. Deo nolu feaddo in domo, con megus, babbu e mama, faeddan s'italianu, ma tra issos faeddana in sardu e gai, como, appo sa possibilitade de lu proare a iscriere. Mi dia piaghene ischire si mi leggide e si isbaglio medas cosas iscriendelu gai. (Ivana 23.01.99) (Grimaldi and Remberger, www.spinfo.uni-koeln.de/mensch/grimaldi_remberger.html [accessed 25 July 2004])

I don't know when this list was established and I don't even know how many we are. But the curiosity of writing in Sardinian is really high [...]. I would like to thank Guido for giving me the possibility of writing Sardinian. I don't speak it at home, my Dad and Mum speak just Italian with me, but they speak Sardinian to each other, and now I have the opportunity to learn how to write it. I would like to know, whether you're able to read my writing and whether you find some errors in my messages!

Another peculiarity of this mailing list is what Grimaldi and Remberger refer to as 'transdialectal communication'. This important characteristic might create the condition for the establishment and acceptance of a standard Sardinian:

There is another peculiarity of this mailing list, which should be mentioned. As has been said above, Sardinian is usually used in a relatively small local radius, in the villages, in the family, among friends and mainly for non-formal communication purposes. This is clearly not the case in SA-LIMBA.

In fact, most of the members of the list didn't know each other before SA-LIMBA started. They come from different parts of the island, some of them are emigrants living outside Sardinia. A small minority is not Sardinian at all, but learned Sardinian as a foreign language, sometimes only thanks to communication in the list. This means that the members of SA-LIMBA speak - and therefore write - very different varieties of Sardinian.

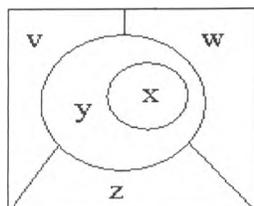
Nevertheless, this doesn't seem to be a serious obstacle for communication. Although there is no common standard and even no standardised orthography we found that speakers of different Sardinian dialects don't seem to have problems in understanding each other, at least in writing. "This contradicts the widespread opinion that Campidanian and Logudorian are mutually incomprehensible" (cf. Mensching: forthcoming).

Yet the participants on the list become of course aware of linguistic differences. There is a great wish to discuss the problems of standardisation and especially the problem of the missing standard orthography. The codification of a standard variety thus became a central theme of discussion between native speakers and several linguistic experts on the mailing list. It goes without saying that tackling these questions is indispensable for the long-term survival of a language. (www.spinfo.unikoeln.de/mensch/grimaldi_remberger [accessed 25 July 2004])

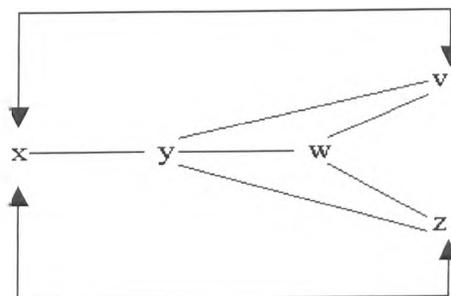
The Catalan sociolinguist, Lluís Aracil, has developed a model that could give further support to the argument that the Internet represents an efficient way of promoting lesser-used languages. According to Aracil (1983:181), one of the important

characteristics of the minority languages is the phenomenon of *interposici o*, which he illustrates in the following way:

a)



b)



X is the minority language (Sardinian), whereas *y*, *v*, *w*, and *z* are dominant languages like Italian, English, German, and French. Italian, English, German, and French (*y*, *v*, *w*, *z*) are in direct contact among themselves. Sardinian (*x*), however, is only in contact with Italian (*y*). This means that speakers of different languages know the Sardinian language and culture only through the Italian medium. This is very different from the situation represented by fig b., in which the users and the information they send and receive are in direct contact. The internet is structured in such a way that interposition is not present. Consequently, there can be a direct communication from everywhere with the minority languages, without the mediation of the dominant language.

‘Sa limba Sarda’ (www.limbasarda.it [accessed 25 July 2004]) gives useful information on the Sardinian grammar, orthographic system, and literature. The problem of achieving a unified norm in Sardinian is also discussed. The website is written in three languages: Sardinia, Italian, and English. ‘Sa limba Sarda in sa Rete de sas Retes’ (<http://www.limbasarda.org> [accessed 25 July 2004]), written entirely in Sardinian, is another website that talks about Sardinian language, news, activities, and Sardinian language editions.

The monthly newspaper *Sardynia News* (<http://www.crs4.it/sarnews/> [accessed 25 July 2004]) is another electronic attempt to spread the written form of a Sardinian variety, Campidanese. However, it has also an Italian and English version (Mensching, 1999: 181).



SA TIRINNINA (La Ragnatela)

Progettu de imprentadura fattu cun s'amparu de s'Unioni Europea e
s'Associazione Culturale "I Miconi" de Quartu Sant'Aleni



SARDYNIA News

Giornali mesili de lingua e de cultura de sa Sardigna

* Mes'e lampas 1997 *

Direttori Respensabili: Gino Melchiorre

The newspaper *L'Unione Sarda* also has an electronic version (www.unionesarda.it) and sometimes includes short articles in Sardinian, which, in this way, are made available at worldwide level.

The projects of the excavation of the archeological area in Barumini are published as a multilingual (including the Sardinian version) audiovisual electronic publication (www.vo.it/imedia/nuraxi/SARDO/sahompag.htm [accessed 4 July 2004]). The initial part of the home page and the text introducing the project follow (Mensingh, 1999: 181):



Cun su sustegnu de Sa Banca Cis

Su Nuraxi de Barumini

Su studiu de un'esemplu straordinariu de nuraxi scavau de prus de 40 annus, esaminian cun is medhus criticus e tecnicus de oi in di.

Custu programma est coment'e unu viaggiu a intr'e sa storia de Su Nuraxi de Barumini: una storia de spantu e una testimonianzia straordinaria de sa Sardigna preistorica. In is capitulus de custu programma, bosaterus s'heis a rendiri contu de s'abilidadadi de su populu nuragicu de costruiiri monumentus medas bortas mannus e complicaus; e heis a agatai su modu de respundiri a is tantis dimandas chi si faint asub'e is nuraxis e de sa genti chi dduus hiat fattus.

The publishing house Papiros has recently created a website written in Sardinian (www.papiros.com/ [accessed 4 July 2004]), where books and information on the

Sardinian language can be viewed. The website includes a forum for exchanging ideas and information (Mensinging: 1999, 181):



The extracts of some books published by Papiros can be read online. Another book available in an electronic version is *Cantos e contos de Aritzo* by Tore Curreli, Carlo Pili, Pino Carboni, and Giuseppe Contu (www.unica.it/well-being/cantosecontos/index.html). Private initiatives to write electronic texts in Sardinian are still very few. However, Ivan Marcialis has created a personal page in cagliaritano (<http://alberti.crs4.it/%7Eciano/ivansar.html> [accessed 25 July 2004]). His interest in the Sardinian language goes even further, since he has made available the poetry of Melchiorre Murenu in an electronic version (<http://alberti.crs4.it/%7Eciano/MURENU/home.html>). Ubaldo Porcheddu is preparing a series of ancient and modern texts, and Andrea, Marco and Gianni Atzori in Oristano offer one illustrated page on the *nuraghi* in English, Italian, Spanish and Sardinian (Mensinging: 1999: 182):

IS NURAGHIS DE SARDIGNA

Su primu sinnai connotu de sa preistoria sarda est de seguru su Nuraghi, testimongiu antigu de fraigamurus mannus e capatzis.

Sa forma a imbudu a fundu in susu at permitiu de ponni in pei is crastus mannus de paris-terra fintzas a susu ; pentzai ki medas passant is 20 metrus de artaria. Sa forma e is logus innui funti postus iant a fai pentzai ki si tratit de operas de difesa, ma iscavus de custus urtimus annus si faint crei ki is nuraghis fessint destinaus puru a costumantzas religiosas.

Su mundu nuragicu imbussat casi 1000 annus; de su XVII seculu a.C. a su VII a.C. Si nd'agatat casi 8000 sprantzias in totu sa Sardigna, ma sceti pagus funt postus in contu de essi bistus e beni apretzias, ponendi a dispositzioni guidas po is istrangius: mentuaus su nuraghe Losa (Abbasanta), su Nuraxi a Barumini, Santu Antine a Torralba e Arrubiu a Orroli.

Su mundu nuragicu est connotu po su brunzu ki scidiant manigiai comentis amostant is "bronzetus", ki si faint bii: gherreris, animais, barkitas e medas cosas de cussus tempus.

Me in is museus de Casteddu e Sassari si ndi podit bii una bella ceddà. (<http://members.tripod.com/~verdi1/nurs.htm> [accessed 25 July 2004])

6.2.2 Regional legislation

In 1997, the regional law 26 ‘Promozione e valorizzazione della cultura e della lingua della Sardegna’ was approved by the Consiglio della Regione Autonoma in Sardinia, with the aim of promoting and upgrading the culture and the language of Sardinia. Article 1 states that ‘l’identità linguistica e culturale della Sardegna è un bene primario da valorizzare’. Moreover, article 2 states that ‘la regione tutela e valorizza la lingua sarda, riconoscendole pari dignità rispetto alla lingua italiana’. This thus preceded the national law 482 of 1999, which guarantees the right of adopting special measures to the Sardinian people and the other minority groups living in the Italian territory, previously excluded from protection.

However, before the formulation of legislation at regional and national level, in 1991, in the town of Goni, the first *delibera* (resolution) in Sardinian was written. The article, entitled ‘A Goni nel 1991, prima delibera in lingua sarda’ (Ilario Delussu, *L’Unione Sarda*, 31 May 2000, <http://www.unionesarda.it/unione/2000/31-05-00/LETTERE/LET01/A04.html>) states that, contrary to what is commonly believed, the merit of the first *delibera* in Sardinian cannot be given to the town of Quartu, but to the town of Goni. In Goni, in fact, the first *delibera* of the Consiglio Comunale n. 81 was written on 30 October 1991, with the title ‘Esamini de sa kistioni de sa lingua in su statutu comunali de Goni’. All the oral and written interventions were carried out in Sardinian. The initiative was seen as an act of defence of the Sardinian language, which had been previously forbidden in the meetings of the local council by the Comitato regionale di controllo. In 1991, there was no regional or national legislation protecting the Sardinian language, except for article 6 of the Italian Constitution. The *delibera* ended in this way:

SU CUNSILLI COMUNALI - intendius is arrexonamentus de su sindigu e de is cunsilleris; - biu su provedimentu de su Coreco de annullamentu de su statutu fatu in dia de su 17.10.91 prot. 1928-1306-1334/1/1991; - bia s’importantzia de difendi su deretu e sa lingua sarda a essi arriconnota lingua de sa comunidadi de Goni TOTU PARIS DELIBERAT - de ‘onai incarrigu a sa Giunta po ricurri a su Tar contras su provedimentu de annullamentu de su statutu fatu de su Coreco; - de ‘onai i’ dimissionis ki no s’arrennescit a fai aprovai su statudu po intreu diaici cumenti esti steti sterriu e aprovalu de su cunsillu cumunali.

The final part of the *delibera* is a statement about the importance of defending the Sardinian language by taking actions against the decision of the Comitato regionale di controllo and by appealing to the Tar (Tribunale amministrativo regionale). After the approval of law 482 in 1999, in Quartu Sant'Elena, the bill for the preservation of the Sardinian language was written. The *delibera (detzididura)*, dated 27 March 2000, was written in Campidanese, the Southern variety of Sardinian. This was the first time since the Sardegna Giudicale of approximately one thousand years ago, that an administrative decree was issued in the local variety. At that time, Sardinia was divided into four independent areas, *giudicati*, which were ruled by the *Giudici*. The first written records of Sardinian date back to 1070-80 for Campidanese, *Carta Volgare del Giudice Torchitorio*, and to 1080-85 for Logudorese, *Privilegio Logudorese* (Bolognesi, 1998: 2). The *detzididura* represents an important milestone, achieved by the s' Assessorau a sa Limba Sarda. The main objective of the Assessorato, which is a new initiative undertaken by the mayor of the town of Quartu, is the promotion of the Sardinian language and identity. This is stated by the 'assessore alla lingua' Elena Ledda, the popular Sardinian folk singer: 'Per noi si tratta del coronamento di un sogno perché volevamo dimostrare l'estrema duttilità del sardo ad essere impiegato come lingua ufficiale nella pubblica amministrazione' ('Prima delibera scritta in sardo non accadeva da 800 anni', *La Repubblica*, 23 April 2000). One of the policies of the Assessorato is to expand the functions of Sardinian in society and to remove the common belief that Sardinian is a linguistic code unable to perform the functions of modern society.

È per questo motivo che sa 'Detzididura' è stata scritta in un Sardo Meridionale letterario e colto, in grado di esprimere con competenza e precisione i delicati concetti che un atto giuridico ufficiale deve necessariamente avere, ottemperando così alla prescrizione legislativa rivolta alla tutela ed ufficializzazione delle Lingue delle minoranze identitarie, e non delle infinite varianti dialettali che, splendide e preziose nelle relazioni personali e familiari, si possono rivelare inadeguate ad un loro uso ufficiale, legislativo e giuridico. Gli strumenti tecnici: vocabolari, grammatiche, glossari, testi storici e letterari ci sono e devono essere potenziati, ma devono essere usati con competenza, pratica e la necessaria dose di umiltà ed impegno, senza pretendere che da un giorno all'altro, una lingua confinata per secoli nell'oralità, si doti magicamente di tutte quelle raffinatezze espressive che altre lingue scritte hanno avuto modo di esprimere nel loro lento processo di ufficializzazione. (<http://www.fontesarda.it/quartu2/pages/bimpsard.htm> [accessed 10 April 2004])

The comune of Quartu Sant'Elena is very proud of its initiatives to promote Campidanese, the southern variety of Sardinian. The main ones are:

- the possibility, stated in the *Statuto Comunale*, to use Sardinian in the meetings of the municipal council
- the production of official documents in Sardinian, following the approval of regional law 26 and national law 482
- a musical school with traditional Sardinian instruments and a school of singing and improvised poetry in Campidanese
- a school of Sardinian language
- the endorsement of conferences on the Sardinian language, such as 'L'identità socioculturale della Sardegna nel prossimo millennio', in 1997. (<http://www.fontesarda.it/quartu2/pages/bimpsard.htm> [accessed 10 April 2004])

It should be mentioned that Quartu Sant'Elena was previously part of the city of Cagliari and only recently has become an independent *comune*. As mentioned above, and as will appear in the following sections, the town is very active in the promotion of Campidanese. Therefore, it may well be that the town perceives its independence from the capital of Sardinia, Cagliari, as connected to its battle for the promotion of Sardinian. Moreover, the fact that Campidanese is so fiercely defended by the inhabitants of Quartu, makes it difficult to believe that the acceptance of a unified linguistic norm in Sardinian will come about without taking into account, in the process of standardization, the Campidanese variety.

6.2.3 Attempts to create a standard

The raising of a specific variety to the status of language, and the expansion of its functions into more formal and official contexts, opens the debate about the creation of a standard. The Sardinian language is an abstract concept. The linguistic reality in Sardinian is fragmentation. There are at least four main varieties spoken in Sardinia: Logudorese, Campidanese, Gallurese, and Sassarese. Therefore, many linguists and political authorities have raised the question of which variety should be promoted to the rank of standard. There are, so far, three main ways of conceiving a solution to the problem. The first would be to create a unified Sardinian language from the existing varieties. The second solution is to make the Logudorese variety the official language of Sardinia, on the grounds that it boasts an important literary tradition.

The third would be the polynomic approach, according to which two standard varieties would co-exist.

As far as the first solution is concerned, Cristina Lavinio (1980: 155) mentions the 'Proposte di ortografia sarda unificata' by Enzo Espa, Antonio Sanna, and Massimo Pittau. Pittau (1975: 47), states his objective of creating a *Lingua sarda unificata*. According to Pittau, a *koinè* should be created by a group of experts, who need to take into account the two main Sardinian varieties, Logudorese and Campidanese, in order to achieve a unified language in Sardinia. Moreover, the first step for the creation of a *koinè* should have, as its starting point, the orthographical system, since it is the most noticeable mark of a distinct language.

Regarding the second solution, in 2001, the Assessore della Pubblica Istruzione, Pasquale Onida, on the advice of a group of experts, approved the motion of promoting the Logudorese-Nuorese linguistic variety to the status of official language of Sardinia, which should be introduced in public administration and later in the educational curriculum. This solution was described in the article 'Unificare la lingua sarda è un genocidio culturale' as a 'unificazione forzata della lingua sarda' (*La Nuova Sardegna*, 12 August 2001). An intervention by the highest regional institutions was required by the ten components of the 'Comitato per la tutela e la valorizzazione di tutte le varianti della lingua sarda'. Moreover, a petition was presented by the Comitato, against the document 'Sa Limba Sarda Unificada'. The solution would lead to the gradual disappearance of the other varieties and their local cultures, starting from the one with the highest number of speakers: Campidanese. The attempt to promote the Logudorese-Nuorese linguistic variety to the status of standard has been strongly opposed by the Comitato. The standardization of Sardinian is regarded as 'un vero e proprio genocidio culturale a danno dei tre quarti della popolazione della Sardegna, in particolare dei suoi abitanti che parlano il campidanese nelle sue molteplici connotazioni'(ibid.). The standardization of the Logudorese-Nuorese linguistic variety would mean that the Sardinians speaking a different variety would be deprived of their mother tongue:

Privare della lingua qualcuno significa togliergli la propria cultura e ridurla a un ruolo marginale, dialettale e sub-dialettale. Dopo che per anni abbiamo condotto battaglie non sempre facili contro la colonizzazione della Sardegna sul piano economico e culturale ad opera del governo centrale, oggi ci troviamo a dover subire un colonialismo linguistico-culturale da parte di una minoranza di Sardi a danno della maggioranza degli abitanti dell'isola, cui si vorrebbe 'tagliare' la lingua proprio così come hanno fatto fino ad oggi i glottofagi italiani. (ibid.)

Sanna analyses the current linguistic situation in Sardinia and describes the attempt to create a standard variety, which should be imposed on speakers of other varieties, in this way:

La situazione linguistica della Sardegna che abbiamo descritto, risulta così frazionata, allo stato attuale, in almeno quattro koinai, più tre gruppi isolati. In queste condizioni è da chiedersi se sia possibile realizzare una koiné che dia una coscienza linguistica unitaria ai sardi, come si auspica, o se questa non sia, allo stato delle cose, una generosa illusione. (Sanna, 1980: 124)

As for the third solution, that is of the polynomic approach, Blasco Ferrer (1986) is in its favour. He argues that two standard varieties, in this case Logudorese and Campidanese, should co-exist. In *La lingua sarda contemporanea. Grammatica del logudorese e campidanese*, Blasco Ferrer defines his objective of contributing to the creation of a standard norm, characterized by the presence of two main varieties. He justifies his choice in the following way:

Ogni attuazione di un programma politico-giuridico inteso a tutelare e a diffondere la lingua minoritaria deve basarsi su una scelta eclettica, sull'individuazione di un sistema linguistico che deve rappresentare adeguatamente la comunità. L'assenza di questa condizione può avere effetti deleteri per il futuro della lingua minoritaria. (1986:30)

Despite the strong opposition against the proposal to make the Logudorese variety the official language of Sardinia, the recent debates on the creation of a standard norm in Sardinia, which have been discussed in this section, have not considered the polynomic approach as a possible solution to the issue of the lack of a standard variety.

In the conference 'L'identità socioculturale della Sardegna nel prossimo millennio', held in Quartu Sant'Elena in 1997, Bolognesi, in his paper 'Per un approccio sincronico alla linguistica e alla standardizzazione del sardo', acknowledges that the solutions so far proposed to achieve a unitary Sardinian are

not satisfactory. He states that 'quello che conta è non ripercorrere le strade antiquate del monolinguismo esasperato e del prescrittivismismo scolastico' (Bolognesi, 1999: 73). Bolognesi suggests that a standard Sardinian should exist only in the written form. However, in this standard Sardinian, different forms should coexist, without imposing one on the other. He gives the example of the masculine form of the definite article in Logudorese, 'sos', and the Campidanese, 'is'. In his opinion, both forms should be accepted. Moreover, he stresses that the Sardinian varieties are not so different as is commonly believed, and that a standard form should strengthen the similarities. The Sardinian varieties should, however, still be used in oral contexts.

Although Bolognesi tries to find realistic solution to the problem, there are still problems to address. Bolognesi does not take into account the other varieties spoken in Sardinia, Gallurese, and Sassarese. Moreover, it is difficult to understand how different forms can coexist. Bolognesi gives the example of the two masculine definite articles in Italian 'lo' and 'il'. However, in Italian, the choice between them is not arbitrary but dictated by phonetic rules. The other issue to consider is how a variable norm like this would work regarding publications. In the standardization of Sardinian consideration should thus be given to the achievement of realistic solutions. Furthermore, the people's views in the decision-making process should be seriously taken into consideration, since the will of the people affected by these decisions will determine the course of future events.

6.2.4 Competitions

Sanna (1980: 124-25) writes that a poetic *koiné* based on the Logudorese and Nuorese varieties already exists in Sardinia. The phenomenon started in the fifteenth century, when the *cantori popolari* from Nuoro used the Logudorese variety in their compositions, since it was the prestigious literary language. Presently, the Logudorese variety is also used by the Campidanese and, to a lesser extent, by the Galluresi poets.

Therefore, thanks to the talent of the *cantori popolari*, a kind of literary *koiné* has been achieved in Sardinia and this could generate the conditions for the creation and the establishment of a standard variety. Moreover, poetry competitions are experiencing an unprecedented vitality and are very popular amongst the younger

generations. However, Sanna questions whether it is really desirable to achieve this linguistic unity in Sardinia, at the expense of the other varieties spoken in the island. The participants of the Premio letterario 'Città di Ozieri', which is one of the oldest and most popular literary competitions in Sardinia, have been invited to compose in their mother tongue. The revaluation of the different varieties spoken in Sardinia has been regarded as necessary 'per evitare ogni forma di acculturazione interna, da parte di un dialetto, sia pure di maggior prestigio, sugli altri' (Sanna, 1980: 124-25). Sanna concludes his argument by strongly criticizing the present attempts to achieve linguistic unity in Sardinia:

Perciò riteniamo inaccettabili le proposte che sono state avanzate di imporre il logudorese, considerato la vera lingua sarda, come varietà da studiare in tutte le scuole dell'Isola, per realizzare l'unità. Così come riteniamo irrealizzabile e antistorica la creazione di una *koiné* artificiale realizzata con una miscelazione di elementi di vari dialetti (Sanna, 1980: 124-25).

6.2.5 *The teaching of the language*

The seventies saw the first demands for the introduction of Sardinian in education. Many local councils voted in favour of the teaching of Sardinian in schools (Faticoni, 1999-2000: [eiha.crs4.it cultura/opere-/Word/teatro/CAP5.DOC](http://eiha.crs4.it/cultura/opere-/Word/teatro/CAP5.DOC) [accessed 25 July 2004]). An interesting initiative of those years was that of a lecturer in chemistry in the University of Sassari, who lectured to his students in the Sassarese variety (Lavinio, 1980: 155).

In February 1971, a motion was presented to the University of Cagliari, in which it was asked that, in compulsory education, the Sardinian language should be used, as a starting point, for the teaching of the Italian language (Sanna, 1980: 128). This contrastive-comparative method would have two positive effects: the safeguarding of the Sardinian language and identity and a better acquisition of the Italian language. Moreover, this method would create the conditions to widen linguistic skills in both languages and for a constructive interaction between the two languages. The motion was positive in many ways, since it promoted an intelligent approach for the teaching of the national language that did not stigmatize the mother tongue of the pupils. There would, however, have been practical issues, difficult to resolve: the need to employ qualified and experienced staff, the presence of pupils who do not share the same mother tongue, etc.

Regarding the current situation concerning the introduction of Sardinian in state schools, there is still a lack of a systematic and structured approach, despite the existence of regional and national legislation allowing the teaching of Sardinian in state schools. However, 'Deo e su mundu' (I and the world), is a project for the teaching of Sardinian in nursery, primary, and middle schools (Franca Rita Porcu, 'Deo e su mundu. Entra a scuola la lingua sarda parlata in casa', 11 January 2002, <http://www.unionesarda.it/unione/2002/11-01-02/CULTURA/CLT01/A04.html> [accessed 10 April 2004]). This is an initiative of the Centro di ricerca nuorese and consists of the publication of teaching materials for teachers of nursery, primary, and middle schools. The initiative is regarded as particularly useful, since there are no regional programmes for the teaching of the Sardinian language. In 1995-96 and 1996-97, the project was tried out in ten communes of the province of Nuoro and received financial support from the European Commission (Pinna Catte, 1999: 77). Maria Teresa Pinna Catte, the author of the project, in the article 'Deo e su mundu. Entra a scuola la lingua sarda parlata in casa', states that the ultimate aim of the project is not only the teaching of Sardinian but the general education of the child: 'Se la scuola non accoglie e valorizza la lingua-cultura di cui il bambino è portatore, come può egli formarsi un'immagine positiva di sé e della comunità in cui cresce?'. The local varieties are introduced in schools with the aim of making the children aware of the differences and similarities between their mother tongue and their second language. The sardophone children are, in this way, not penalized but encouraged to appreciate their local culture and to compare it with others.

Another important initiative for the teaching of Sardinian has been organized by the Assessorato alla Lingua Sarda of Quartu Sant'Elena. The course started in 1999, following the approval of regional law 26, and received part of the funding from the European Union. Approximately four hundred people registered for the course. S'Iscola de Sardu was been advertised in the local media and the phone line s'Ofitziu pro sa Limba Sarda was installed. All the information on the courses and on the cultural activities in Quartu was released in Campidanese Sardinian. However, in the year 2000, the lack of regional and European fundings limited the number of places available to one hundred and fifty. The objective of the courses is explained in one of the electronic pages of the website of Quartu:

La Casa sarà aperta tutti i pomeriggi per promuovere e favorire incontri e discussioni su temi di interesse per la nostra lingua e cultura. Oltre a lezioni di grammatica, sintassi, scrittura e lettura, si parlerà di letteratura, poesia, musica, di tradizioni popolari e storia sarda; si potrà discutere inoltre dell'utilizzo della lingua sarda nella vita pubblica e moderna: Scuola, Università, Istituzioni, e nei mass-media compreso Internet. Si vuole creare dunque, un luogo dove sia possibile ascoltare, scrivere e parlare con gli altri in sardo. (<http://www.fontesarda.it/quartu2/pages/bimpsard.htm> [accessed 10 April 2004])

Regarding the type of people who attend the courses, their age varies, from children who are still in primary education to people in their eighties. The majority are either graduates or *diplomati* (in possession of the Italian equivalent of 'A' levels). Most of them live in Cagliari, Quartu, and nearby villages. However, there are also university students, 'nuoresi, sassaresi e logudoresi interessati ad ampliare la loro conoscenza linguistica con robuste lezioni nella variante meridionale della lingua sarda' (<http://www.fontesarda.it/quartu2/pages/bimpsard.htm> [accessed 10 April 2004]). Moreover, there is also a considerable number of primary school teachers who, in agreement with the parents, would like to introduce Sardinian at school. According to the organizers of the course, the main motivation to register is the desire to gain confidence in what the people regard as a vital element of their cultural heritage, the local language:

La motivazione più diffusa, per la scelta di iscriversi ad una scuola come la nostra (pagando tra l'altro una quota di iscrizione) è quella di riappropriarsi di un patrimonio linguistico cui sentono appartenere nel profondo, ma che, specialmente per i residenti in aree urbane, hanno sempre avuto difficoltà ad esprimere per l'invasivo e prepotente monolinguisimo italiano imposto dalla scuola, dalla televisione e dalle istituzioni che, generando un perverso mix di ignoranza e sottomissione psicologica, spinse, a partire dagli anni '60, molti genitori sardofoni ad evitare ed addirittura proibire ai figli l'uso della lingua convinti che questo li avrebbe salvati dalla povertà e dal precariato economico. (<http://www.fontesarda.it/quartu2/pages/bimpsard.htm> [accessed 10 April 2004])

6.2.6 *The Press*

In 1973, the bilingual periodical 'Su populu sardu' was founded by Mario and Elisabetta Carboni. In 1974, the editorial office moved from Oristano to Nuoro. In the same year, the activities of the periodical were linked with those of the first bilingual radio channel, Radiu Supramonte-Sa oghe de sa Sardigna. In those years, the periodical and the radio channel represented two important reference points for

separatist political movements. However, the articles published in ‘Su populu sardu’ are regarded by Cristina Lavinio as an artificial experiment and described as a mechanical transposition of an Italian text (Lavinio, 1980: 155). The experience of the radio channel and of the periodical ended in 1982. However, this date does not represent the end of the periodical, since, the movement ‘Su populu sardu’ has advertised, in its own website, the restoration of the periodical:

Nel 2000 nascerà Su Populu Sardu come rivista Sardista di politica e cultura multimediale indipendentista moderno e coraggioso, diffuso in Sardegna e nell'emigrazione sarda con sedi, sezioni militanti, corrispondenti e sostenitori in ogni comune dell'Isola e nelle città italiane ed europee. (web.tiscali.it/SuPopuluSardu/[accessed 10 April 2004])

The newspaper *L'Obiettivo*, the daily paper of Quartu, publishes articles in Sardinian.

Cristina Lavinio has, however, rather cynical views on this type of initiative:

In realtà si tratta di iniziative isolate e portate avanti da pochi intellettuali, o comunque da gruppi estremamente esigui e privi di un seguito reale, il cui ‘sardo’ usato per parlare di politica o di chimica rischia di essere compreso solo da chi possieda una notevole conoscenza del linguaggio speciale usato per affrontare questi argomenti anche in italiano. (Lavinio, 1980: 155-56)

6.2.7 *Literary production and studies on the language*

This section looks briefly at earlier and contemporary studies on the language and literary production in Sardinian. Emanuele Pili (1880-1951), Luisu Matta (1851-1913), and Efsio Vincenzo Melis (late nineteenth/twentieth century) used the Campidanese variety in early twentieth-century comedies. In *Ziu Paddori* (1919), Melis exploited the linguistic transition from Sardinian into Italian. In the comedy, a dialectophone father and his bilingual son misunderstand each other over the words *marde* (pig) and *madre* (mother) (Haller, 1999: 327). As for narrative texts, the novels by Benvenuto Lobina (1914-1993) and Michelangelo Pira (1928-1980) represent an attempt to defend Sardinian from its gradual decline in form and use (Haller, 1999: 327). Lobina wrote a historical novel *Po cantu a Biddanoa* (1987) in a lyrical language based on Campidanese. *Sos sinnos*, the incomplete novel by Pira, composed between 1974 and 1980 in the Nuorese variety of Bitti, represents an attempt at recovering the rustic origins of his island through its language (Haller, 1999: 327-28).

Regarding linguistic studies on Sardinian, Pietro Casu (1878-1954) translated *Sa Divina Comedia de Dante in limba sarda* in 1929 and wrote *Vocabulariu sardu-italianu*. Among more recent linguistic works there are: *La lingua sarda* by Max Leopold Wagner, *Storia linguistica della Sardegna* (1984) by Edoardo Blasco Ferrer, *La lingua sarda contemporanea: Grammatica del logudorese e del campidanese* (1986) by the same author, and *Grammatica del sardo logudorese. Con una proposta ortografica, elementi di metrica e un glossario* (1994) by Francesco Corda. Several dictionaries have been produced. The *Vocabolario sardo-italiano e italiano-sardo* by Giovanni Spano was written in 1851-52. Later on, Wagner compiled a *Dizionario etimologico sardo* (1960-6). More recent dictionaries are Vito Lonza's *Vocabolario sassarese-italiano* (1980) and *Vocabolario italiano-sassarese antico e moderno* (1989), *Vocabolario italiano-sardo nuorese* by Luigi Farina (1989), and the *Vocabolario italiano-gallurese* by Mario Sardo (1994). Another contemporary study on the Sardinian language is the Holland Institute of Generative Linguistics dissertation *The Phonology of Campidanian Sardinian: A Unitary Account of a Self-organizing* by Roberto Bolognesi (1998). This provides a theoretical account of the phonological system of Southern Sardinian.

In October 2001, Renata Puddu, a resident of Quartu, was a final-year student in the Department of Romance Languages at the university of Freiburg and was writing a thesis on the standardization and official use of Sardinian in contemporary society. She was interviewed by *L'Obiettivo* by Roberto Spano (4 October 2001) and justified her choice to study in Germany in this way: 'volevo approfondire lo studio della lingua sarda ma, per assurdo, qui in Sardegna avrei avuto molto più difficoltà'. Puddu gave the following reason for the interest shown abroad towards the Sardinian language: 'in tutta l'Europa ed in Germania in particolare, la lingua sarda è tenuta in grandissimo conto dagli studiosi, che la utilizzano come base storica e scientifica per lo studio comparato delle lingue'. In her interview, she talks about Wagner, the German linguist, who devoted his life to the study of Sardinian, praises the initiatives undertaken by the town of Quartu to promote Sardinian, and criticizes the lack of commitment in the nearby city of Cagliari:

Quando in questi giorni sono andata al Comune per cercare materiali per la tesi, Giuseppe Corongiu, responsabile de s'Ofitziu po sa Limba Sarda, oltre ad un gran numero di documenti ufficiali prodotti dall'Amministrazione, mi ha messo a disposizione la raccolta di tutti gli articoli e materiali pubblicati in sardo dall'Obiettivo, il quotidiano di Quartu. Sono rimasta davvero sorpresa per la qualità degli interventi, che mi saranno molto utili nel lavoro di documentazione. Lo stesso non posso dire dei pezzi pubblicati sul quotidiano di Cagliari.

Large-scale sociolinguistic surveys on Sardinian are very limited. The most recent publication is 'La lingua sarda: l'identità culturale della Sardegna nel prossimo millennio. Quartu Sant'Elena, 9-10 maggio 1997', edited by Bolognesi and Helsloot (1999). However, this work does not provide linguistic data on the use of Sardinian in society or on the attitudes of people toward their regional variety. It includes interesting papers on the importance of creating a unifying norm in Sardinia, on the use of Sardinian on the internet, and linguistic descriptions of some Sardinian varieties. It will be necessary, in future, to assess the vitality of the language in Sardinia and to consider the views of the people on the issues of standardization and the expansion of the functions of Sardinian in contemporary society.

6.2.8 Political parties

The two main political parties in Sardinia are the Partito Sardo d'Azione and Sardigna Natzione. While the first has more moderate views about Sardinian autonomy and acknowledges that it should not be achieved in conflict with the recognition that Sardinia is an Italian region, Sardigna Natzione describes itself more radically as 'un movimento politico indipendentista impegnato in una lotta di liberazione nazionale della propria patria, la Sardegna' (La delegazione di Sardigna Natzione, 'Per la costruzione dell'Europa dei popoli e delle nazioni: <http://web.tiscali.it/sardignanatzione/attivida1.htm> [accessed 25 July 2004]).

The history of Sardigna Natzione dates back to the seventies. In those years, different political movements, which were in favour of the self-determination of Sardinia, were created. The most important movement was Su Populu Sardu, with the slogan Sardigna=Colonia. In the eighties, part of the members of Su Populu Sardu joined the Partito Sardo d'Azione. Angelo Caria, ex-leader of Su Populu Sardu, created the Independence Sardinian Party, Sardigna Natzione. The following quotation shows the aims and objectives of this independence party:

Chiusa l'esperienza di Su Populu Sardu, parte del quale confluì nel PSd'Az, Angelo Caria, ex leader di S.P.S fondò il Partidu Sardu Independentista. Il partidu sardu independentista, costituito da patrioti che hanno giurato fedeltà alla patria sarda, volendo costruire una casa comune per tutti i nazionalisti sardi, superando la distinzione tra destra, sinistra e centro, insieme ad altri movimenti, sardisti, federalisti e nazionalisti ha dato vita alla meravigliosa esperienza di SARDIGNA NATZIONE. (La delegazione di Sardigna Natzione, 'Per la costruzione dell'Europa dei popoli e delle nazioni: <http://web.tiscali.it/sardignanatzione/attivida1.htm>, [accessed 25 July 2004])

Sardigna Natzione has also used the language issue to express its demands for political autonomy. An article on its website refers to the 'azione non violenta' of a group of militants of the party. In 1997, some party members occupied the power station of Fiume Santo, as a form of protest against the disparity of the cost of energy between Sardinia and the other regions of Italy, in which methane is used. The occupiers of the power station had to be prosecuted. They demanded the right to express themselves in Sardinian during the trial. The tribunal approved their request, on the 30 November 2000. An extract from the article reporting the event is:

COMUNICATO STAMPA

22 FEBBRAIO ALLE 9.30 A SASSARI PROCESSO AL COMMANDO AMSICORA PER L'OCCUPAZIONE DELLA CENTRALE DI FIUME SANTO. GLI IMPUTATI HANNO CHIESTO DI ESPRIMERSI IN SARDO ED IL TRIBUNALE IL 30/11/2000 HA ACCOLTO LA RICHIESTA.

Gli imputati, che nella seduta processuale del 30/11/2000 hanno visto riconosciuto il loro diritto ad esprimersi sardo, non solo deporranno esclusivamente in lingua sarda ma chiederanno anche che nella stessa lingua vengano scritti i verbali. In questo modo S.N. intende cogliere l'occasione per porre un'altro importante problema che interessa il popolo sardo, quello della lingua e dell'applicazione della legge statale n. 482 e regionale n. 26 e della necessità di adottare uno standard linguistico, che senza voler togliere niente alle varianti locali, permetta di stilare atti ufficiali validi in tutta la nazione sarda. (Bustiano Cumpostu: <http://web.tiscali.it/sardignanatzione/attividades1.htm> [accessed 25 July 2004])

6.3 Sicilian

The second part of the chapter will discuss the initiatives undertaken to promote the use of Sicilian.

6.3.1 Websites

The website 'U Situ Web Pa Valurizzazioni i Prumuzioni du Sicilianu' (<http://www.linguasiciliana.org/> [accessed 24 July 2004]) represents an important

initiative to safeguard and promote Sicilian. The main objectives of the website are listed on the home page and concern the safeguarding of all the varieties of Sicilian spoken in Sicily; the importance of giving legal status to Sicilian; the expansion of its use in the schools, administration, and the media; the creation of a forum for discussions on the Sicilian language between Sicilians living in Italy and abroad; the creation of a corpus of data including articles, books, research, literature, art, and music in Sicilian; the institution of a committee of cultural associations involved in the issue of introducing Sicilian in education; the formulation of a regional bill for the safeguarding of Sicilian. The website is not linked to any specific political party and currently has 290 members. Its ambition is to provide an approach towards the promotion of Sicilian, different from the exclusive and elitist position of the Centro filologico e linguistico siciliano, and also from the positions of those emphasizing only the folkloric aspect of the language. The ultimate aim should be the use of Sicilian in everyday written contexts:

Lo scopo principale del Forum è quello innanzitutto di posizionarsi al centro di due forme di 'valorizzazione' della nostra lingua: quella 'gessata' effettuata da parte dei centri di ricerca universitari (vedi Centro Filologico e linguistico siciliano), e quella che valorizza solo il lato 'folkloristico' della nostra lingua. Il nostro scopo è quello di rafforzare l'idea dell'utilizzo del siciliano scritto nella 'quotidianità', un concetto poco radicato tra di noi siciliani. Infatti nonostante il siciliano sia una lingua largamente 'parlata' tra la popolazione, il suo utilizzo scritto è limitato fortemente al campo poetico. Con questo non voglio affermare che centri universitari non facciano il loro lavoro. Anzi, lo fanno eccome e in maniera dignitosa. Ma la nostra lingua non può essere solo studiata come si studia un 'fossile'. La nostra è una lingua viva e come tale deve essere preservata! L'obiettivo è quello di stimolare la modifica di un atteggiamento negativo che è soprattutto il frutto di una ignoranza della conoscenza della propria lingua e della cultura della propria terra.

The electronic page 'Comu ni poi ajutari' is involved in the following attempts to use Sicilian in written and formal contexts:

- Traducennu 'The Universal declaration of linguistic rights' in sicilianu
- Traducennu u cursu di sicilianu in tedescu
- Traducennu a Dichiarazioni universali pi diritti di cristiani in sicilianu
- Cullaburannu cu nuatri pi fari nasciri na sizioni di musica siciliana o cucina in sicilianu
- Traducennu libbra classici in sicilianu.
- scrivennu ricinzioni di libbra o firm siciliani

6.3.2 Regional legislation

Regarding regional legislation to promote Sicilian, the only existing regional law is regional law 85 (1981), entitled ‘Provvedimenti intesi a favorire lo studio del dialetto siciliano e delle lingue delle minoranze etniche nelle scuole dell'Isola e norme di carattere finanziario’. Article 1 concerns the introduction of Sicilian in schools and institutes willing to include the teaching of the local language and history in the current curriculum. Article 2 concerns the teaching of Sicilian to adults, and article 5 promotes teacher training courses. The three articles are:

ARTICOLO 1

Nel quadro delle iniziative di promozione culturale e di educazione permanente, la Regione, al fine di promuovere lo studio e la conoscenza del dialetto siciliano da parte degli studenti e dei cittadini, interviene in favore delle scuole e degli istituti d'istruzione di ogni ordine e grado aventi sede nel territorio regionale, che intendano realizzare, con le modalità previste dalla vigente normativa statale, attività integrative volte alla introduzione dello studio del dialetto ed all'approfondimento dei fatti linguistici, storici, ad esso connessi.

ARTICOLO 2

Gli interventi di cui alla presente legge sono altresì destinati a favore delle istituzioni scolastiche di ogni ordine e grado funzionanti in Sicilia che programmino attività di educazione degli adulti finalizzate allo studio ed alla conoscenza del dialetto siciliano.

ARTICOLO 5

L'Assessore regionale per i beni culturali ed ambientali e per la pubblica istruzione istituisce direttamente o promuove, mediante apposita convenzione con istituti universitari dell'Isola e con il Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani, corsi di aggiornamento culturale sulla materia del dialetto siciliano.

Giuseppe Gulino (1986: 213) reports the objective of this law as stated by the Onorevole Luciano Ordile, assessore regionale pro tempore dei beni culturali, ambientali, e della pubblica istruzione, who presented the law:

[...] far riconquistare ai nostri giovani e ai nostri cittadini la conoscenza e la consapevolezza critica delle proprie radici, non per isolarli nel ghetto di uno sterile e vieto campanilismo fuori della storia, ma perché, riappropriatisi della loro specifica identità, più consapevolmente ed orgogliosamente si inseriscano nella comunità nazionale e mondiale.

It is interesting to note that in this law the word ‘dialect’ is used to refer to Sicilian. However, the status of dialect does not exclude the promotion of Sicilian. Nevertheless, Gulino (1986: 215) stated that this law had not achieved the expected

results and that ‘lo studio del dialetto siciliano nella scuola dell’obbligo è rimasto una semplice utopia’. He gives three main reasons to explain this failure:

- the study of the Sicilian dialect is part of the extra-curricular activities. In Sicily, very few schools have the resources to provide this type of activity
- the lack of specific teaching material
- the lack of qualified teachers.

The following section, however, will show that there have been recent attempts to introduce the study of Sicilian in schools. This suggests that the application of law 85 is still possible in contemporary society and that the promotion of Sicilian and a revision of its possible future roles can still stand a chance.

Before concluding this section, it should be mentioned that the Legge regionale 26 of 9 October 1998 ‘Provvedimenti per la salvaguardia e la valorizzazione del patrimonio storico, culturale e linguistico delle comunità siciliane di origine albanese e delle altre minoranze linguistiche’ makes no reference to the ‘dialetto siciliano’. Article 1 states the following:

La Regione siciliana, nell'ambito della tutela della lingua e della cultura delle popolazioni appartenenti alle minoranze linguistiche riconosciute dalle leggi della Repubblica, dispone per le popolazioni di lingua e di cultura albanese e delle altre minoranze linguistiche presenti nella Regione gli interventi di cui agli articoli seguenti.

6.3.3 *The teaching of the language*

The website ‘Lingua siciliana’ advertises an online course in Sicilian by Ninu Russu. It is divided into eleven lessons and covers areas such as grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics.

Moreover, in the academic years 2000/01, 2001/02, and 2002/03, the project ‘Studio del dialetto siciliano e approfondimento dei fatti linguistici, storici, culturali ad esso connessi’ was undertaken by several schools in Sicily. The schools had to submit a project. The best projects received funding from the Assessorato Beni Culturali, Ambientali e Pubblica Istruzione of the Sicilian Region, which, thanks to a *circolare assessoriale* (Legge Regionale n.5 del 30/4/2001) was able to sponsor the

projects. The students, in collaboration with the teachers and sometimes the parents, were responsible for the creations of projects in which the Sicilian dialect was used (http://www.linguasiciliana.org/scola_file/progetto%20scolasticu.htm [accessed 24 July 2004]). Responding to my questions, Dottoressa Quartana and Dottoressa Lupo, who were responsible for the project, were very positive about the achievements of the students. The projects included collections of riddles, local recipes, proverbs, and the writing and performance of plays in Sicilian. The schools received the equivalent of 2,500 euros for each project.

One of the projects sponsored by the Assessorato was the teaching of the Sicilian language, linguistics, and history in the Istituto Tecnico Industriale 'E. Majorana' and its associate Istituto Tecnico per le Attività Sociali in Enna. The project was structured in two courses, one for the pupils of the first two years and another for those of the last three years. The courses were part of the extra-curricular activities, and were run after school from 14.30 to 17.30. Each course comprised fifty-four contact hours

(http://www.linguasiciliana.org/scola_file/progetto%20scolasticu.htm [accessed 24 July 2004]). Unfortunately, in the academic year 2003-04, the project 'Studio del dialetto' had not started by April, since it was not clear whether the Assessorato would make the fundings available or not. The possible lack of funding was regarded by Dottoressa Quartana as 'un vero peccato, perché l'italiano è la nostra lingua, ma non vogliamo smettere di parlare il nostro dialetto'. Another initiative advertised by the 'Lingua siciliana' website is the 'Corso di lingua e letteratura siciliana' in Palermo, organized by the Associazione siciliana per l'amicizia fra i popoli in 2003.

6.3.4 Attempts to create a standard

Although there have been no discussions among linguists and politicians about which variety of Sicilian should be used as the linguistic norm in Sicily, there are acknowledgements of the importance of establishing some principle for a common language in Sicily. The 'Manifestu pi na Lingua Siciliana Unificata' by Massimo de Mauro states the importance of achieving a unified language in Sicily, in order to reinforce the notion of the specific identity of the Sicilian people, and also to remove the common belief that the dialect is the linguistic code associated with ignorance:

MANIFESTU PI NA LINGUA SICILIANA UNIFICATA

Stu manifestu è a prima inizziativa di n'gruppù di Siciliani, in Italia e di l'esteru, di stabiliri i principi di basi pi na lingua siciliana unificata (LSU). Picchì na lingua siciliana unificata?

Non ni putissimu cuntintari du sicilianu parratu, cu tutti i differenzi di parrati ca in generali tutti i siciliani capemu? U problema è puliticu: si vulemu rivendicari a nostra identità di Siciliani, una parti imputtanti da nostra identità è a nostra lingua, ca cuntene a storia da Sicilia e ca n'anu vinnutu finu a ora pi 'dialettu', ca non s'avissa parrari, vistu ca, secunnu certuni, u 'talianu fussi a unica 'lingua vera', tutti l'autri ssennu 'dialetti d'ignoranti'. (<http://www.linguasiciliana.org/lisu.htm> [accessed 24 July 2004])

The 'Lingua siciliana' website contains 'Sicilian language: an essay for the Welsh conference in Europe 2003' by Daniel Puglisi. The author states the importance of recognizing Sicilian as a language, and the fundamental role the European Union should play in this recognition. Since 'language equality and human rights are a key philosophy of the EU, all languages should play an integral role in the future of the EU, superstate or not'. The following quotation shows Puglisi's arguments in favour of the recognition of Sicilian as a language:

After all what makes the EU so special is its culture. Currently Sicilian, contrary to other 'lesser used languages' is not in danger of extinction by any means. It has many famous modern poets and writers like Pirandello and Andrea Camilleri, to name a few and is spoken fluently by young and old alike. However, like our 'lesser used languages' equal status, recognition and perhaps most importantly of all education is undeniably essential to their futures. Therefore Sicilian must be allowed the opportunity to be taught much more to new generations and given legal acknowledgements to allow its modern development and continuation. Like all of our languages, if they are not given equality where some may be disregarded then in effect we are denying key rights of European citizens. (http://www.linguasiciliana.org/sicilian_file/sicilianlanguage.htm [accessed 24 July 2004])

Puglisi's arguments are sometimes contradictory. He acknowledges the importance the European Union gives to lesser-used languages and the need to prevent their extinction. However, he does not think that Sicilian is in danger of extinction at all. It is used equally by older and young generations, and boasts an important literary tradition. However, he thinks that Sicilian should be taught in schools to avoid its extinction.

The documents in the 'Lingua siciliana' website suggest that, in Sicily, people might have to use the experience of other Italian regions, such as Sardinia and Friuli, for advancing demands for linguistic autonomy:

I sardi ed i friulani ad esempio dopo una cinquantennale lotta per dare credito ai loro idiomi hanno oggi ottenuto il riconoscimento a lingue, uscendo dal ghetto dei dialetti, ed hanno l'opportunità di rivalutare la loro condizione minorizzata. Per il siciliano la situazione è molto differente rispetto a questi ultimi due esempi. Se ad esempio vai alla pagina www.linguasiciliana.org che il creatore del Forum, Nino Atria, ha costruito noterai in basso a sinistra una mappa che mostra l'estensione delle aree dove il siciliano è parlato. Cliccandoci la potrai ingrandire, e ti accorgerai subito che il siciliano fuoriesce molto dal territorio della sola isola di Sicilia, e si estende su gran parte della Calabria e sulla parte peninsulare della regione Puglia, cioè il Salento. Il sardo ed il friulano invece sono parlati solo sul territorio della isola di Sardegna e nel Friuli, il che già costituisce di per se una differenza metrica tra il nostro linguaggio e gli altri due presi ad esempio. (Lingua o dialetto, 12 December 2003, <http://www.linguasiciliana.org/articoli.htm> [accessed 24 July 2004])

The author of this quotation, Ginu 'i Calavria, claims that Sicilian is in a better position than Sardinian and Friulian to advance demands of linguistic autonomy: while these last two are spoken only in the regions of Sardinia and Friuli, Sicilian is spoken not only in Sicily, but also in large part of Calabria region and also in the Salento. Calavria's claim is rather exaggerated since, more reliable linguists than him regard Sicilian as a separate dialect from Pugliese and Calabrian (see Ruffino, Trumper, and Loporcaro, in Maiden and Parry 1997). These three dialects, however present morphological similarities since they have in common the fact of being southern dialects of Italy (ibid.). Other quotations indicate that Sicilian should take advantage of the new opportunities offered to 'lesser-used languages' by the European Union:

Il forum è nato dall'esigenza di preservare e valorizzare il nostro patrimonio linguistico.

I principali obiettivi del forum Lingua siciliana sono:

Ottenere, attraverso richieste nelle sedi competenti, uno status legale per la nostra lingua (che ha già ottenuto un riconoscimento da parte dell'Unesco Red Book of Endangered Languages e da numerosi istituti di linguistica come l'Ethnologue) che ne permetterebbe l'utilizzo nelle scuole, negli uffici pubblici e nei mezzi di informazione.

[...] La lingua siciliana, di natura romanza, viene classificata lingua propria nettamente distinta dall'italiano standard in diversi studi internazionali come l'Unesco Red Book of Endangered Languages (1993 – 1996) del Prof. Tapani Salminen, membro della Commissione Unesco per le Lingue regionali e minoritarie, e dall'Ethonologue, tredicesima edizione pubblicato negli Usa dal Summer Institute of Linguistics. (<http://www.linguasiciliana.org/cusemu.htm> [accessed 24 July 2004])

However, the official position towards Sicilian held by international organizations such as the Unesco is rather ambiguous since Sicilian, in the Unesco Red Book of Endangered Languages, has been listed among the European languages guaranteeing intergenerational transmission and therefore in the safest position among other European languages in danger of extinction. Languages in a similar position to Sicilian are, according to this, Italian, English, French, and Spanish, which are national languages of European states, and varieties spoken in Italy such as Venetian and Southern Italian (not clearly defined by the Unesco). Lombard, Piedmontese, Ligurian, Emiliano, and Corsican, however, together with Sardinian, Basque, and Irish, are classified as languages in danger of extinction (http://www.linguasiciliana.org/linguasiciliana_file/futuro).

6.3.5 *Studies on the language and literary production*

Sicily boasts a rich and well-known literary production in dialect. Sicily's best-known writers of the early twentieth century were the poets and playwrights Nino Martoglio (1870-1921) and Alessio di Giovanni (1872-1946). In his poetry, Martoglio stressed the local feature of the dialect. As for his theatrical production Martoglio exploited the social bilingualism of his characters. In *'U ntirrugatoriu* (Cross-examination), the judge speaks in Italian, the accused in Sicilian (Haller, 1999: 306-7).

Among the twentieth-century poets, Ignazio Butitta (1899-1997) is one of the most impressive. One of his poems, 'Lingua e dialettu', compares the gradual loss of the dialects to a guitar's gradual loss of strings (Haller, 1999: 307). Other modern poets, such as Santo Calì (1918-1972) and Salvatore Di Pietro (1906-) wrote on social and political themes (Haller, 1999: 307). Among the more recent is Mario Grasso (1932-), a novelist, playwright, and critic, who began to write in dialect in the 1980s (Haller, 1999: 307). Giuseppe Battaglia (1951-) began to write poetry of protest at the age of twenty-one. In the poems 'La terra vascia' and 'La piccola valle

di Alí', the dialect represents the only weapon left to people, in their misery and exploitation (Haller, 1999: 307).

This thriving literary production is kept alive by the *concorsi di poesia in dialetto siciliano* (Gulino, 1986: 211). One of the most popular is the 'Premio di poesia dialettale e prosa Nino Martoglio'. There are, however, conflicting views about the quality of these *concorsi*. Francesco Gallo states:

[le poesie in dialetto siciliano] non riescono ad acquistare quelle valenze universali tipiche della poesia perché le ragioni della dialettalità stanno divenendo, sempre di più, materiale archeologico, incapace di esprimere le ragioni di un mondo sempre più unificato dai linguaggi standard, dai codici internazionali della scienza e dell'economia. (1981: 50-1, cited in Gulino, 1986: 212)

Gulino disagrees with this position and stresses that the different Sicilian varieties are suitable to express contemporary social issues:

Ma queste affermazioni scaturiscono, a nostro avviso, da considerazioni teoriche che non trovano riscontro nella realtà. Chi, infatti, ha una conoscenza ampia e profonda della poesia siciliana contemporanea sa benissimo che, oltre alla folta schiera dei 'minori', esistono grandi poeti, i quali trattano temi moderni e affrontano alcuni tra i problemi sociali più scottanti dell'Isola con un linguaggio vario, ricco e armonioso, che dimostra la grande vitalità e le notevoli possibilità espressive e comunicative delle parlate isolate. (1986: 212)

As for studies on the language, the Osservatorio Linguistico Siciliano has been conducted by the Centro di Studi filologici e linguistici siciliani: The OLS is a large-scale survey conducted on a sample of 1320 people aged above 15, and living in Sicily. The survey was carried out between April 1984 and March 1985. Given the size of the sample, the data of the OLS provide us with reliable information on the linguistic dynamics in Sicily. The survey gives important information on the linguistic behaviour of the sample and on their attitude towards their regional variety. Berruto describes the work conducted by the OLS in this way:

Bisogna subito complimentarsi con l'Osservatorio Linguistico Siciliano, perché uno studio quale quello che ci viene presentato qui non ha nel suo genere precedenti diretti in Italia, e rappresenta qualcosa di cui si sente il bisogno in tutte le regioni del paese, una radiografia ampia e attendibile degli usi linguistic odierni nella coscienza del parlante. (Berruto, 1992: 263)

Another important study of Sicilian is the *Atlante Linguistico Siciliano* (ALS). The research is conducted by the *Centro di Studi filologici e linguistici siciliani* together with the Department of Scienze filologiche e linguistiche of the University of Palermo. The objective of the ALS is to document the linguistic repertoire in Sicily, from the oldest forms of the dialect to the most recent developments, the so-called 'regional dialects'. The final outcome of the project should be a computerized database, giving access to archives. In this way, it would be possible to view sociolinguistic and geolinguistic maps, to have information on local foods and jobs, to read sociolinguistic surveys describing the present linguistic situation of contemporary Sicily.

6.4 Conclusion

This study has shown that, in Sardinia and Sicily, the actions aimed at the promotion of the local variety are similar. In Sardinia, however, there are many more initiatives than in Sicily. Moreover, in Sardinia the projects are undertaken by experts and specialists (politicians and sociolinguists), whilst in Sicily they are generally carried out by individuals and organizations, often not connected to each other.

In particular, the promotion of Sardinian through the internet might lead to unexpected developments. The objectives of websites created for the diffusion of the local variety are very ambitious. Their ultimate aim is the revitalization of the language in real life. It will thus be most interesting to assess what the internet succeeds in achieving in the future. The other initiatives, such as the teaching of the local variety, its use in official documents, the discussions on the possibility of creating a linguistic norm, are also noteworthy because they attempt to remove the notion that local varieties can only represent the folkloric aspect of a region and its people. This is very important, since it is vital that these languages obtain a niche in contemporary society, which goes beyond their folkloric component.

Sardinian enjoys the status of language at regional and national level. This recognition has an impact on the type of actions conducted to safeguard it. Therefore, in Sardinia, there are many debates about the importance of creating a standard variety, which is strongly opposed by some people and supported by others. It is worthwhile noting, however, that these initiatives to safeguard the local languages or varieties are decided only by a few 'experts' who very often do not take

into account the views of the people whose life will be affected by their decisions. Regarding the issue of the standardization of Sardinian, how would a speaker of Campidanese or Gallurese feel if the Logudorese variety were to be imposed in schools, administration, and official contexts? Would it not be more desirable to encourage the use of the variety normally spoken in a particular area? In Sardinia, in many post offices, the local variety is used in oral interactions. It is important to ensure the continuity of such things and also to promote the use of the local variety in those contexts most appropriate to it. Experts involved in the promotion of a certain variety should exclude artificial and anachronistic solutions. Taking actions strongly opposed by the public would be not only useless but also counterproductive.

Regarding the initiatives to promote Sicilian, the issue of a standard seems to be a less urgent matter, even though there are a few acknowledgements of the benefits that would derive from such a thing. In many of the initiatives examined in this chapter, Sicilian is described as a dialect. However, this does not seem to have negative consequences for its status. In particular, the promoters of the project 'Studio del dialetto siciliano' emphasized that Sicilian is the dialect and Italian is the language in Sicily. Nevertheless, this view did not indicate a negative perception of the dialect. On the contrary, Sicilian was regarded as an essential component of the cultural and historical heritage of the region. Despite the lack of coordination amongst the different initiatives to safeguard Sicilian, the project 'Studio del dialetto siciliano' and the Osservatorio Linguistico Siciliano represent two outstanding contributions to the study of the Sicilian dialect.

A further point concerns the consequences the Sardinian case might have for other regional varieties spoken in Italy, such as Sicilian. The promoters of Sicilian might argue: 'if the Sardinians have obtained the status of language for their regional variety and if this can be used in official contexts, we should promote Sicilian in the same way'. However, it is debatable to assume that what works in one case will also work in another. The past and present situation of Sicily is different from the past and present situation of Sardinia, even though the two regions have a similar geographical position. Therefore, it would be unwise to think that the promotion of Sicilian should be carried out in the same way as the promotion of Sardinian. Moreover, in Sardinia, despite the approval of legislation to safeguard Sardinian, there is still a need to work out questions of practice. There should be thus a certain

degree of caution about adopting solutions which have not yet proved of significant value for the safeguarding of the local variety.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1 Introduction

Chapters 8 and 9 show my findings based on the results of a survey conducted in 2001-03 on a group of sixty Sardinian and sixty Sicilian respondents. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the methodology used in carrying out the survey.

7.2 Method adopted for data collection

In meeting the objectives of the study within the constraints of time and finance, the main method of investigation adopted was based on written responses to questionnaires. The use of questionnaires as a method of data collection has received severe criticisms (Thomas, Chataway, and Wuyts, 1998:136). The technique has several disadvantages such as poor response rates, response bias, wording of questions, as well as the inability of the investigator to verify the information provided. Nevertheless the demerits of the questionnaire method could be overcome by utilising specific techniques.

The questionnaire length is an important factor to be considered in the design of a questionnaire. The temptation of the investigator is to cover too much and ask questions on everything that might turn out to be interesting. Having considered the effect of length of questionnaire on response rate, a balance was reached between obtaining as much information as possible from the questionnaire in order to satisfy the objectives of the study, and ensuring that an acceptable response rate would be achieved. In the end, it was decided that a questionnaire, two back-to-back pages long, which could be completed without taxing the respondents a great deal would be satisfactory for the study, and would provide sufficient information to satisfy the objectives of the research.

Another important factor in assuring high response rates is whether the respondents perceive the survey as important and current to him/her, that is whether the respondent is interested in the subject of the survey. For this reason, the respondents were asked if they were interested in taking part in a survey aimed at investigating the vitality of and their views on their local or regional language.

The objectives of the questionnaire were also briefly mentioned at the beginning of the questionnaire.

7.3 The questionnaire

Prior to sending out the final draft of the questionnaire to the respondents, the questionnaire had to be piloted. An important part of the piloting process was to make sure that the questions provided the necessary data. Furthermore, the pilot process was necessary so that difficulties, especially those of ambiguity and wordings of questions were identified. When the questionnaire was near completion and perceived as ready to be piloted, a Sicilian family (father, mother, and two daughters) on holiday in Leeds and two Sardinian informants who were temporarily resident in England, co-operated in the piloting of the questionnaire. This was in the form of a face-to-face meeting, conducted in June 2001, lasting for about two hours. During the face-to-face meeting, I had the opportunity to discuss the issues that they had raised concerning the questionnaire. The six informants helped to identify ambiguities and omissions. This eventually resulted in further refinement of the questionnaire. After limited modification to the questionnaire, a final version was finally developed, and ready to be sent out to the Sicilian and Sardinian informants via six Sicilians and four Sardinians who also took part in the survey. These ten informants had a key role in ensuring that the questionnaire was completed and in clarifying anything which might be ambiguous. Questionnaire distribution occurred in July 2001. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were distributed: sixty to the Sardinian sample and another sixty to the Sicilian sample. Thanks to the good will and effort of my helpers, all the questionnaires were completed. The number of questionnaires completed was considered satisfactory to provide data for analysis.

When the questionnaires were returned to me and the process of analysis of the data started, I contacted on the phone all those who gave unclear replies. The telephone check helped to ensure a better understanding of the data.

7.4 Structure of the questionnaire

The respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire divided into five sections. The questionnaire can be read in Appendix B and Appendix C, along with tables summarising all the results (Appendices D and E). In the first section of the questionnaire, the respondents replied to questions about their linguistic competence

(Q1, Q2, and Q4) and behaviour (Q6a and Q6b). Since language attitudes can have an effect on whether or not a language variety is intelligible (Fasold, 1984: 149), two questions (Q3 and Q5) were also asked to see if the respondents who did not speak or understand their local or regional variety, wished to be able to do it and for which reasons.

The second section of the questionnaire analysed how the sample distinguished between the concept of 'language' and that of 'dialect' and the criteria used to establish this distinction. This distinction is very often subjective and creates debates about the reasons why a certain variety should be classified as a language or as a dialect. The same variety might be regarded by some as a dialect and by others as a language. Fishman (1972: 16) acknowledges the problem posed by the distinction and describes 'the expression "a language" as a judgmental one, a term that is indicative of emotion and opinion, as well as a term that elicits emotion and opinion'. For this reason, the respondents were asked whether they regarded their local variety as a language or as a dialect (Q8) and to explain their reasons (Q9). In this section of the questionnaire, Q10 was asked to find out whether the respondents identified a unitary linguistic norm in Sardinia and Sicily or not. This was felt to be a particularly important issue, since, as already mentioned in chapter six, the idea of a single unitary Sardinian or Sicilian language is an abstract concept. The linguistic reality in both islands is fragmentation. However, the raising of a specific variety to the status of language, and the expansion of its functions into more formal and official settings, opens the debate about creation of a standard. Therefore, the attitudes of the informants towards the existence of a possible common linguistic norm were sought.

The third section considered the link between local language and local identity in order to see whether the respondents establish a link between the safeguarding of their regional variety and the safeguarding of their regional identity. The improvement of status for one's own variety goes hand-in-hand with an affirmation of the separate identity of the relevant social group (Ager, 2001: 10). The language becomes very often the marker of a specific ethnicity. Fishman points out that the link between language and identity is a very important element to consider when analysing the process of reversing language shift (RLS):

It is not uncommon to view the language as being yet another tangible contributor to authentic ethnocultural membership. To abandon a language may be viewed as an abandonment not only of the traditional doings and knowings but as an abandonment of personal ancestral kin and cultural ancestral heroes *per se* [...] a traditionally associated language is more than just a tool of communication for its culture. Such a language can mean more to its ethnoculture than just languages in general or than the language capacity with which all humans are endowed. Such a language is often viewed as a very specific gift, a marker of identity and a specific responsibility *vis à vis* future generations. (2001: 5)

The respondents were asked questions to assess their views about the decline of their language and to see if they felt that the loss of the local or regional language would mean the loss of their local or regional identity. Questions of identity are difficult to analyse, given their highly subjective nature. Therefore, in order to receive enough feedback from the informants which would translate into significant data and information, they were asked direct questions (Q13, 14, 17, 18, and 19) as well as open ones (Q16 and 17). The advantage of asking direct questions is that the investigator receives clear replies (usually yes or no), while the open questions give the respondent the opportunity to raise issues that are not explicitly addressed by the researcher in the compilation of the questionnaire.

The fourth section considered the reactions of the sample to measures to safeguard Sardinian or Sicilian as a way of maintaining and strengthening local and regional identities. Concerns about the future of regional or local languages call for actions to safeguard the threatened variety. In order to ascertain the respondents' reactions to practical measures to safeguard Sardinian or Sicilian, they were asked whether they agreed or not with the use of their local or regional variety in more official situations such as the meetings of the municipal, provincial, and regional councils, in schools and universities, in the media, and in religious ceremonies (from Q20 up to Q32).

The last section considered reactions to law 482, which protects minority languages so far excluded from protection as well as the new category of Romance languages: Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian. The views of the respondents on this law (Q34 and Q35) were sought. The Sardinian respondents were asked if they thought that law 482 would be followed by practical actions to protect Sardinian (Q36). The Sicilian respondents were asked whether Sicilian should be granted the same rights as the 'minority languages', that is whether Sicilian should be used in more official

situations such as in meetings of the municipal, provincial, and regional councils, schools and universities, the media, and religious ceremonies (Q36).

7.5 Variables adopted in the analysis of the questionnaires

A first analysis was conducted with the aim of assessing the overall response of the respondents, who lived in urban as well as non-urban areas. The term 'non-urban' is adopted here rather than the term 'rural', since in Italy the traditional structures of a community are under a process of constant change. The term 'rural' would have been rather restrictive, since it excludes places which cannot be classified as urban but, at the same time, do not have the structure and organization typical of rural society. The following quotation illustrates this point well:

I livelli di urbanizzazione negli ultimi cinquanta anni sono cresciuti enormemente tanto che, secondo stime ONU, nei paesi ricchi, alla fine di questo secolo, il 75% della popolazione sarà concentrata in zone urbane; inoltre, all'interno dei medesimi paesi, molteplici flussi visibili e invisibili, percorrono lo stesso spazio rurale collegandolo ai poli urbani. La rete di scambi e di comunicazioni che lega tutto quanto il territorio fa sì, in sostanza, che, anche al di fuori della città, non ci sia niente che rassomigli alla tipica folk society, cioè a quell'idea di anti-città, di non-urbano, che ci hanno descritto gli antropologi degli anni '40 e '50: una società isolata i cui membri sono molto simili fra di loro e in cui i mutamenti da una generazione all'altra sono minimi. (Mari d'Agostino, 1995: 197).

The different geographical location of the respondents was the first division introduced into the total sample, with the aim of distinguishing the answers and views of the respondents living in urban areas from those living in non-urban areas. Since globalization exposes people living in big cities as well as those living in more secluded and isolated areas to similar social and linguistic networks, Mari d'Agostino (1995: 160) raises the question of whether the link between place of residence and linguistic dynamics is still valid in modern society: 'Le dinamiche linguistiche sono ancora oggi strettamente collegate a un determinato territorio e a particolari forme di organizzazione dello spazio oppure si assiste a un distacco progressivo delle une dalle altre?'. She concludes, however, that the place of residence is still a factor of paramount importance in the analysis of linguistic behaviour and attitudes towards local and regional varieties:

I repertori linguistici delle diverse comunità sociali e geografiche presenti nel paese sono a tutt'oggi, anche a un esame superficiale, così profondamente distanti gli uni dagli altri da costringerci a respingere come profondamente inadeguata l'idea di un 'villaggio globale' linguistico. Il luogo di residenza è una variabile che incide nell'Italia di oggi in maniera molto forte sui comportamenti linguistici dei soggetti e quindi la dimensione 'spaziale' della variazione si impone come elemento di analisi di primaria importanza, come è possibile rilevare, fra l'altro, dall'inchiesta nazionale di più vasto respiro quantitative oggi disponibile sull'intera penisola. (Mari d'Agostino, 1995: 161)

The more general level of analysis (urban and non-urban combined) precedes more specific sub-levels, in which the variables 'sex', 'age', and 'social status' (education and employment) were introduced. In this way, interesting comparisons can be made between the general situation of the sample and the more specific groupings within it. The issue of representing the different variables adequately was raised with the informants who helped me in the distribution of the questionnaires. Although they selected a number of informants sufficient to represent the three different variables, it was not always possible to have an even number of informants for each of them.

7.6 *The sample frame*

In both groups, there were thirty respondents living in urban areas (*città*) and thirty respondents living in non-urban areas (*paesi*). Regarding the Sardinian sample, of the thirty respondents who lived in urban areas, twelve were from Cagliari, twelve from Sassari, and the remaining six from Olbia. Cagliari is the capital city of Sardinia with an estimated population of over 220,000; Sassari is the second largest city of Sardinia with a population of 120,000; Olbia is the third largest city of Sardinia with a population of 38,206 and experienced a process of urbanization after the Second World War. Of the non-urban respondents, seven were from Pula and twenty-three from Arzachena. Pula is a village in Campidano, with a population of 5,961. Arzachena is a small town in Gallura, with a population of 9,276. The town is witnessing a rapid growth because of the expansion of the Costa Smeralda in the tourist sector (<http://www.sardegnaweb.it/guida/sezioniguida.asp> [accessed 25 July 2004]). Arzachena was considered a non-urban area for several reasons. Firstly, the fact that it is a *paese* (in opposition to *città*) and the limited number of its inhabitants (below 10,000) were taken into account. Afterwards, some informants were asked on the phone how they viewed Arzachena. They all agreed that, although the town was changing because of its expansion in the tourist sector, it was still a *paese* and

not representative of the urban areas because of the very limited presence of public services such as commercial and official settings, cultural activities, and so on. The following quotation supports the argument of the importance of the presence of certain types of services that make a place an urban centre.

Entrambe le osservazioni ci spingono in direzione di una analisi che, superando il criterio demografico, analizzi il ruolo e le caratteristiche del comune, in primo luogo in rapporto alle funzioni urbane che esso è in grado di esercitare, al suo essere città nel senso più profondo del termine, cioè di fornire servizi a una collettività più o meno vasta, a un'area più o meno vasta. La quantità e l'area di influenza dei luoghi pubblici, dei servizi educativi, sanitari, per lo svago, per la cultura, di tipo burocratico amministrativo, di tipo commerciale ecc., che ogni centro può offrire possono avere degli immediati correlati sul piano linguistico, determinando la quantità e la qualità delle relazioni pubbliche, formali o semiformali, a cui potenzialmente si può avere accesso (D'Agostino, 1995: 173).

It was very interesting to hear the views of the Galluresi respondents, especially regarding the issue of standardization. It is important to point out, however, that, in the analysis of the results, the Gallura factor rather than the other variables, such as place of residence, sex, age, and social status, may have affected their response. Therefore, it could well be that if the survey had been carried out in a different part of Sardinia, the results would have been different and the response on the issue of standardization would have been less negative than that of the Galluresi. As discussed in section 6.2.3 of Chapter Six, the process of standardization of Sardinian takes into account the Logudorese and Campidanese varieties and excludes the Gallurese and Sassarese varieties.

Regarding the Sicilian sample, of those living in urban areas, thirteen were from Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto, ten from Messina, six from Catania, and one from Palermo. Palermo is the capital of Sicily with a population of 1,235,923; Catania is the second largest city with a population of 1,054,778; Messina is the third largest with a population of 662,450. Barcellona is a town in the province of Messina with a population of 41,258 (www.regione.sicilia.it [accessed 6 May 2004]). Although the number of inhabitants in Barcellona is much lower than that in the three main Sicilian cities, Barcellona is an urban centre (*città*). In Sicily the number of inhabitants is not always a valid criterion for distinguishing 'urban' from 'non-urban'. This point is illustrated by a quotation from the Atlante linguistico Siciliano (Als), a major survey based on ethno- and socio-linguistic criteria, conducted in 1995

in both urban and non-urban areas of Sicily by the Centro di Studi Filologici e Linguistici Siciliani:

In Sicilia, a una 'sovraurbanizzazione' dal punto di vista quantitativo corrisponde spesso una 'sottourbanizzazione' dal punto di vista qualitativo; assistiamo cioè a un divario netto fra città e sue funzioni. Infatti l'antinomia fra centri urbani di grosse proporzioni, ma elementari, e città grandi o anche medie nelle dimensioni, che sono città vere e proprie, nella accezione del termine che siamo abituati ad accettare per la realtà occidentale, è senza dubbio da annoverare fra i fattori caratterizzanti la rete urbana dell'Isola [...]. Entrambe le osservazioni ci spingono in direzione di una analisi che, superando il criterio demografico, analizzi il ruolo e le caratteristiche del comune, in primo luogo in rapporto alle funzioni urbane che esso è in grado di esercitare, al suo essere città nel senso profondo del termine, cioè di fornire servizi a una collettività più o meno vasta, a un'area più o meno vasta. (Als, 1995: 171-73)

Moreover, in the chapter 'Un presondaggio fonetico in una piccola area del Messinese centrale' of the Als, Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto is classified as an urban centre:

A ciò si aggiunge che, nel corso degli ultimi decenni, il vicino centro di Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto ha assunto sempre più il ruolo di polo dell'area, esercitando una decisa funzione attrattiva nei confronti dei nostri centri. Barcellona, la cui rapida ascesa è dovuta soprattutto ad uno sviluppo economico di tipo commerciale, polarizza le attività di tutta l'area, compresi, in particolare, gli spostamenti pendolari sia per il lavoro che per la fruizione di servizi. (Als, 1995: 277)

A limitation of this survey is that only one respondent is from Palermo, the city at the forefront in the trend to abandon the dialect (Lo Piparo, 1990:71). The other cities Catania and Messina are closer in linguistic behaviour to the provincial centres (Lo Piparo, 1990:71). Therefore, the fact that only one informant represents Palermo, the most Italophone Sicilian city, could have affected the results of the survey, especially the figures on the vitality of Sicilian in urban areas. It should be pointed out, however, that the results of the Ols survey suggest that the widespread use of Italian in Palermo does not rule out the use of Sicilian (Lo Piparo, 1990: 47). Moreover, Berruto, commenting on the results of the Ols survey, states that in Sicily there is 'il più felice degli esiti possibili del rapporto italiano-dialetto' (1992: 264), namely a situation of 'balanced bilingualism with no strict associations between codes and socio-functional domains' (Bentley, 1997: 207).

Of the non-urban respondents, twenty-two were from Partinico and eight from Balestrate. Partinico is a small town with a population of 25,000, five kilometres away from the coast. The economy of the town is based on agriculture, in

particular on the production of olive oil and wine. Balestrate has a population of 8,000. It is on the coast and faces the gulf of Castellammare, ten kilometres away from Partinico. Both towns are part of the province of Palermo (www.regione.sicilia.it [accessed 6 May 2004]).

Although the Als classes Partinico as a *centro dinamico/forte* (Ruffino, 1990:185), the following quotation supports the claim that Partinico cannot be regarded as an urban centre:

Fra i comuni che nei contesti extrafamiliari fanno registrare i TSL più alti troviamo sia centri sotto i 5000 abitanti (Spadafora, Rodi, Milici, Sàvoca, ecc.), sia i centri con popolazione fra i 5 e i 20 mila abitanti (Floridia, Fiumefreddo, Pedara, ecc.) oltre a qualche centro ancora più popoloso (Partinico, Avola), accomunati tutti dal fatto di essere poco o per nulla 'città' (D'Agostino, 1995: 174).

Moreover, the Als proposes a new classification of the Sicilian *comuni* regardless of the demographic criterion. The new criteria to ascertain the urban or non-urban feature of a specific place are:

the ability to carry out urban functions;
its belonging to a metropolitan area;
the structure of its population according to their educational level
the structure of its population according to their age (D'Agostino, 1995: 176)

These criteria have allowed a new classification of the Sicilian *comuni*:

Poli regionali
Centri urbani
Centri semi-urbani
Centri rurali (D'Agostino, 1995: 176)

The *centri semi-urbani* are described in the following way:

La terza classe (*centri semi-urbani*) si delinea come un gruppo intermedio; di essa fanno parte tutti i centri che riescono a superare una soglia minima di servizi e di ruolo di attrazione nel territorio ('città medie', 'piccole normali', 'centri semi-urbani' secondo Da Pozzo, Mautone e Sbordonò 1985) e comuni invece che tale soglia non superano ma che, pur collocandosi fra i centri elementari, si distinguono per una struttura della popolazione decisamente dinamica, in rapporto principalmente al titolo di studio.

The *centri semi-urbani* category includes: *città medie deboli*, *città medie debolissime* e *piccole forti*, *città piccole deboli*, *città incomplete* o *centri semiurbani*, *centri senza*

funzioni urbane ma con alte quote di popolazione dinamica per età e/o titolo di studio, and centri rurali. Within the category of the *centri semi-urbani*, Partinico is classed as a *città piccola debole*.

It is important to acknowledge, therefore, that the fact that ‘non c’è più un asse città-campagna, lungo il quale si spostano l’innovazione e la conservazione’ (D’Agostino, 1995: 160) renders the urban/non-urban distinction less clear-cut than it might appear to be. However, provided these facts are made explicit and taken into account in the analysis, the variable ‘place of residence’ still contributes to our knowledge of linguistic behaviour and attitudes towards local or regional varieties.

Amongst the Sardinian respondents, there were fifteen urban females, fifteen urban males, eighteen non-urban females, and twelve non-urban males. The urban and the non-urban sample were divided into three groups, according to the age of the respondents. The first group (G1) included those aged 21-35; the second group (G2) included those aged 36-50; the third group (G3) included those aged 51 and above. In the urban sample, there were thirteen young respondents, nine middle-aged, and seven old. In the non-urban sample, there were thirteen young respondents, six middle-aged, and eleven old. The urban and non-urban sample were also divided into groups according to social status defined by the qualifications and jobs. All the urban respondents had either the *maturità*, equivalent to English and Welsh A levels, or a university degree. In terms of jobs, they were either professionals or doing a clerical job. None of the urban respondents did a manual job. Therefore, the urban sample was split into two groups (G2 and G3), where G2 stands for people with a lower status (clerks with the *maturità*) and G3 for people with a higher status (professionals with a university degree). There were seventeen people in the first group and twelve in the second. Although the lack of a group of respondents with a low status is a limitation of this study, it should be stated that in Italy it is becoming less and less frequent for people living in urban areas not to have an educational qualification below the *maturità*. The non-urban sample was split into three groups, G1, G2, and G3, where G1 stands for people with a low status (manual workers with primary or middle-school leaving certificates), G2 for the group in the middle (clerks with the *maturità*), and G3 for people with a higher status (professionals with a university degree). There were thirteen people in the first group, eleven in the second, and six in the third.

Regarding the Sicilian sample, there were fifteen males and fifteen females in both groups. The urban sample was divided into two groups, according to the age of the respondents: young and old. The analysis excluded the middle-aged group, since only three respondents were aged 36-50. The first (G1) consisted of those aged 21-35; the second (G3) consisted of those aged 51 and above. There were eighteen young respondents and nine older respondents. The non-urban sample was divided into three groups: young, middle-aged and old. The first (G1) consisted of those aged 21-35; the second (G2) consisted of those aged 36-50; the third (G3) consisted of those aged 51 and above. There were ten young respondents, ten middle-aged respondents, and ten old respondents. The urban sample was also split into three social groups, G1, G2, and G3, where G1 is made up of those with low status (manual workers with primary or middle-school leaving certificates), G2 of people employed in the public sector, with the *maturità*, and G3 of people with high status (professionals with a university degree). There were five people in the first group, sixteen in the second, and nine in the third. The non-urban sample was split into two social groups, where G1 is made up of those with lower status (manual workers with primary or middle-school leaving certificates) and G3 of people with higher status (professionals with a university degree). There were eleven in the first group, and nine in the second.

Those with the *maturità* were not considered in this analysis by social/educational status, since they were all young and therefore their response was already analysed in the section dedicated to the age category. The omission of the middle socio-educational group from the discussion may be debatable since the analysis of the results may not show clearly whether the response of this group is governed by age or educational status. Moreover, it should be pointed out that if my young respondents had had a different socio-economic background, namely a more deprived one, the results could have been different. However, it is becoming very uncommon in Italy that young people leave school before achieving the *maturità*. Therefore, a group of young respondents with a lower socio-economic background would have not been necessarily a better representative of the young population.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to describe in detail the methodological approach adopted in this study. The methodology consists of questionnaires. The problems encountered and the strategies employed to minimise them have been discussed.

The analysis will be carried out in the following two chapters (8 and 9) and will be conducted according to the framework outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS SARDINIAN AND REACTIONS TO POSSIBLE WAYS OF SAFEGUARDING IT

8.1 Introduction

The following analysis was conducted in 2001-03 on a group of sixty Sardinian respondents. As stated in chapter seven, they were asked to complete a questionnaire in which they had to reply to questions on their linguistic competence, behaviour, and attitudes towards the local language and identity. The respondents' reaction to the introduction of Sardinian in more formal and official contexts was also assessed through specific questions.

8.2 The overall analysis

A first analysis was conducted with the aim of assessing the overall response of the respondents. There were thirty respondents living in urban areas (*città*) and thirty living in non-urban areas (*paesi*). This more general level of analysis (urban and non-urban combined) precedes more specific sub-levels, in which different categories (sex, age, and social status) are introduced.

8.2.1 Linguistic competence and behaviour

In the first section of the questionnaire, the respondents replied to questions about their linguistic competence and behaviour. Urban areas are usually more exposed to external influences, and therefore more likely to go through a process of language shift in favour of the national and official language of the country. Fishman writes that 'the most reasonable and the best documented generalization in the study of language maintenance and shift is that urban dwellers are more inclined to shift, rural dwellers (more conservative and more isolated) are less inclined to shift' (1972: 126). 38 per cent of the urban respondents, however, spoke Sardinian and 69 per cent understood it. The percentages of speakers of Sardinian might have been even higher, as some respondents might not have admitted to being able to speak or understand Sardinian. There are still some stigmas and prejudices attached to the

concept of regional or local languages, and therefore the respondents might not always be willing to declare that they speak or understand a regional or local language. The active use of the language, however, seemed to be quite limited, as very few urban respondents spoke Sardinian always, often, or even sometimes.

Of the non-urban respondents, 50 per cent claimed that Sardinian was their mother tongue and 73 per cent were able to speak a Sardinian variety. Moreover, 83 per cent of the sample could understand it. Replies to questions about the linguistic behaviour of the sample showed that the use of Sardinian in oral interactions was quite high: 20 per cent of the respondents spoke Sardinian always, 37 per cent often, and 10 per cent sometimes. 13 per cent of the sample spoke it rarely, 13 per cent never used it, and 7 per cent of the respondents did not reply to this question.

The linguistic behaviour of the respondents was also assessed through questions about their choice of code in different domains: family, friends, shops, offices, school/university and work. These domains are one way of examining language choice from the sociologist's point of view (Fasold, 1984: 183) and were identified by Fishman (1964, 1965, 1968). His domains are 'certain institutional contexts, in which one language variety is more likely to be appropriate than another' (Fasold, 1984: 183). Moreover, Parry states that 'the family is the domain par excellence of primary relationships, based on solidarity of attitude and values. Shops, offices, large corporations, the armed forces are characterized by secondary relationship based on the power factor, rather than on solidarity. However, even in these domains small groups exist which may foster primary relationships, for instance friendship between members of a work-team, as opposed to the formal interchange between boss and worker' (1989: 114).

The following table shows the linguistic behaviour of both urban and non-urban respondents in the domains of family, friends, shops, offices, school/university and work:

Q6b: Do you speak Sardinian? (%)

	Urban	Non-urban
With the family	14	63
With your children	3	3
With your spouse	7	10
With your parents	10	40
With your grandparents	10	3
With your friends	41	47
In the shops	3	65
In the offices	0	0
At school/university	0	0
At work	7	23

In the urban sample, the results are predictable, since, in the ‘family’ domain, they reflect the current linguistic situation in Italy: very few respondents spoke Sardinian with their children, a few more spoke Sardinian with their spouse, a few more again spoke it with their parents and grandparents. The ISTAT survey in 2000 on the use of dialect and Italian in the whole of Italy had similar findings:

L’uso prevalente dell’italiano decresce col crescere dell’età in tutti i contesti relazionali. Per l’uso in famiglia, la quota varia dal 65,4% dei bambini al 25,6% degli anziani. Viceversa, l’uso esclusivo o prevalente del dialetto cresce col crescere dell’età, passando da una quota molto bassa (6,4%) dei bambini che parlano solo dialetto in famiglia al 40,1% degli ultrasessantacinquenni. (‘Lingua italiana e dialetti in Italia’, www.istat.it/Comunicati/Fuoricale/allegati/Lingua-ita/ver3.doc [accessed 27 May 2004])

Regarding the non-urban sample, this table also shows that the use of Sardinian in the family with the younger generation is also in decline. However, Sardinian is still a frequent linguistic choice within the family and friendship domains. Since ‘the family is the domain par excellence of primary relationships, based on solidarity of attitude and values’ (Parry, 1989: 114), and friendship is another important domain for the development of primary relationships, the linguistic code chosen to express values of intimacy and solidarity, on which primary relationships are based, is Sardinian. Moreover, Sardinian is also employed in two contexts outside the family and friends: in the shops, and at work, domains characterized by secondary relationship based on the power factor, rather than on solidarity. 65 per cent of the non-urban respondents used Sardinian in the shops.

In Italy, the decline of the local and regional varieties is very noticeable among the younger generations, who have been brought up speaking Italian. The older generations, however, are more capable of speaking local idioms because the

switch in favour of the national language, and the consequent abandonment of regional varieties, started only in the 1950s. These results support the findings of the ISTAT surveys on the use of dialect and Italian in the whole of Italy ('Lingua italiana e dialetti in Italia', www.istat.it/Comunicati/Fuoricale/allegati/Lingua-ita/ver3.doc [accessed 27 May 2004]).

Use of dialect in the home according to the 2000 ISTAT survey (%)

	6-10 year-olds	11-14 year-olds
Only or mainly Italian used in the family	65.4	58.3
Only or mainly dialect used in the family	6.4	9.5
Both dialect and Italian used in the family	23.9	29.2

Another interesting result was that 41 per cent of the urban respondents and 47 per cent of the non-urban respondents spoke Sardinian with friends. Moreover, it is worth noticing that the percentage of urban respondents using Sardinian with their friends (41%) was higher than that of those who declared themselves to be able to speak it (38%). These figures, however, should be read taking into account the fact that many young people say that they use dialect with their friends if they are asked with whom they speak it. What they really mean is that they exchange *battute* or use it *per scherzare*. They would not be capable of using it in serious conversations and this explains the fact that they have declared previously that they do not speak it. The reclassification of Sardinian as minority language might provide a further explanation of the contradictory behaviour of the urban sample: if Sardinian is a language, fewer people might be willing to state that they speak it properly. However, the figures on the use of Sardinian with friends support the Doxa surveys conducted in 1982 and 1988. According to the 1988 survey, for 33 per cent of Italians the dialect was the language preferred in conversation with friends. Moreover, in 1982, the Sardinia region was in first place in Italy for the use of the regional language with friends and colleagues (cited in Tosi, 2000: 30). More recent surveys show that, in Sardinia, in 2000, 37.6 per cent of the people used the dialect with their friends, while 11.7 per cent used 'another language' in the same context. The selection 'another language' for Sardinian can be explained with the reclassification of Sardinian as minority language. The choice of Sardinian with friends might be seen as a positive factor to consider in a policy of language maintenance. To encourage the use of Sardinian

within the sphere of friends might be a powerful tool to use in safeguarding regional or local languages.

In urban areas, the domains of shops, offices, school, and university are dominated by the use of Italian. Virtually all the urban respondents preferred to employ Italian in these situations. In urban areas, despite its status of 'minority language', Sardinian does not perform more functions in society than the Italian dialects: it is mainly reserved for oral, colloquial, and family contexts. The 7 per cent of urban respondents who used Sardinian at work may have developed a 'primary relationship' (Bell, 1976: 102-103) based on intimacy and friendship, which might have required the use of Sardinian as an expression of a more intimate code amongst some colleagues.

The attitude of the urban sample towards language acquisition seemed to be positive. Many respondents, who did not speak or understand Sardinian, would have liked to speak Sardinian or at least understand it. This definitely represents a major change from the common attitude that has relegated regional and local language to the status of 'minor', 'less important' or even 'spoken by ignorant people'. Nevertheless, Agheyisi and Fishman (1970: 150) refer to 'the familiar problem of the low degree of consistency between attitude measures and overt behaviour'. Negative responses focused on the lack of usefulness. The willingness to learn these languages was justified by factors associating them with questions of local identity, origins, and history. This aspect of the safeguarding of the local language will be studied in more detail in the analysis of the third section of the questionnaire.

One of the findings of the present study is that 65 per cent of the non-urban respondents used Sardinian in the local shops. It is important to underline, however, that, in this context, customer and shopkeeper are often acquaintances, even long-standing friends, and therefore it is quite obvious, in these circumstances, to use the local speech (Lo Piparo, 1990: 22). In smaller towns and rural areas, the use of dialects outside the home is still widespread, as the Doxa survey percentage figures from 1988 and 1996 indicate.

	1988	1996
Inhabitants of towns up to 10,000 residents, speaking always or usually in Italian outside the home	28.1%	34.4%

(‘L’uso del dialetto’, *Bollettino della Doxa*, 50/16-7, 17 September 1996, 167-85, cited in Parry, 2002: 55)

Even though the Doxa figures register an increase in the use of Italian, these figures suggest that the number of inhabitants of towns up to 10,000 residents, speaking the local variety outside the home, is still very high. This factor might act as a drive for the use of local languages in contexts outside the family in more urbanized centres. The increasing mobility between urban and more rural and isolated areas might create a new impetus for the use of dialects in a number of public contexts. The Doxa percentage figures, in fact, register a drop in the use of Italian outside the home in large centres.

	1988	1996
Inhabitants of towns up to 100,000 residents, speaking always or usually in Italian outside the home	68.2%	64.2%

(‘L’uso del dialetto’, *Bollettino della Doxa*, 50/16-7, 17 September 1996, 167-85, cited in Parry, 2002: 55)

According to Berruto (2001), the Doxa figures suggest that there is a halt in the decline in use of dialects in large centres. Moreover, this tendency is confirmed by ISTAT statistics in 1995 and 2000 percentage figures:

	1995	2000
Inhabitants of inner city areas claiming always to use Italian in the home	63.0%	61.1%

(‘Lingua italiana e dialetti in Italia’, www.istat.it/Comunicati/Fuoricale/allegati/Lingua-ita/ver3.doc [accessed 27 May 2004])

Berruto believes that this new linguistic trend in favour of the revival of dialects and local languages can be explained with the fact that linguistic unification in Italy has been achieved and therefore, the ability to speak a local variety is no longer associated with ignorance or lack of competence in the national language. People are thus more willing to admit to being able to speak a local variety or to pass it on to the next generation. This interpretation is confirmed by Parry's field-work (2002) in Cairo Montenotte, a town in the Savonese hinterland, which has witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of its inhabitants, and also an important transformation from agricultural community to one more industrially orientated. Several dialect-speaking interviewees responded that once their children had acquired a good knowledge of Italian, they would encourage the acquisition of the local variety. However, it is debatable whether this willingness will be able to reverse the process of local language shift. Certainly, generational transmission ensures the continuity of use of a language. Nevertheless, parents, despite their efforts and concerns, might find it hard to pass the local varieties on to their offspring. Italian is the language in which the majority of the children are brought up. It is the most obvious and natural linguistic choice for the younger generation by now. Therefore, the parents' willingness to encourage their children to use the local variety, once the acquisition of the national language is ensured, might not be enough to change the fortunes of local and regional varieties.

8.2.2 The distinction between 'language' and 'dialect'

The second section of the questionnaire aimed at assessing the respondents' distinction between the concept of 'language' and that of 'dialect'. In Italy, in the case of Sardinian, despite the recent recognition of the status of minority language that came with law 482 (1999), there is still some confusion, as many Italians regard it as a dialect rather than a language. As 'language is a superordinate designation' and 'dialect is a subordinate designation' (Fishman, 1972: 17), the view of the Sardinians was sought about whether their variety is a language or a dialect and hence about its perceived prestige.

Q8: In your opinion, is Sardinian a language or a dialect? (%)

	Dialect	Language	Both	In some parts of Sardinia, it is a language	I do not know
Urban	24	65	3	3	3
Non-urban	37	57	0	0	7

The majority of the respondents in both groups regarded Sardinian as a language. However, the percentage of the urban respondents was higher than that of the non-urban respondents. This might be explained by the fact that the acquisition of the national language, which is still a fairly recent achievement for the non-urban respondents, is an established phenomenon for the urban sample. The most common reasons for Sardinian being regarded as a language by the non-urban respondents were that it has Romance origins and it is different from Italian. On the other hand, Sardinian was regarded as a dialect because of the existence of several varieties of Sardinian. Some non-urban respondents were unable to explain their reasons. The urban respondents gave more sophisticated replies to justify the status of language or dialect of Sardinian. The most common reasons for Sardinian being regarded as a language, were that it is an independent linguistic system, it has Romance origins, and it has been employed, even in written texts, for a long time. On the other hand, Sardinian was regarded as a dialect by a minority of the sample because of the existence of several varieties of Sardinian and the lack of a codified grammar, syntax, and standard form. Moreover, a similarity (which was not fully explained and could therefore be at a sociolinguistic or linguistic level) between the situation of Sardinian and that of the Italian dialects was recognized by these respondents.

Some of the reasons given by the urban sample to justify the opinion that Sardinian was a language coincided with some of those given to justify the opinion that Sardinian was a dialect. For instance, the fact that there are internal varieties of Sardinian was a reason for Sardinian being regarded as a language by two respondents and as a dialect by three others. The geographical context in which Sardinian is spoken (an island, a region) was a reason for Sardinian being regarded as a language by two respondents and as a dialect by two others. One respondent wrote about Sardinian not having the rules of a proper language. By using the word 'rules' s/he may have been referring to the lack of a codified grammar and syntax. Many of

the respondents who agreed that Sardinian was a language thought the opposite, that Sardinian did have a codified grammar and syntax.

The respondents were asked whether it is fair to make a distinction between a Sardinian language and Italian dialects (Neapolitan, Venetian, etc.). 62 per cent of the urban respondents answered yes, 27 per cent answered no, 3 per cent did not know, and 7 per cent did not reply. The respondents who answered yes argued that Sardinian, unlike the Italian dialects, was an independent linguistic system. The urban respondents who disagreed about the distinction expressed a similar position to that of Cristina Lavinio: 'La situazione in Sardegna è simile a quella di altre zone d'Italia e i dialetti sardi non godono affatto, in questo rapporto, di uno statuto privilegiato rispetto alla maggioranza degli altri dialetti: la loro funzionalità comunicativa li colloca sullo stesso piano' (1980:153). They claimed that Sardinian lacked a standard form, or saw an affinity between the situation of Sardinian and that of the Italian dialects.

Regarding the non-urban respondents, 70 per cent answered yes, 27 per cent answered no, and 7 per cent did not know. Thus, even though only 57 per cent of the non-urban sample agreed that Sardinian was a language, the percentage of respondents believing that there should be a distinction between Sardinian language and Italian dialects was considerably higher. This shows a certain degree of confusion among the non-urban respondents about whether Sardinian is a language or a dialect. However, their high competence in Sardinian could be one of the factors influencing their perception of Sardinian being a language, and hence of being a variety with a higher status than the others spoken in Italy.

8.2.3 The link between Sardinian language and Sardinian identity

If the survival of a variety is threatened, the identity that becomes the marker of the threatened variety is also endangered. Concerns about the safeguarding of a particular variety are often a way of expressing concerns about local or regional identities, which are perceived as threatened by the national and super-national entities. The loss of a language is viewed as the loss of a specific identity. In recent years, globalization has become an additional cause of concern for the future of local or regional identities. If, up to few years ago, the threat to the safeguarding of local and regional varieties was perceived as coming from the nation state, more recently,

the European dimension and globalization are also having an impact on people's views about the future of local or regional varieties.

The aim of this section of the questionnaire was, therefore, to assess the Sardinians' views about the decline of their language and to see if they felt that the loss of Sardinian would mean the loss of their regional identity. The respondents were asked if they were concerned with the future of Sardinian and for which reasons it was important to protect it. The replies to this section of the questionnaire showed some concern for the future of Sardinian: 62 per cent of the urban respondents and 47 per cent of the non-urban respondents did not think that Sardinian would be spoken by future generations. 38 per cent of the urban respondents and 43 per cent of the non-urban respondents thought that it would still be spoken in fifty or one hundred years. 90 per cent of the urban respondents and 70 per cent of the non-urban respondents thought that it was important to safeguard the future of Sardinian.

The answers to question 15 ('For which reasons is it important to try to safeguard Sardinian?') indicated a stronger correlation between language and identity among the urban respondents than among the non-urban respondents. 21 per cent of the urban respondents and only 7 per cent of the non-urban respondents made a direct link between the safeguarding of the Sardinian language and that of the Sardinian identity. The remaining respondents in both groups made the connection more indirectly: the safeguarding of Sardinian was important to protect the historical, cultural, and linguistic heritage of the region. This finding supports Fishman's assertion that 'it is a characteristic of the newly rich to supply their own ancestors. In a similar vein those speech communities, [...], are also more likely to be concerned with its *historicity*, that is with its respectable ancestry in times long past' (Fishman, 1972: 20). Moreover, Fishman asserts that 'historicity provides the *ex post facto* rationale for functional changes that have transpired with respect to the verbal repertoire of a speech community' (Fishman, 1972: 20). In the case of Sardinian, the link between identity and language as well as the importance the promoters attribute to the protection of the historical and cultural heritage of the island have created the conditions for its 'functional change'. According to law 482, Sardinian can be employed in formal and official domains. However, in the fourth section of the questionnaire, in which the views of the respondents on the use of Sardinian in

administrative and official settings were examined, the replies showed a high degree of doubt and uncertainty.

The urban sample made a strong correlation between protection of language and protection of identity. For several urban respondents, being Sardinian meant having a specific identity. The answers to Q17 and Q18 showed the importance the urban sample attributed to the Sardinian identity. 69 per cent of the respondents regarded this as important and saw the safeguarding of Sardinian as a way of protecting it. However, with very few exceptions, they did not see their regional identity as conflicting with national and European dimensions. They asserted that they felt Sardinians, Italians, and Europeans at the same time. Therefore, the safeguarding of Sardinian as a language marking the Sardinian identity, history, and ancestry did not mean positions of closure towards 'outsiders' and unrealistic aspirations to reverse the present socio-political conditions of the island. As Fishman puts it, 'most RSLers [reversing language shifters] are not by any means aiming at a "return to the golden past", when the interaction between people was minimal and, therefore, when local differences could be easily maintained. On the contrary, they [...] would like to "call more of their own cultural shots", so to speak, and to make sure that globalisation's unification of the market is counterbalanced to a larger extent by an even greater emphasis on different cultural values, skills, attitudes and beliefs that stem from and reinforce their own identity' (Fishman, 2001: 6).

Regarding the non-urban sample, the answers to question 16 ('What does it mean for you to be Sardinian?') showed that only a minority of respondents (13 per cent) stressed the diversity and specificity of the Sardinians. Another small percentage of respondents (17 per cent) emphasized the positive traits of the Sardinian people. The rest of the sample did not attribute specific values to Sardinian identity and stated that they felt mainly Italian. However, the importance of having a Sardinian identity was acknowledged by 70 per cent of the sample, while 60 per cent linked the safeguarding of the language with that of identity. Moreover, with very few exceptions (7 per cent), they did not see their regional identity as being in conflict with the national and European dimensions.

These findings show that the non-urban sample did not lay emphasis on the diversity of the Sardinian people and saw the safeguarding of the language as a way of preserving the traditions and the culture of the island, rather than of distancing

themselves from the rest of Italy. Moreover, several non-urban respondents expressed their reservations about the link between language and identity. There was a feeling that being Sardinian did not have to be strictly linked with the ability to speak the language. The urban sample, on the other hand, made the connection between language and identity more directly. It is worth remembering that the linguistic competence of the urban respondents was lower than that of the non-urban respondents. This different level of competence might have generated different responses to questions on Sardinian identity. Those who speak the language and therefore have more relaxed attitudes about the future of Sardinian do not emphasize the connection between language and identity. Those who are less able to speak the language, and therefore are more concerned about the future of Sardinian, make a stronger link between language and identity.

Crystal, despite his acknowledgement of language as an expression of identity, states that the view that ‘people cannot save their culture without their language’ (2000: 39) is an overstatement, given that so many communities demonstrate a living ethnicity despite the fact that most of its members have lost or never learned the language. Therefore, in future years, developments towards a notion of a Sardinian identity and ethnicity that do not include the ability to speak the language might be possible in Sardinia.

8.2.4 *Reactions to measures to safeguard Sardinian*

Cristina Lavinio summarizes the position of the supporters of the ‘Sardinian language’, who are in favour of the use of Sardinian in more formal contexts, in this way:

La ‘lingua’ sarda, proprio grazie al suo essere ‘lingua’ e non ‘dialetto’, avrebbe diritto ad essere salvaguardata, tutelata ed utilizzata in ambiti molto più ampi rispetto a quelli corrispondenti al suo uso attuale, dovrebbe sostituire l’italiano negli atti ufficiali degli Enti locali, negli uffici pubblici, nei mezzi di comunicazione di massa, dovrebbe essere insegnata in tutte le scuole dell’isola e divenire lingua d’insegnamento almeno nella scuola dell’obbligo. (1979: 150)

Many urban respondents seemed to be against the use of Sardinian in the meetings of these councils. The majority view was that Italian is the language to be used in the administration of the Italian *comuni*, *province*, and *regioni*. Another reason was that

such measures would discriminate against those who do not speak Sardinian and, therefore, would be undemocratic. The few who were in favour of the use of Sardinian in the municipal councils thought that it would be easier for the councillors to express themselves in the local variety and that there was still a need to use Sardinian in this situation. However, some urban respondents pointed out that, since several varieties of Sardinian are spoken within the same province and region, there would be problems of comprehension, if the local varieties were spoken in the provincial and regional councils.

The views of the non-urban respondents on the employment of Sardinian in local politics were mixed. 47 per cent were in favour of the use of Sardinian in the meetings of the municipal councils, while 43 per cent were in favour of its use in the meetings of the provincial and regional councils. The reasons given by the people in favour of this measure were:

- It would assist those who do not speak Italian, especially the older people
- Sardinian is the language of Sardinia, therefore the administrators need to speak it
- Sardinian is more important than Italian
- It would guarantee the safeguarding of Sardinian
- Local and regional problems need to be discussed in the local varieties
- Sardinians would understand each other better if they used the local language

On the other hand, those who were against the possible introduction of Sardinian in local politics gave reasons similar to those of the urban respondents.

Another way of promoting Sardinian would be through the media. Currently, the use of Sardinian in the media is rather limited and very dependent on the initiatives of a few individuals. Many urban respondents admitted that they were not interested in newspapers, magazines, and radio channels in Sardinian. Even those who read articles in Sardinian considered that they addressed only local issues, and were of poor quality and difficult to understand. The non-urban respondents, however, showed a little more interest in the media in Sardinian, since 13 per cent of them read newspapers or magazines in Sardinian, and 30 per cent listened to radio programmes in Sardinian. In both groups, there was a very different attitude towards

a possible television channel in Sardinian: 76 per cent of the urban respondents and 63 per cent of the non-urban respondents were in favour. They thought that it could help to preserve and spread the language. Several urban respondents, moreover, emphasized that a television channel could help to assert a Sardinian identity, express diversity, and also strengthen the feeling of belonging to the same community.

48 per cent of the urban respondents and 40 per cent of the non-urban respondents were in favour of the possibility of celebrating of the mass in Sardinian. According to the urban respondents, it would be a moving experience and would involve the local population. Another reason was that it would be a good way of asserting Sardinian diversity. However, the main advantage for the non-urban sample was that it would give prestige to Sardinian and would be better understood by some sections of the local population. In both groups, some respondents argued that the initiative would create problems of understandings. In addition to this, some urban respondents were concerned that it would be only a folkloric event, while some of the non-urban respondents pointed out that they would prefer the celebration of the mass in Latin.

Regarding the use of Sardinian in education, half of the urban sample was in favour of the teaching of Sardinian in nursery schools, and more than half was in favour of the teaching of Sardinian in primary and middle schools. The majority of the urban respondents were in favour of the teaching of Sardinian language, literature, and culture in high schools and universities. It seems, therefore, that the greater the age at which Sardinian was introduced into the schooling system, the better was the response of the sample. The views of the non-urban respondents showed a similar pattern, even though their replies registered a lower level of consent.

Generally, the replies of the urban respondents to this section of the questionnaire showed that they had stronger views about the best ways of promoting Sardinian: they opposed the introduction of Sardinian in local politics, they did not have an interest in newspapers, magazines, and radio channels in Sardinian but they agreed with the creation of a television channel and the introduction of Sardinian in education. The non-urban respondents, on the other hand, did not have a strong objection to any possible way of safeguarding Sardinian and did not have preferences for specific actions. Their response to this section of the questionnaire was rather

uniform. In both groups, the respondents who were against the introduction of Sardinian in education thought that it would be more useful to encourage the use of the language in the family. This point is interesting and recurred in the replies to question 32. 52 per cent of the urban respondents and 50 per cent of the non-urban respondents thought that the safeguarding of Sardinian should start in the family, with children being encouraged to speak the language at home.

These findings are in line with those of other studies conducted on local or regional languages in Italy. Parry (1994: 173-92) conducted a socio-linguistic survey on Piedmontese. Piedmontese does not enjoy the status of language and it is classified as an Italian dialect. Every year, in Quincinetto in Piedmont, there is a motion calling for support of Piedmontese. In her survey, Parry questioned her informants about the use of Piedmontese in more formal contexts, such as education, the media, and local politics. She wrote that answers to questions on the use of local or regional languages in local politics revealed much opposition from the people who would be affected by these provisions (1994: 183-85). The majority feel that Italian should be used in official situations, Italian being the official language of the state. Analogies with the results of Parry's study (1994: 184) also appear when the respondents reply to questions on the situation of the local media. The standard of local radio programmes was perceived as low and so was that of the local newspapers.

Access to the media is considered by *Contact* (1987) of paramount importance for the safeguarding of the threatened variety. In Sardinia, the lack of a television channel and the low standard of the local media reveal a lack of interest on the part of the local population and authorities. This may well be the result of a lack of linkage between local and regional languages and real life. If access to social interaction, education, and jobs is guaranteed by the acquisition of the national language, then the safeguarding of threatened languages becomes problematic unless it is carried out with a realistic assessment of the objectives to be achieved. Threatened languages do not possess the power to spill over substantially and predictably into other functions, particularly not into functions at any distance from those in which they are acquired (Fishman, 2001: 467).

In both groups, several respondents underlined the importance of the family in passing on the language. Two Alaskan field workers, Nora and Richard Dauenhauers have used the expression ‘the bureaucratic fix’ to refer to the readiness with which people think that language safeguarding should be carried out by specialists, institutions, and official bodies (1998: 69-70). The Dauenhauers underlined the importance of the family in the transmission of a language. The awareness of the importance of the role of the family in maintaining the language would be an important strategy to use in a linguistic policy aimed at the safeguarding of Sardinian. The use of the language in more official and formal domains can help to revive the language and to enhance its status, but cannot replace the input that should come from the family and the community.

8.2.5 Reactions to legislative measures

Law 482 protects the Sardinian language. Sardinian can now be taught in primary and middle schools, employed in meetings of municipal councils and in public administration, and written in official documents. Moreover, this law allows the use of Sardinian in the media. The respondents were asked if they were aware of the existence of the law. 72 per cent of the urban respondents were aware, while 27 per cent of them were not. 47 per cent of the non-urban respondents were aware, while 47 per cent were not. The rest did not reply. The rather high percentage of non-urban respondents unaware of the existence of the law is probably due to the fact that they have less access to information concerning such legislation. The sample was also asked their opinion about the law. This question could be posed to all the respondents, including those who were unaware of law 482, because its content was summarized in the initial part of the section.

Q34: What do you think of this law (tick one or more boxes)? (%)

	Urban	Non-urban
Fair	34	37
Necessary	17	10
Useless	27	43
Unjust	7	3
Other	16	7

The table show that the respondents’ views about law 482 were mixed. One group did not see it as a positive development in Sardinia. Some of the urban respondents

added that it was useless because it would be anachronistic to restore the use of Sardinian; others thought that it was unjust as the selection of a standard form of Sardinian would be discriminatory against the other varieties spoken in the island. Some others described the law as useless and unfair since Italian should be used in official situations. It was also considered unnecessary because it could contribute to a further isolation of the island from the rest of Italy. 43 per cent of the non-urban respondents had negative views about the law. They expressed their concern for Gallurese, the linguistic variety spoken in Gallura, the area in which the majority of them were living. They regarded Sardinian as an abstract concept, a language that does not reflect the linguistic fragmentation existing in Sardinia. Since the familiar variety for many respondents was Gallurese, the employment of Sardinian in more formal contexts was seen as pointless and even potentially dangerous for the survival of the other local varieties. The position of Gallurese within the community, in fact, was perceived as threatened by the imposition of this unfamiliar variety. Indeed, the sense of a Gallurese identity was stronger amongst these groups of respondents than that of a Sardinian identity. Gallurese was the variety spoken in the family and with friends and the variety that they were hoping to pass on to the next generation. Several respondents stressed this point and wrote that the law was meaningless to them, since they spoke Gallurese and, consequently, did not have any feelings for Sardinian. The Gallurese bias of my sample group has already been discussed in Chapter 7. It is possible that a larger sample, spread over a wider geographical area would have registered a more positive attitude towards the introduction of Sardinian. However, in both urban and non-urban groups, there were respondents who regarded this law as a positive development for the future of Sardinian. They thought that it was an important and necessary step for the preservation of Sardinian and of the Sardinian identity.

In the final question, the sample was asked if they thought that law 482 would be followed by practical actions to safeguard Sardinian. 14 per cent of the urban respondents and 20 per cent of the non-urban respondents replied affirmatively, 27 per cent of urban respondents and 53 per cent of the others replied negatively. The remaining respondents in both groups either did not know or did not reply.

The findings show that in both groups only a minority of respondents have a positive view of law 482. However, the non-urban respondents were more negative

about law 482, while the urban respondents were uncertain about the law, since a high percentage of them did not have a view on it or chose not to reply. Generally the sample, even those who expressed positive reactions to the law, seemed to be very sceptical about its application. This was seen as a long and difficult process, and several problems were forecast, such as a lack of coordination and efficiency and the lack of a standard form of Sardinian. Many respondents, however, thought that Italian was the language to be employed in official situations and administration, while Sardinian was more suitable for specific contexts, such as the family, cultural initiatives, and education. This supports the claim of Tosi (2000: 30) who refers to the figures of the 1991 Doxa survey and concludes that the family and informal socialization are the domains in which dialects are mostly used. This point is also stressed by Fishman (2001: 467) who regards the home-family, neighbourhood, and community, i.e. intergenerational mother tongue transmission, as crucial for the safeguarding of the threatened language. He stresses the importance of the role of the threatened language in family, intimacy, and local identity (2001: 475) and claims that, if this aspect of reversing language shift is disregarded, actions and legislation to safeguard the language become useless.

8.3 Categories

So far, the analysis has been carried out on the urban and the non-urban sample as a whole. In the following sections, the urban and the non-urban sample will be analysed according to different categories: sex, age, and status.

8.3.1 Analysis based on the sex of the respondents

The first subdivision was made according to the sex of the respondents. Amongst the urban respondents, there were fifteen females and fifteen males. Amongst the non-urban respondents there were eighteen females and twelve males.

8.3.1.1 Linguistic competence and behaviour

In both groups, the percentage of males speaking Sardinian was higher than that of the females: 7 per cent of the urban females and 61 per cent of the non-urban females spoke Sardinian, while 64 percent of the urban males and 91 per cent of the non-urban males were able to do so. The lower number of women not speaking Sardinian

reflects the finding of studies showing that women are more conscious than men of the most prestigious linguistic forms and are therefore ready to adopt them as a marker of social superiority (Labov, 1981: 185; Trudgill, 1972: 179-85). Trudgill (1972: 182-83) suggests that women may be more status-conscious because they are less secure and have less developed social networks than men. Labov reaches similar conclusions and points out that women prefer forms that have higher prestige in society. However, Labov writes that 'it is important to bear in mind that this shift towards higher prestige forms is limited to those societies where women play a role in public life' (Labov, 1981: 184). Men, on the other hand, may seek solidarity through the 'toughness' that non-standard varieties of the language seem to indicate. If they lead in any kind of change, such change may well be away from the norm (Wardhaugh, 1992: 322).

The attitude of the non-urban females unable to speak Sardinian towards language acquisition, however, was negative overall. This is in contrast with the findings of the urban females, whose attitude towards the acquisition of Sardinian was very positive. These different positions may be explained by the fact that the non-urban females are from Gallura and this factor could have influenced their negative attitude towards the acquisition of a language (Sardinian) perceived as alien and different from the local variety they normally speak. Another possible explanation is that, for many women living in more rural and isolated areas, the acquisition of the national language is relatively new and they are still striving to express their new social position, which came with the acquisition of the national language. For the urban females, however, the acquisition of Italian is more a battle that lies behind them, and, they are, therefore, more in the position to appreciate the consequences of the decline of their regional variety. Fishman has pointed out that 'attitudes towards threatened languages seem to improve quite noticeably toward the very end, when their imminent demise is already quite evident' (2001: 464). It might well be, therefore, that in the areas where the local language is still alive, the attitude towards language acquisition is rather negative, since they are more concerned with the acquisition of the national language, whereas in the areas where the decline of the local language is evident, and the acquisition of the national language is established, people's attitude towards the threatened variety become more protective. Another possible explanation of the negative attitudes of the non-urban females towards the

acquisition of Sardinian could be that most of them are from Gallura and therefore might think that Gallurese rather than Sardinian is the variety worth learning.

8.3.1.2 *The distinction between language and dialect*

When asked if Sardinian was a language or a dialect more males than females, in both groups, chose the former option. It is worth noting that 50 per cent of the non-urban females regarded Sardinian as a language. The percentage of the urban females who gave the status of language to Sardinian was lower: 33 per cent. However, 7 per cent of them considered that Sardinian was both a language and a dialect and another 7 per cent that in some parts of Sardinia it was a language. The following tables show the replies of both urban and non-urban respondents.

Q8: In your opinion is Sardinian a language or a dialect? (%)

Urban	Dialect	Language	Both	In some parts of Sardinia, it is a language
Females	53	33	7	7
Males	21	78	0	0

Non-urban	Dialect	Language	Both	I do not know
Females	50	50	0	0
Males	17	67	0	17

The lower number of females regarding Sardinian as a dialect may be seen in relation to the fact that, 'language' being a more prestigious term and 'dialect' a less prestigious one, women are more willing to reserve the label 'language' for Italian alone, as the variety giving access to high-status positions in society. The higher number of males regarding Sardinian as a language may be seen in relation to their greater linguistic competence. The reason why more males promoted Sardinian to the rank of 'language' and therefore gave it a higher status, may be that they employ it in a variety of functions in society. For several male respondents, Sardinian was a linguistic code useful for interaction with family, friends, and colleagues at work. If males are less status-conscious and attribute less importance to the prestige of the linguistic forms, they may well give the same status, that of 'language', both to Sardinian, the linguistic code used in more informal situations, and to Italian, the linguistic code more appropriate in formal contexts.

In 1976, Antonietta Dettorri conducted a sociolinguistic survey in Macomer. Despite its rather low number of inhabitants (11,083), this industrial town in central Sardinia is more representative of the linguistic behaviour of urbanized areas, since it is an important commercial centre and functions as a railway and road junction. Moreover, there is a high number of schools, offices, and public services (Sanna, 1980: 129). In Dettorri's survey, the sample was composed of 78 factory workers, of different ages and both males and females. The use of Sardinian amongst females was significantly lower than that amongst males. Females, in fact, were more sensitive to the social prestige associated with the ability to speak Italian and tended to use it even in more familiar contexts:

La differenza di sesso esercita un ruolo importante sugli atteggiamenti linguistici del campione: le donne appaiono generalmente più favorevoli all'uso dell'italiano e pertanto più sensibili al prestigio sociale che ad esso viene correntemente riconosciuto, ed è soprattutto nei domini amici e paese che il loro atteggiamento si caratterizza significativamente sul piano statistico. (1979: 189)

Furthermore, Sanna writes that, in Sardinia, for many women, the rejection of their local variety means refusal of the rigid society in which they live and suggests an ambition to social advancement. Many young women state that they are not able to speak Sardinian, but, in fact, a more detailed survey shows that they speak it and use it:

Il rifiuto del sardo appare, spesso, più dichiarato nelle donne, come rifiuto di un certo tipo di società, come volontà di fuga da un mondo chiuso, come tentativo di promozione sociale.

In realtà, a un'analisi più approfondita [...] è risultato che le giovani donne che avevano affermato di non conoscere attivamente il sardo, ne avevano completa competenza. Nella famiglia, nella vita di relazione, nel paese, nel lavoro, malgrado la loro tendenza a nascondere durante l'intervista, il sardo era, anche per loro, in genere, vivo e vitale, ma esse mostravano una tendenza ad operare precise scelte situazionali nel suo uso. (1979: 126)

8.3.1.3 *The link between local language and local identity*

Both males and females in the two different groups expressed concern about the future of Sardinian:

Q13: Do you think that Sardinian will be spoken by future generations? (%)

	No
Urban females	60
Urban males	57
Non-urban females	56
Non-urban males	58

The following table shows their attitude towards the safeguarding of Sardinian:

Q14: Do you think it is important to safeguard the future of Sardinian? (%)

	Yes
Urban females	93
Urban males	86
Non-urban females	55
Non-urban males	75

The slightly higher number of urban females, compared to that of the urban males, who gave importance to the preservation of Sardinian may be a consequence of their more positive attitude towards language acquisition. However, when asked why it was important to safeguard Sardinian, the urban males expressed more concern with the preservation of the diversities and peculiarities of the Sardinian people. The replies to the question ‘What does it mean for you to be Sardinian?’ also revealed a general belief on the part of the urban males in the specificity of the Sardinians, who were described by one respondent as a superior race. The females wrote about the specificity of the Sardinian people but, at the same time, they did not see this specificity as conflicting with being Italian or European. The females also stressed the problems of living in an island, especially the disadvantages of being isolated from the rest of Italy. They seemed concerned that isolation from the mainland may have negative effects on the Sardinian people, such as a more difficult access to social advancement.

The urban males, therefore, made a more explicit link between the safeguarding of the local language and the safeguarding of local identity. The urban females put less emphasis on the diversities of the Sardinian people and expressed concern for the preservation of the Sardinian culture and history. Moreover, several urban females thought that all the regional varieties should be preserved, in order to keep the distinctiveness of each specific region. Therefore, they did not think that the Sardinians were the only ones to have a specific identity to protect and safeguard. Cristina Lavinio states this point very clearly:

Non si può non rilevare, come in tutto ciò, sia implicita una discutibile contrapposizione tra lingua e dialetto in cui la polarità rappresentata dal dialetto assume una indebita connotazione negativa; e si è spesso lontanissimi dal pensare che il problema della tutela dei 'beni linguistici' possa riguardare tutte le realtà 'dialettali' esistenti in Italia, che pure sono tutte ugualmente connesse a peculiarità di carattere culturale, frutto di una frantumazione storica plurisecolare, della cui dispersione non si vede perché ci si dovrebbe disinteressare per privilegiare solo i diritti delle cosiddette 'minoranze'. (1979: 150)

Like the urban males, the non-urban males also made a strong connection between the safeguarding of the language and the safeguarding of identity. Furthermore, they valued their Sardinian identity very positively. The non-urban females, however, were generally less willing to promote their local language and also gave less importance to the notion of a 'Sardinian identity'. This is in contrast with the attitude of the urban females, who valued the safeguarding of the local language and identity very highly. This different position may be explained with the fact that the urban females are less competent in Sardinian than the non-urban females. They are, therefore, more aware of the possibility of losing a very important component of the Sardinian identity: the language. The non-urban females, however, might be more interested in the acquisition of the national language, which gives access to social and economic advancement.

The different attitudes of the two sexes towards the promotion of the local language and identity may be explained partly by the fact that the males are more ready than the females to use the local language in different domains and that their linguistic competence in the local variety is higher. Another reason could be that men may seek solidarity through covert prestige forms (Trudgill, 1974: 95-102). They are more likely than women to adopt a non-standard dialect, since the prestige associated with this choice is gained from within group gender identification. If men seek solidarity through the use of non-standard forms, this may explain the more positive attitude the Sardinian males showed towards the safeguarding of their language and identity.

DetTORRI explains the different attitudes of the males and females towards Sardinian with the different roles the two sexes perform in Sardinian society:

Nella famiglia tradizionale sarda la donna ha pari dignità dell'uomo, ma ambiti di competenza nettamente distinti ed è soprattutto inserita in una rete di rapporti sociali meno ampia. La distinzione fra i ruoli, connessa a una netta separazione fra i sessi, si verifica fin dalla fanciullezza. Alla bambina, che ha anche maggiori responsabilità nell'ambito della famiglia (aiuto nelle faccende domestiche, sorveglianza dei bambini piccoli) viene riconosciuta minore libertà che ai coetanei maschi. Le viene a mancare, per es., quell'importante canale di socializzazione che è costituito per l'uomo nella società sarda dalle 'compagnie', gruppi per classi di età di ragazzi e giovani, e pertanto quella rete di rapporti di complicità-solidarietà anche linguistica, che potrebbe essere una delle principali motivazioni che il codice dialettale conserva per gli uomini. Per la ragazza che cresce separata dai maschi ed è inserita in una rete meno codificata, più episodica e saltuaria di relazioni amicali con le coetanee, il canale principale di socializzazione, accanto alla famiglia resta la scuola. Pertanto l'incontro con i valori culturali e linguistici veicolati dalla scuola, non filtrati attraverso l'esperienza rassicurante di solidarietà linguistica del *peer group*, determina nella ragazza sensi di inferiorità più accentuati in relazione al codice dialettale. (1979: 192-94)

8.3.1.4 Reactions to measures to safeguard Sardinian

In the urban sample, the reactions to measures to safeguard Sardinian were generally similar amongst males and females. The use of Sardinian in meetings of the municipal, provincial, and regional councils was generally opposed, as the preferred language for these situations was Italian. The non-urban females also opposed the use of Sardinian in local politics, but the non-urban males had a more positive attitude. They were generally more in favour of the use of Sardinian in more formal and official settings. 67 per cent of the non-urban males approved the use of Sardinian in local councils, while 58 per cent agreed with its use in provincial and regional councils. Moreover, several non-urban males gave reasons in strong support of its use in local or regional politics: better understanding among the participants, preservation of the language, the higher status that Sardinian would acquire, the importance of discussing local problems in the local language.

The number of urban males who read Sardinian magazines and newspapers was slightly higher than that of the urban females. However, the males criticized harshly their poor quality. The majority of the non-urban females and males did not read newspapers or magazines in Sardinian. However, 50 per cent of the non-urban males listened to radio programmes in Sardinian, and 67 per cent were in favour of a possible television channel in Sardinian. This measure was approved strongly by the non-urban females: 77 per cent of them were in favour. In the urban sample, the

majority of both females and males agreed with the introduction of a television channel in Sardinian, but, more females than males approved of it.

The majority of the urban females and of the non-urban males were also in favour of the celebration of the mass in Sardinian, while only 36 per cent of the urban males supported the idea. 50 per cent of the non-urban females were against it, since it would create problems of understanding and there would therefore be a situation similar to when the mass was celebrated in Latin.

Reactions towards the introduction of Sardinian in education showed that the majority of the non-urban males approved it. The introduction of Sardinian in nursery, primary, and middle schools, was opposed by 55 per cent of the non-urban females. A lower number of them were against the introduction of Sardinian in high schools and universities, since 50 per cent objected to it. The non-urban females were more concerned with the correct acquisition of the national language and also of the 'important' foreign languages. One also underlined the problem of the lack of qualified teaching staff. The main reason in favour of the introduction of Sardinian in education was that it is better to learn a language when you are young.

In the urban sample, the higher number of urban females in favour of the use of Sardinian in the media, religious ceremonies, education, and the family may be the result of their more positive attitude towards language acquisition. However, similar surveys have found out that 'support in principle for threatened languages is not hard to come by, whereas support for concrete proposals is less forthcoming and real personal commitment is scarce' (Parry, 1994: 178). Since the linguistic competence of the females is usually low, they may be ready in theory to support a policy to safeguard Sardinian, but it is difficult to forecast whether this support will develop into a personal commitment to protect Sardinian. The analysis of the attitude of the non-urban sample towards actions to safeguard Sardinian, however, revealed the opposite behaviour: more males than females were in favour of the use of Sardinian in more formal contexts. This may well be a consequence of the fact that, in more rural and isolated areas, it is quite common to use Sardinian in formal contexts, as Sanna points out: 'bisogna aggiungere che in molti consigli comunali si discute in sardo, che anche nelle chiese dell'interno il sardo viene usato e, nelle aule dei tribunali, il sardo compare spesso a livello di imputati e testimoni' (1980: 125). The non-urban females, however, were more concerned than the males about the

importance of using the national language in official contexts. This different attitude suggests that the females living in non-urban areas regard the ability to use the national language in a variety of contexts as a major factor contributing to success and social advancement. This position is possibly reinforced by the fact that females living in more rural and isolated areas are still striving to change their traditional role in society and see this change as dependent on their correct acquisition of the national language.

8.3.1.5 Reactions to legislative measures

The urban males were better informed about the existence of law 482 than the urban females. However, views about the law were more positive in the female group. Several females considered it an important step for the safeguarding of Sardinian. The females who were against the law thought that the national language should be used in formal and official situations and that the safeguarding of Sardinian was anachronistic. Moreover, there was some concern that the law might mean further isolation for Sardinia. Therefore the females' views about the law were conflicting: some thought that Sardinian should be given a higher status and used in more formal contexts, others thought that the national language should be used in formal and official situations. Both positions, however, showed awareness that the promotion of a variety to the rank of 'language' can change the future of that variety in the society.

Problems were also envisaged in the selection of a standard variety, which would be imposed at the expense of the other varieties spoken in the island. Cristina Lavinio states that the people who are in favour of the use of Sardinian in more formal contexts never specify how this process should be carried out:

A questo punto occorre mettere in rilievo che chi si batte per l'insegnamento del sardo non dice niente circa le modalità con cui tale insegnamento dovrebbe attuarsi. L'unico problema affrontato è ancora una volta quello relativo alla varietà (o della *koinè*) da insegnare. C'è chi arriva a sostenere la necessità dell'insegnamento, contemporaneamente, del logudorese comune – in quanto lingua nazionale sarda – e della parlata locale. [...] Ed è inutile sottolineare le enormi difficoltà tecniche che renderebbero impossibile, quand'anche la proposta risultasse accettabile teoricamente, la municipalizzazione oltre che la già difficile conseguibile 'sardizzazione' dei posti d'insegnamento (e degli impieghi: la stessa proposta viene avanzata per gli uffici pubblici). (1979: 161)

There seems to be a gap between the legislation and the practical issues to be dealt with. If the practical issues are not solved, legislation to safeguard Sardinian might be not enough to guarantee survival. It is not surprising, therefore, that several respondents who had a positive view of the law were not so positive regarding practical developments arising from it.

The issue of how to put legislation into practice was also raised by the urban males. Half of them regarded the law as a good thing, but several had no trust in its practical application. They forecast various problems (lack of a coherent language planning, delays in the application of the law, or even failure to transform it into practical actions) and did not think that the law would be followed by positive steps to safeguard Sardinian.

The non-urban males were better informed about the existence of law 482 than the non-urban females and had more positive views about it. The majority of males considered it an important step for the safeguarding of the Sardinian language and identity. 55 per cent of the females, however, thought it was useless and stressed again the importance of learning the national language. The females were also rather negative about the application of the law, since it did not take into account the several varieties of Sardinian spoken in Sardinia.

8.3.2 Analysis based on age groups

The urban and the non-urban sample were divided into three groups, according to the age of the respondents. The first group (G1) included those aged 21-35; the second group (G2) included those aged 36-50; the third group (G3) included those aged 51 and above. In the urban sample, there were thirteen young respondents, nine middle-aged, and seven old. In the non-urban sample, there were thirteen young respondents, six middle-aged, and eleven old.

8.3.2.1 Linguistic competence and behaviour

The following table compares the linguistic competence of the three groups in the urban and non-urban sample. It is interesting to note the decline in the local or regional variety in the non-urban sample, especially if compared to the linguistic competence of the urban sample, in which the shift from Sardinian is far less pronounced. A more detailed analysis of the results in each group is provided below.

In the non-urban sample, the figures regarding linguistic competence according to age category show a decline of the language in intergenerational transmission. The following table shows the linguistic competence in Sardinian of the three age groups.

Q1: Do you speak Sardinian? (%)

	Non-urban			Urban		
	G1	G2	G3	G1	G2	G3
Yes	46	83	100	38	28	42
No	54	17	0	62	72	58

The figures are in line with the findings of a survey on the Sardinian language use carried out for Euromosaic in 1995

(www.uoc.es/euromosaic/web/document/sard/an/e1.html [accessed 3 July 2004]).

According to the latter survey, there has been a pronounced shift in the ability to speak Sardinian during the generation of the respondents, which has declined from about 80 per cent in the parental generation to less than 50 per cent for their offspring.

	Very good	Quite good	Little	None	NA
Father	228.00	44	11.00	10.00	3.00
Mother	224.00	44	13.00	14.00	1.00
Brother	124.00	54	57	23	38
Sister	108	43	51	24	70
Maternal Grandparents	248	16	3	18	11
Paternal Grandparents	246	18	4	12	16

The Euromosaic survey was undertaken in ten sampling points distributed across Sardinia, involving the areas of Sassarese, Nuorese, Monte Ferru, Barbagia, Oristano, Marmilla, Iglesiente, Campidano di Cagliari, and the city of Cagliari. Although the size of the sample is not specified, the ten different locations used for the investigation indicate that it is a large-scale survey. It is not clear whether the place of residence of the informants was employed to establish whether it affected their linguistic behaviour and attitudes. Moreover, no explanation is given regarding the figures in the table and this makes it difficult to understand to what they refer. Since no indication is given on what the figures refer to, one may assume that they relate to

the number of respondents. However, it was interesting to use them since in my sample, as in the Euromosaic survey, there was a pronounced shift in the ability to use Sardinian from the parental generation to that of their children. In both surveys, the shift was far more evident than for the preceding generation.

In the present study, the situation in the urban areas was found to be different: the linguistic competence of the older generations was not much higher than that of the younger generations, given that 42 per cent of the respondents in G3 and 38 per cent of those in G1 spoke Sardinian. 28 per cent of the respondents in G2 spoke Sardinian. While in urban districts a halt in the decline of dialects has been registered, according to the Doxa survey figures from 1991 and 1996 ('L'uso del dialetto', *Bollettino della Doxa*, 50/16-7, 17 September 1996, 167-85, cited in Parry, 2002: 54), and a drop in the use of Italian has also been confirmed by the ISTAT statistics of 1995 and 2000 (ISTAT, 2002, 'Lingua italiana e dialetti in Italia', www.istat.it/Comunicati/Fuoricale/allegati/Lingua-ita/ver3.doc [accessed 27 May 2004]), more rural and isolated areas are still undergoing the classic three-generational pattern of language shift. The first generation is monolingual in the local or regional variety, the second generation is bilingual in the national language and local or regional varieties, and the third generation is monolingual in the national language. Nettle and Romaine (2000: 136) observe a similar pattern in language transmission in several Celtic areas: where a parental generation was monolingual in the Celtic language but near to the English (or French) frontier, the children tended to become bilingual. Where the parents were bilingual, the children tended to become monolingual in the dominant language.

To return to the situation in Sardinia, the halt in the decline of the local varieties amongst the younger generations living in urban areas, might be seen as the result of the lack of conflict between national language and local varieties, which is allowing dialects to re-emerge. This is maintained by Berruto (2001: 33-49), who believes that people nowadays feel more confident and relaxed about using the local varieties, since linguistic unification in Italy has been achieved. Moreover, Parry (2002: 54) reports a similar tendency in her own field-work in Cairo Montenotte. The parents interviewed, claimed that, once their children had acquired a good knowledge of Italian, they had no objections about speaking to them in dialect.

Thus, in more rural and isolated areas, the shift in favour of the national language, which is very noticeable amongst the younger generations, might be caused by the fact that people are not relaxed about using dialect, since the acquisition of the national language is a relatively new phenomenon. Parents are very anxious for their children to acquire standard Italian, the command of which cannot be taken for granted. The local variety is still associated with negative factors such as ignorance and lack of opportunities for children who speak it, and it is more a cause of embarrassment than of pride. This negative attitude toward the local variety was confirmed by the comments of the younger generation on Sardinian, which was described as 'not useful' or 'ugly'. Several young respondents also claimed that they did not have any interest in learning Sardinian. It will appear in the following chapter that this attitude is in contrast with that of the young Sicilians towards the acquisition of their regional variety.

8.3.2.2 Distinction between language and dialect

Among the non-urban sample, 77 per cent of the young respondents, 33 per cent of the middle-aged respondents, and 45 per cent of the older respondents answered that Sardinian was a language. G1 was thus the group most prepared to give a higher status to Sardinian. This finding is rather surprising, since the young respondents were the least fluent in Sardinian and also the least interested in learning it. However, the percentage of young respondents who thought that it was fair to distinguish between Sardinian language and Italian dialects was lower, since 54 per cent of them thought that the distinction was appropriate. One young respondent pointed out that Sardinian should not be considered differently from the Italian dialects, since it performs the same functions in society. This concept also occurs in other sociolinguistic studies on Sardinian (Lavinio: 1979; Sanna, 1979). The following quotation shows the view of Lavinio, who does not see any dissimilarity between the functional role of Sardinian and that of the Italian dialects:

La situazione in Sardegna è simile a quella di altre zone d'Italia e i dialetti sardi non godono affatto, in questo rapporto, di uno statuto privilegiato rispetto alla maggioranza degli altri dialetti italiani: la loro funzionalità comunicativa li colloca ancora una volta sullo stesso piano. (1979: 153)

Regarding the urban sample, 54 per cent of the young respondents, 67 per cent of the middle-aged respondents and 86 per cent of the older ones answered that Sardinian was a language. Moreover, 69 per cent of the respondents in G1, 44 per cent in G2, and 86 per cent of the respondents in G3 thought that it was fair to distinguish between Sardinian language and Italian dialects. The urban as well as the non-urban young respondents thus gave contradictory answers regarding the issue of Sardinian being a language or a dialect. The non-urban young respondents classified Sardinian as a language, but when it was compared to the Italian dialects, a much lower number of respondents accepted the distinction that Sardinian is a language and the dialects of Italy are not. 54 per cent of the urban young respondents regarded Sardinian as a language, but a higher percentage (69 per cent) considered Sardinian to be a language when compared to the Italian dialects. Similarly, 45 per cent of the non-urban older respondents regarded Sardinian as a language and 73 per cent accepted the distinction between Sardinian language and Italian dialects. The urban middle-aged respondents also answered in a contradictory manner: 67 per cent of them regarded Sardinian as a language but only 44 per cent accepted the distinction between Sardinian language and Italian dialects.

The non-urban middle-aged respondents, however, showed more consistency in their replies on the status of Sardinian as language or dialect. However, they represented the highest percentage of those who regarded Sardinian as a dialect: 33 per cent. Moreover, only 33 per cent of them accepted the distinction between a Sardinian language and Italian dialects. The fact that so few respondents were prepared to give Sardinian the higher status of language, may be linked to their failure to pass on the language to the next generation and also to the negative views on Sardinian expressed by some young respondents. However, a reevaluation of the status of Sardinian may be taking place amongst the young people, given the high number of them who regard Sardinian as a language. This reevaluation may prove to be a useful tool for the safeguarding of the language in future years. In her survey in Macomer, Dettorri underlined the recent reevaluation of Sardinian amongst young people:

Nei giovani comincia a farsi strada qualche resistenza all'azione livellatrice di certi modelli esterni [...] C'è del resto una maggiore consapevolezza politica che consente di rivalutare, accanto a quella acquisita, forme alternative di cultura; e c'è anche una carica di protesta verso scelte politiche ed economiche che, lungi dal determinare l'attesa rinascita economica, si sono rivelate fonti di rinnovato sfruttamento e impoverimento dell'isola. Si ha da più parti la sensazione che si tenda, soprattutto da parte dei giovani operai, ad equilibri nuovi, per cui, l'inserimento nella realtà moderna non implichi la distruzione di quei valori della realtà tradizionale, che hanno ancora significato e importanza. Linguisticamente ciò si traduce in una rivalutazione delle parlate locali che vanno perdendo la connotazione di subaltermità che spesso le caratterizzava. (1979: 201)

The older urban generation also gave very consistent replies. 86 per cent of them regarded Sardinian as a language and accepted the distinction between Sardinian language and Italian dialects. Moreover, it was the group most prepared to give a higher status to Sardinian. This could be due to a nostalgic revaluation of the 'golden past', given that this generation had a direct experience of the transition from old to modern ways of life and has undergone the language shift in favour of the national language as a result of the enormous changes in Italian society.

8.3.2.3 The link between local language and local identity

A high number of non-urban respondents in the three different age groups were rather sceptical about the chances of survival for Sardinian in future years. Among the urban sample, the least optimistic group regarding the future of Sardinian was G1: 92 per cent of the young respondents thought that their local language would disappear. The other two groups, however, were more confident that Sardinian would be spoken in the future. 33 per cent of G2 and 43 per cent of G3 thought that Sardinian would still be spoken in fifty years. Moreover, 44 per cent of G2 and 14 per cent of G3 thought that Sardinian would still be spoken in one hundred years.

Regarding attitudes towards the safeguarding of Sardinian amongst the non-urban sample, 54 per cent of G1, 50 per cent of G2, and 82 per cent of G3 thought that it was important to safeguard Sardinian. This may be an indication that the future of Sardinian in rural areas is very uncertain. The number of young urban respondents interested in the preservation of Sardinian was much higher: 77 per cent. However, this different attitude may well be a consequence of the awareness of the decline of Sardinian amongst the young urban respondents. Crystal claims that

concerns about the decline of a variety are very common among the members of a community two generations after that which failed to pass the language on:

The first generation is typically not so concerned, as its members are often struggling to establish their new social position and new language. It is their children, secure in the new language and in a much better socio-economic position, with battles over land-claims and civil rights behind them, who begin to reflect on the heritage they have lost, and to wish that things had been otherwise. (2000: 106)

An important result of this stage of the analysis is that young people, especially those living in urban centres, regard the protection of regional or local languages as important, particularly because they relate it to the safeguarding of their regional identity. However, this revaluation does not mean aspiration to independent statehood or rejection of globalization and modernization. They want to have access to progress without renouncing local differences and values. The achievement of a balance between these two opposed and, sometimes, even conflicting tendencies is the challenge young generations will have to face in future years.

It is interesting to compare the results of the present study with those of the Euromosaic Sardinian language survey (www.uoc.es/euromosaic/web/document/sard/an/e1.html). The following table shows the findings regarding the issues of identity and attitudes. The respondents were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with eleven evaluative statements on Sardinian such as: 'there are more valuable languages to learn than Sardinian' or 'Sardinia would not really be Sardinia without Sardinian-speaking people'. The Euromosaic table shows that there is a highly developed sense of local identity, which coexists with that of a Sardinian, Italian, and European identity.

SELF IDENTITY

	Yes	No	NA
Local	218	72	6
Sardinian	279	17	0
Italian	260	36	0
European	203	93	0
Other	15	274	7

8.3.2.4 Reaction to measures to safeguard Sardinian

In the non-urban sample, the middle-aged respondents were the group most opposed to the introduction of Sardinian in more formal and official domains. The majority of the older respondents, however, approved of the use of Sardinian in these domains, while the reactions of the young respondents were generally mixed. Several young respondents approved the use of Sardinian especially in local politics, religious ceremonies, and education, while several others were against it. This pattern may be explained by consideration of the linguistic code chosen by the middle-aged respondents, especially in communication with their offspring. The present study and other larger-scale surveys, such as that of Euromosaic in 1995, have revealed the failure of middle-aged people to pass the language on to the next generation. The section on the linguistic competence of the three different age groups shows a high level of competence among the middle-aged respondents in Sardinian and a much lower level of ability in the young generation.

In my analysis, reactions to measures aimed to safeguard Sardinian reveal that most of the middle-aged respondents living in non-urban areas acknowledge the importance of using the national language in formal contexts and are concerned about the correct acquisition of Italian in Sardinia. The importance of learning and using the national language properly, which is advocated so strongly by the middle-aged group, might be explained with the fact that they were the generation who suffered prejudices deriving from lack of fluency in the national language and, therefore, made a conscious effort to avoid similar problems for their offspring, choosing the linguistic code which guaranteed access to better opportunities and social advancement. Cristina Lavinio, who makes some observations on the attitudes of parents towards the use of Sardinian in the family, in particular with their children, acknowledges this point:

L'italiano è la lingua da usare almeno con gli 'estranei' (nel senso del sardo campid. (i) *strangiu*, log. (i) *stranzu* 'non dello stesso paese, forestiero' – e non è escluso che il forestiero sia di un centro distante pochi chilometri –), con le 'persone importanti' e, ovviamente, a scuola, mentre il dialetto è proprio del dominio 'famiglia' oppure, se i genitori, come si verifica sempre più spesso, individuando nella dialettologia un ostacolo alla mobilità sociale, si sforzano di usare l'italiano con i figli e li rimproverano nel sentirli parlare in dialetto, al dominio più ristretto che potremmo definire 'rapporti con i fratelli' e soprattutto a quello 'amici', specie nel momento gioco. (1979: 160)

The reactions of the older generation to the use of Sardinian in more formal contexts show that they are less aware of the stigma and negative bias attached to the notion of local or regional varieties and therefore take more pride in the possibility of using Sardinian in these contexts. These different attitudes suggest that in rural areas the shift in favour of the national language has involved more the middle-aged generation than the older. The same findings related to the urban centres, however, show that the switch in favour of the national language has happened at an earlier stage than in more rural and isolated areas.

In the urban sample, answers to the questionnaire generally revealed opposition amongst the three groups to the use of Sardinian in local politics. In the last question of this section, they were asked which other strategies could be employed to safeguard Sardinian. It was interesting that 46 per cent of the young respondents, 89 per cent of the middle-aged respondents, and only 14 per cent of the older respondents thought that Sardinian should be spoken more in the family. G3, in comparison with G1 and G2, was more in favour of initiatives such as the creation of a TV channel in Sardinian and the introduction of the language at school. Cultural initiatives to safeguard the language were generally regarded as good measures by the majority of the three groups, but the third group was the most in favour of them. The different views of the older generation might have been affected by the negative attitudes towards local varieties in the past. In urban centres, the switch from Sardinian in favour of the national language was a frequent choice in the family to promote the social advancement of their offspring. This might thus have affected the older respondents' views against the use of Sardinian in the family.

8.3.2.5 Reaction to legislative measures

The following table shows that G3 in the non-urban group and G1 in the urban group were the least informed about the law.

Q33: Are you aware of the existence of law 482? (%)

Urban	Yes	Non-urban	Yes
G1	61	G1	38
G2	89	G2	67
G3	71	G3	36

Regarding attitudes towards the law, the findings of the non-urban sample are not surprising since they reflect the different views that the second and third group gave in section 8.3.2.4. The middle-aged respondents had strong reservations about extending the linguistic domains of Sardinian, and this was also reflected in their views on legislation aimed at enhancing the status of Sardinian through an expansion of its functions in society. The majority of the older respondents welcomed the legislation since they approved of the introduction of Sardinian in a variety of linguistic domains. The young respondents behaved in a different way: they had mixed feelings about the introduction of Sardinian in local politics, media, religious ceremonies, and education but their views on the law were negative overall. Regarding the urban sample's opinion of the law, 31 per cent of the young people, 55 per cent of the middle-aged people, and 86 per cent of the older people had positive views about the law. The young people were also the most sceptical or negative about future developments resulting from it: 8 per cent of the first group, 11 per cent of the second, and 14 per cent of the third thought that the law would be followed by practical actions to safeguard Sardinian. Moreover, the young respondents thought that it was important to use the national language in formal contexts and stated that they felt more Italian than Sardinian. One young respondent saw the establishment of a standard norm as problematic: the other Sardinian varieties would suffer as a result of it.

These findings show that, in neither urban nor non-urban areas are young people well informed about legislation to protect Sardinian, although in non-urban areas this also applies to older people. The percentage of urban young respondents aware of the law, however, is higher than that of the non-urban young respondents. Moreover, the lack of trust in legislation is an indication that, despite the fact that the younger respondents are not against a wider use of Sardinian in society, the implementation of legislation may be regarded as an unnecessary and artificial step to promote Sardinian. The young people generally showed more awareness than the other two groups of the difficulties that need to be addressed, in order to achieve a balance between the safeguarding of Sardinian and the acknowledgement of the importance of the national language.

8.3.3 Analysis based on social status

The urban sample was divided into two groups (G2 and G3) according to social status. G2 stands for people with a lower status (clerks with the *maturità*) and G3 for people with a higher status (professionals with a university degree). There were seventeen people in the first group and thirteen in the second.

The non-urban sample was split into three groups, G1, G2, and G3, where G1 stands for people with a low status (manual workers with primary or middle-school leaving certificates), G2 for the group in the middle (clerks with the *maturità*), and G3 for people with a high status (professionals with a university degree). There were thirteen people in the first group, eleven in the second, and six in the third.

8.3.3.1 Linguistic competence and behaviour

The following three tables show the linguistic competence and behaviour of the different groups in the urban as well as the non-urban sample.

Q1: Do you speak Sardinian? (%)

	Urban		Non-urban		
	G2	G3	G1	G2	G3
Yes	35	33	85	73	67
No	65	67	15	27	33

Q6a Do you speak Sardinian? (%):

	Urban		Non-urban		
	G2	G3	G1	G2	G3
Always	0	8	31	9	0
Often	12	8	38	27	50
Sometimes	12	8	8	18	17
Rarely	25	25	8	18	17
Never	47	33	8	18	17

6b Do you speak Sardinian? (%):

	Urban		Non-urban		
	G2	G3	G1	G2	G3
With your family	18	8	69	45	67
With your friends	35	50	77	18	50
In the shops	0	8	54	18	0
At work	6	8	31	18	0

In the urban sample, the linguistic competence of both groups was similar: 35 per cent of the respondents in G2 and 33 per cent of the respondents in G3 spoke

Sardinian. The attitude towards language acquisition, however, was more positive among respondents with a lower status. This was confirmed by their replies to question 3, when they were asked to state the reasons why they would have liked or would not have liked to speak Sardinian. 64 per cent of the respondents in G2, compared to half of those in G3, would have liked to be able to speak Sardinian. Moreover, G2 gave stronger reasons for wanting to speak Sardinian. Regarding the linguistic behaviour of the sample, 47 per cent of G2 and 33 per cent of G3 never used Sardinian. The percentage of respondents who never used the language was thus higher in G2, while 8 per cent of G3 claimed to use Sardinian always. This might be an indication that the G3 used or was a little more competent in the regional variety than the first group. These figures, however, showed that a higher status does not necessarily mean a lower level of competence in the regional language.

From the non-urban sample, replies to questions on linguistic competence indicate that the low status group is the most competent in Sardinian. These figures are in line with other studies showing that there is a correlation between educational level and choice of standard language or local or regional varieties (Fishman, 1965: 67-88). Better educated people tend to use the local or regional varieties less and the standard language more. The first table shows an obvious pattern: G3, the most educated group, speaks Sardinian less than G2, which speaks Sardinian less than G1. Competence in Sardinian in all three groups is, however, quite high. These figures indicate that inhabitants of rural areas are generally able to speak the local language, irrespective of their social status. The following table shows the frequency with which each group uses Sardinian. The second table confirms that the respondents in the lower-status group use Sardinian more than those in the other groups. However, half the respondents in the third group claim to speak Sardinian often. Moreover, the table shows that the percentage of respondents in the third group who use Sardinian often is higher than that of the respondents in the second group.

It is worth noticing that the percentage of non-urban respondents speaking Sardinian often is higher in G3 than in G2, and also that more non-urban respondents in G3 than in G2 use Sardinian in the family and with friends. This may be explained with a phenomenon that Labov calls the hypercorrection of the lower middle class (1966: 240). Labov's studies on linguistic variation (1966, 1972) indicate that the linguistic behaviour of the lower middle class outperforms the behaviour of the upper

middle class. Speakers of the middle class are more sensitive to the negative bias towards local or regional varieties and therefore use them less, despite their ability to do so. The respondents in the higher-status group, however, do not seem to have problems in admitting to using Sardinian, as long as the situation is appropriate. When the context is more formal or official, they switch to Italian.

While the results of the non-urban sample thus seem to be in line with those of other studies claiming that the lower the social class, the greater the incidence of the non-standard variant (Trudgill, 1983: 109-10) and that the higher the social class, the more standard is the speaker's behaviour (Wardhaugh, 1992: 173), the results from the urban sample seem to contradict the same studies. This suggests that the Italian situation is different since the ability to speak the local variety is not always linked to a lower social status. The example of Venetian in Venice, 'il dialetto municipale, la parlata della buona borghesia' (Milani, 1993: 162), illustrates this point. In terms of linguistic competence in Sardinian, the situation of the two urban groups is very similar. However, G2 shows a more positive attitude towards language acquisition. This may well mean that Sardinian, for those in this group, is an indicator of group membership, and that their willingness to learn Sardinian is due to their desire to revive a linguistic code that enhances feelings of group solidarity.

8.3.3.2 *Distinction between language and dialect*

The urban and non-urban sample followed a similar pattern: the high-status group was prepared to give a higher status to Sardinian. The consensus, however, was higher among the non-urban respondents, and this may be related to their higher linguistic competence in Sardinian.

Respondents regarding Sardinian as a language (based on their replies to Q8):

Urban		Non-urban		
G2	G3	G1	G2	G3
59	75	38	54	100

Furthermore the two high-status groups expressed more awareness of issues related to the safeguarding of the Sardinian language and identity. The non-urban high-status group was also more willing than the other two groups to accept a particular variety as the unitary norm in Sardinia. The urban higher-status group expressed more awareness of issues such as the codification of morphology, lexicon, and syntax, the

employment of a variety of Sardinian (Logudorese) in old written texts. The respondents in this group considered these elements of paramount importance for according the status of language, rather than of dialect, to Sardinian. Another important reason for regarding Sardinian as a language was its similarity to Latin. For this reason, the urban higher-status respondents regarded Sardinian as a Romance language rather than a dialect. It is interesting to note, however, that this view is not shared by all sociolinguists who are expert on Sardinian. Bolognesi (1997) states that Sardinian, at least in its grammar, is rather distant from Latin:

Quest'evidenza fa anche giustizia di un luogo comune abusatissimo, quello che vuole che il sardo sia la lingua neolatina più conservatrice. Se è vero che in certi dialetti del sardo un numero maggiore di parole, rispetto ad altre lingue, si è conservato pressoché identico alle corrispondenti forme latine, è anche vero che mentre il sardo comprende questi dialetti, esso non coincide però con questi. E soprattutto, come abbiamo già visto, una lingua non consiste solo di parole, ma anche di una grammatica. Dal punto di vista della grammatica, il sardo (cioè tutti i suoi dialetti) si discosta più di qualunque lingua romanza dal sistema latino, basato su una morfologia estremamente complessa e su una sintassi praticamente libera. (1997: 36)

The fact that the higher social classes give a high status to Sardinian, and also their awareness that positive perception of local or regional varieties can influence their future, may be important elements to consider in a linguistic policy aimed at the safeguarding of Sardinian.

8.3.3.3 The link between local language and local identity

The findings from this section of the questionnaire show interesting analogies between the urban and non-urban sample. In the non-urban sample, the middle-status group is less positive about the future of Sardinian, less interested in safeguarding it, and, moreover, emphasizes the negative aspects of living in an island rather than the positive ones. The respondents in the low-status group, however, behaved in the opposite way: they clearly indicated that they were proud of being Sardinian, they valued their Sardinian identity, and underlined the diversity and specificity of the Sardinian people. These different attitudes may well indicate that the second group is unsure about its social position in society and is striving to gain a more advantageous position. For this reason, this group is less willing to admit to being able to use the local variety, to give the local variety a higher status, and to attribute

importance to the safeguarding of the local language and identity. However, the lower-status group claimed to use Sardinian in a variety of contexts, considered Sardinian a language, and regarded the safeguarding of the regional language and identity as important. This group identifies most closely with the island and chose to express local loyalty and solidarity through linguistic choices in favour of the local/regional variety and through positive evaluation of the local or regional identity. Labov's study on Martha's Vineyard (1963), a small island lying three miles off the coast of Massachusetts, shows that a specific social group can opt for a particular linguistic choice, in order to stress their positive feelings towards that place.

In the urban sample, the findings related to the lower-status group, which corresponds to the non-urban middle group, show that this group was less positive about the future of Sardinian, less interested in safeguarding it, and, moreover, emphasized less the specificity of the Sardinians. Other studies have shown how social status can be an important factor for not regretting the decline of a dialect (Berruto, 1977; Marcato, 1986). Groups in the lower middle class, are characteristically eager for social advancement and tend to view the dialect as a hindrance or at best irrelevant (Parry, 1989: 126). It is interesting to note, however, that, in the present study, the two middle social groups have a more negative attitude towards their local language and identity than the other groups.

8.3.3.4 Reactions to measures to safeguard Sardinian

These results show that social status can play an important role in the attitude people have towards the safeguarding of local varieties and also in the different choices they make about how to safeguard them.

Within the non-urban sample, the low-status group was very positive about introducing Sardinian into education as well as into local politics, media, and religious ceremonies, while the middle-status group generally did not approve the introduction of Sardinian into more formal settings. The high-status group, however, were in favour of the introduction of Sardinian in education. The different choices of the three groups may well be related to their different social position. Respondents in the lower social status group are very fluent in Sardinian, and can therefore easily accept the use of Sardinian in more official domains. Respondents in the middle-status group do not approve the use of Sardinian in formal settings, since they tend to

perceive local varieties as an obstacle to social advancement. Respondents in the high-status group, who are more relaxed about local varieties, since they feel that their high social position is secured, generally approve the use of Sardinian in official situations and stress the importance of introducing Sardinian into education.

As for the urban sample, the results show again that social status can be an important factor in the choices people make about how to safeguard a variety. The middle-status group (G2) favoured the introduction of Sardinian in education, while the high-status group seemed more inclined to protect it through the media and cultural initiatives. However, the fact that both groups thought that Sardinian should be spoken in the family could point to the recent revaluation of dialects, discussed in this chapter. The acquisition of dialects and regional varieties is no longer seen as conflicting with that of Standard Italian. On the contrary, the ability to speak another variety means an additional skill for those whose acquisition of the national language is taken for granted.

Bruno thinks that Sardinian should be safeguarded through an increase of its functions in society:

Questo è il modo più sicuro di salvare la lingua, perché non vi può essere lingua vera se essa non si esprime attraverso le quattro abilità comunicative, se non è usata nella vita quotidiana, per comprendere, parlare, leggere, scrivere.

Ciò significa favorire l'introduzione della lingua sarda *in ogni aspetto della vita sociale* nella scuola innanzitutto, nei quotidiani, nella stampa periodica, negli uffici pubblici, nei consigli comunali, nella pubblicità, nella televisione, nella radio, in tutti i *media*. (1999: 91)

It is interesting to compare this point of view with that of Villata (1991: 277, cited in Parry: 1994: 189). He writes that, to save a language, it is not enough to make laws to protect it and to decree that it must be spoken and studied at school. It is also essential that the whole population continue to speak it. A different attitude on the part of the Sardinians towards their local varieties could thus bring about a more significant change in the future of the varieties than the approval of the use of Sardinian in more formal contexts.

8.3.3.5 Reaction to legislative measures

In the non-urban sample, 61 per cent of the low-status group were not aware of law 482. 38 per cent regarded it as fair and 8 per cent as necessary. The rest wrote that the law was useless, mainly because they did not have any trust in its application, rather than because they did not approve a law for the safeguarding of Sardinian. Only 31 per cent thought that it would be applied. Lack of trust in the authorities thus affected the sample's replies to questions about legislation.

The middle-status group had a less positive attitude towards legislative measures to protect Sardinian. The majority of the respondents were not willing to support the application of law 482 and 73 per cent did not think that it would be followed by positive actions. The law was regarded as useless by 54 per cent, and 45 per cent were unaware of its existence.

67 per cent of the respondents in the high-status group were aware of the existence of legislation to protect Sardinian and thought that it was a fair or necessary step. The problem of the different varieties spoken in Sardinia was a cause of concern and it was stressed that any policy should take into account the linguistic diversity of the island.

Among the urban sample, 83 per cent of the respondents in the higher-status group were aware of the existence of law 482, against only 65 per cent of those in the middle-status group. Moreover, the respondents of the higher-status group had more positive views about the law than those of the middle-status. G2 criticized it more harshly and forecast several problems that would delay its application. G3 seemed more convinced that the law was necessary to safeguard Sardinian and, therefore, to stop its decline. Both groups generally were sceptical about the future application of the law, but the first was more pessimistic. Several respondents in G2 (41 per cent) did not think that the law would be followed by practical actions. Only 17 per cent of those in the G3 shared this opinion.

8.4 Conclusion

One should note Fishman's (1965:77) remark that 'any simultaneous attempt to cope with all of the theoretically possible sources of variance in language behaviour in multilingual settings is likely to be exceedingly complex'. In this analysis, age, gender, and social status were all influential factors in determining the linguistic

competence of the respondents. Sardinian was spoken more by males than by females, even though the gap between the linguistic competence of females and males in Sardinian in the non-urban sample was not as wide as that observed in the urban sample. As far as social status is concerned, the findings show that there is a correlation between educational level and choice of standard language or local or regional varieties. More educated people tend to use the local or regional varieties less and the standard language more. In the urban sample, however, those of higher status did not indicate a lower level of linguistic competence or negative attitudes towards local or regional language acquisition.

Regarding the age factor, the data show a decline in linguistic competence amongst the young respondents living in non-urban areas. Less than half of them were able to speak a Sardinian variety. Grassi, Sobrero, and Telmon state that ‘le scelte dei giovani orientano la tendenza evolutiva del repertorio verso l’estensione dell’uso dello “standard”, e in generale dei codici che garantiscono una comunicazione ad ampio raggio, o che sono dotati di maggiore prestigio sociale. [...] Il fattore “età” è perciò molto rilevante nel processo attuale di estensione dell’uso dell’italiano nei confronti del dialetto’ (1998: 186). The number of urban young respondents speaking Sardinian, however, was only slightly lower than that of older respondents, and higher than that of the middle-aged respondents. The fact that the number of young Sardinian speakers has not declined further in urban areas might be a sign that, in recent years, there has been a recovery of the language. Young urban respondents, unlike their peers living in more rural areas of Sardinia, do not reject the local or regional language and want the promotion of Sardinian, without discarding the advantages that result from being part of the dominant culture. Sanna acknowledges the importance of the safeguarding of Sardinian and, at the same time, of rejecting anachronistic solutions to achieve it:

La Sardegna ha solo quella italiana, oltre alla sua cultura alternativa di base. Occorre non rischiare di rinchiudersi in questa cultura che deve restare alternativa, senza rinuncia dell’altra. Se no si darebbe ragione a chi, nella problematica prospettata, ha temuto un salto indietro e un impossibile ritorno a un passato ormai superato, a chi, in sostanza, non intende rinunciare a ciò che ha conquistato sul piano culturale. (1980: 131)

Regarding the distinction between the concept of language and that of dialect, more urban than non-urban respondents replied that Sardinian was a language. This indicates that people living in urban areas are questioning the common belief that local and regional varieties are associated with ignorance and other negative connotations. My analysis shows that the revaluation of the cultural heritage of the island is taking place more in urban than in non-urban areas. Moreover, the urban respondents could also have been influenced by the knowledge that a recent law had granted minority language status to Sardinian. The old urban group had the highest percentage of respondents giving the status of language to Sardinian: 86 per cent. The middle-aged group living in non-urban areas had the lowest percentage of respondents (33 per cent) regarding Sardinian as a language. The higher-status respondents in both groups (75 per cent of the urban respondents and all the non-urban respondents) regarded Sardinian as a language. The fact that the higher social classes give a high status to Sardinian, and also their positive perception of local or regional varieties, may become important tools in a linguistic policy for the safeguarding of Sardinian. These factors might have a significant role in shaping attitudes towards Sardinian in other sectors of the society. Bruno states that lately, in Sardinia, ordinary people are acknowledging the importance of the safeguarding of Sardinian identity: 'La nostra posizione non è pessimista perché vediamo crescere la sensibilità del popolo, della gente comune, rispetto ad un irrimediabile perdita di identità: il popolo vuole una lingua viva e vegeta' (1999: 97). Age, sex, and social status were also influential factors in assessing the link between language and identity. In both urban and non-urban groups, the males connected the safeguarding of Sardinian with safeguarding of the regional identity more directly than the females. Bolognesi (1998: 10) acknowledges that women's attitudes towards Sardinian depend heavily on the social class to which they belong. Generally speaking, middle-class women have an extremely negative attitude towards Sardinian. In non-urban areas, the link was also present in the answers of the older and low-status respondents. Moreover, the low-status group stressed the specificity and the diversity of the Sardinians. The fact that the older and low-status respondents made the connection between language and identity more clearly than the young and high-status respondents could have negative consequences for the future of Sardinian. Since the older and working-class people have a restricted role

in the process of decision-making, the chances that their positive attitude towards their local language and identity could reverse the process of language shift are very limited. It is interesting to note, however, that in the urban sample, the link between language and identity was strong in the answers of higher-status respondents. Moreover, the higher-status group stressed the specificity and the diversity of the Sardinians. It is important to underline that this group had the highest number of respondents regarding Sardinian as a language. Fishman writes that ‘ethnolinguistic persistence involves a basic continuity in the meaning of symbols. For RLSers (regional language users) a given language is the first and foremost of these symbols, as is their interpretation of that language as being truly fundamental to identity and continuity’ (2001: 387). The ‘social status’ factor might prove to be, in the long term, more decisive than the other two (age and sex), for the promotion of Sardinian. The fact that the higher-status group made the connection between language and identity more clearly than the lower status group could be a positive factor for the future of Sardinian. As this social class enjoys more power in society, it could have a fundamental role in the process of reversing the language shift.

Regarding reactions to measures to safeguard Sardinian, the introduction of Sardinian in education was perceived as a positive initiative, especially amongst the urban respondents. This measure, which is already being introduced on an experimental basis in Sardinia, could prove to be a very successful step for the promotion of Sardinian. It is worthwhile underlining, however, that the teaching of Sardinian in schools should be carried out in a constructive way, taking into account the linguistic and cultural background of the pupils rather than reproaching the children who speak Sardinian as their first language. Bolognesi (1998: 7) recalls his personal experience when, in the late fifties, he was a schoolboy in Sardinia: ‘I witnessed both physical and psychological abuse against monolingual Sardinian-speaking children. The psychological violence consisted usually in calling the children “donkeys” and in inviting the whole class to join the mockery’. The teaching of Sardinian, moreover, should promote the students’ awareness that Sardinian cannot be reduced to a folkloric experience and that it represents a very important component of Sardinian society. According to Mercurio Gregorini, who conducted a study on five classes of children in two primary schools on the outskirts of Cagliari, the results are encouraging, since the children develop positive attitudes

toward their local culture. Moreover, the children who speak Sardinian as their mother tongue and are not fluent in Italian achieve very good standards in the acquisition of the national language:

Con il ripetersi di queste analisi contrastive fra la struttura dell'italiano standard, la struttura dell'italiano regionale e la struttura del sardo, molti alunni hanno eliminato alcuni di questi 'errori' di deviazione; altri, pur continuando a ripetere 'l'errore' davanti all'osservazione sono coscienti della deviazione commessa e ricostruiscono la frase in modo corretto.

Riteniamo che se i ragazzi, ultimati gli studi elementari, continuassero nelle scuole medie e in quelle secondarie questo tipo di apprendimento linguistico, acquisirebbero una competenza dell'italiano attiva e consapevole. (1979: 554)

Regarding legislation to promote Sardinian, the high-status respondents in both groups were better informed about the present regulations to safeguard Sardinian. Those who lived in non-urban areas were also more aware of the problem of the lack of a unitary form of Sardinian and underlined that any policy should take into account the linguistic diversity of the island. Beside social status, sex and age were also influential factors in affecting respondents' knowledge of and views about legislation to protect Sardinian. In the non-urban sample, the males were better informed about the existence of law 482 than the females and had more positive views about the law. Moreover, several females were concerned that law 482 could also be seen as an imposition to use or speak Sardinian and that people who were not interested in safeguarding the language could also be affected by the legislation. The females also stressed the importance of acknowledging the Gallurese variety. This strong sense of a Gallurese identity is supported by the study of Ines Loi Corvetto (1979: 133-46), on the lexical interferences between Sardinian and Italian. She states that in Gallura, as well as in Logudoro and the Sassarese, the local varieties are commonly used in the family, with friends, and at work. In Campidano, however, the local variety is present only in the family and sometimes with friends, while Italian is the dominant language in informal and formal situations. In the urban sample, more females than males were aware of the existence of the law, even though several were not positive about it.

The views of the non-urban young respondents were rather mixed but generally indicated that the promotion of Sardinian did not necessarily have to take place through legislation. The role of the community in passing on the local

language was emphasized by this group of respondents. The urban young respondents were the most sceptical and the least informed. This trend could be regarded as worrying by the promoters of Sardinian, since the young are those who will have a major role in the process of safeguarding Sardinian. However, this scepticism towards legislation for the safeguarding of Sardinian might not mean a lack of interest on the part of the younger people to protect their regional variety. One of the reasons why dialects are showing unexpected energy in some cities is that they have provided an alternative source of invention for the language of young people (Tosi, 2000: 28). The following tables show the use of Sardinian among young respondents living in urban and non-urban areas.

Q1: Do you speak Sardinian? (%)

	Young urban	Young non-urban
Yes	38	46

Q6b: Do you speak Sardinian? (%)

	Young urban	Young Non-urban
With the family	15	46
With your children	0	0
With your spouse	0	0
With your parents	8	31
With your grandparents	8	0
With your friends	38	31
In the shops	0	23
In the offices	0	0
At school/university	0	0
At work	8	0

The fact that Sardinian, like other regional varieties in Italy, is spoken in informal contexts, such as among family and friends, does not have to be viewed as negative in terms of its safeguarding. On the contrary, the restriction of Sardinian into colloquial and familiar domains might become a powerful tool for its revival. The more positive figures for the use of Sardinian in contemporary society, however, could also possibly be the final flourish before complete collapse due to lack of generational transmission, as feared by Ruffino for Sicilian (1990: 192-93).

CHAPTER NINE

ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS SICILIAN AND REACTIONS TO POSSIBLE WAYS OF SAFEGUARDING IT

9.1 Introduction

The following analysis was conducted in 2001-03 on a group of sixty Sicilian respondents. As outlined in Chapter Seven, the respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire. This chapter therefore follows the same structure as the previous chapter.

9.2 Overall analysis

A first analysis was conducted with the aim of assessing the overall response of the respondents. There were thirty respondents living in urban areas (*città*) and thirty living in non-urban areas (*paesi*). This more general level of analysis (urban and non-urban combined) precedes more specific sub-levels, in which different categories (sex, age, and social status) are introduced.

9.2.1 Linguistic competence and behaviour of the urban sample

The analysis of the urban sample showed that competence in Sicilian is still very high in urban areas: although only 50 per cent of the respondents claimed that Sicilian was their mother tongue, 90 per cent was able to speak it and 97 per cent to understand it. Regarding the frequency of use of Sicilian, 57 per cent spoke it often, 30 per cent sometimes, and 13 per cent rarely.

As for the non-urban sample, 62 per cent claimed that Sicilian was their mother tongue and 79 per cent were able to speak it. All the respondents could understand it. Replies to questions on the frequency of use of Sicilian in oral interactions showed that 24 per cent of the respondents spoke it always, 38 per cent often, and 17 per cent sometimes. 17 per cent of the sample spoke it rarely, and 3 per cent never used it.

The linguistic behaviour of both groups in different domains was assessed as follows:

Q6b - Do you speak Sicilian? (%)

	Urban	Non-urban
With the family	63	72
With your children	3	48
With your spouse	30	52
With your parents	53	55
With your grandparents	23	34
With your friends	93	76
In the shops	3	34
In the offices	3	17
At school/university	3	0
At work	13	17

The following table shows that, for the majority of the respondents, Sicilian was the common linguistic code spoken at home:

Q7 - Which language did your parents use among themselves? (%):

	Urban	Non-urban
Sicilian	70	72
Italian	13	10
Both	10	7

These data show that the use of Sicilian is still very alive, particularly in the more rural and isolated areas, especially in the domains of family and friends. This finding is in line with a recent work indicating that Sicilian is a frequent linguistic choice in Sicily:

Più si espande l'italiano meno si usano i dialetti, ma ciò non significa che i dialetti stiano scomparendo. Benché di questi tempi vi sia un progressivo calo nel numero dei parlanti dialetto, mentre aumentano coloro che preferiscono usare solo l'italiano, le statistiche informano che i dialetti sono adoperati o conosciuti da buona parte della popolazione che spesso alterna, e mescola, nell'uso del quotidiano, italiano e dialetto. La conservazione è maggiore in regioni come il Veneto e la Sicilia. (Marcato, 2002: 18)

The Doxa survey in 1988 confirmed that Sicily was one of the regions with the highest percentage for the use of dialect in the family (73%) and in 1991 it had the lowest percentage for Italian only (5.6%) (1992, 46: 9-10). These figures show that in urban areas, the family might not ensure, in future years, the intergenerational transmission of the language. However, the language is still very alive, in view of the high percentage of respondents claiming to be able to speak Sicilian. The majority of the urban respondents, in fact, used Sicilian with their friends. There seems to be an indication, therefore, that the acquisition of Sicilian does not necessarily happen through the channel of the parents. It is spoken within the family,

even though not directly to the children, and also outside the family, especially with friends.

The Osservatorio Linguistico Siciliano (Ols) is a large-scale survey conducted between April 1984 and March 1985 by the Centro di Studi Filologici e Linguistici Siciliani on a sample of 1,320 people aged over 15 and living in Sicily. It highlighted a very recent tendency in the urban areas in Sicily: many of those who have learned Italian as their first language and come from an italoophone family, learn Sicilian as their second language. The survey revealed that 76.1 per cent of the young informants living in Palermo and 34.5 per cent of those living in the provinces said that their use of the dialect had increased since their childhood. The percentage of young people using more dialect now than in the past was higher in Palermo than anywhere else in Sicily. This finding, however, is not surprising if, according to the Ols survey, 71.1 per cent of those living in the provinces spoke Sicilian, whereas only 15 per cent of Palermitani did it. One of the important conclusions of the survey is that 'nella Sicilia linguistica contemporanea, la mobilità non è un abbandono ma un arricchimento: i parlanti non viaggiano solo dal siciliano verso l'italiano ma anche dall'italiano verso il siciliano' (Lo Piparo, 1990: 47). In Sicily, linguistic mobility does not necessarily mean shifting towards the national language and giving up the local language. It also means the acquisition of Sicilian by those who speak Italian as their first language.

9.2.2 The distinction between 'language' and 'dialect'

Sicilian is traditionally classified as an Italian dialect, for example in the *Carta dei dialetti d'Italia* (1977) and *The Dialects of Italy* (1997). However, despite this classification, there was a certain degree of uncertainty about its status, especially in the non-urban sample.

Of the urban sample, 73 per cent regarded Sicilian as a dialect. The most frequent justification was that Sicilian is spoken only in Sicily. Other reasons were the lack of a standard variety and the fact that it is similar to the national language. The respondents who regarded Sicilian as a language gave the following reasons: it is the language that unites all the Sicilians and it is a literary language. If 'language' is more prestigious than 'dialect', the majority of the urban sample do not give a high status to Sicilian. However, the analysis of the response to the following section of

the questionnaire reveals a strong connection between language and identity among the urban respondents. They regard it as a dialect but this does not necessarily mean a negative perception or rejection of Sicilian. Sicilian does not perform the same function as Italian in society, but still performs important roles that cannot be accomplished by the national language: it is associated with Sicilian identity, it is the linguistic vehicle for expressing irony, immediateness, and the emotional link with the island and its inhabitants. It would therefore be superficial to conclude that Sicilian is regarded as a dialect by the urban sample because it does not enjoy a positive status amongst them. Rather than opposing dialect and language, it would be more appropriate to distinguish between the different and complementary roles the national language and the local varieties can realistically have in modern society and to exploit the dialect for those contexts and situations most appropriate to it.

Sicilian can be regarded as a dialect and, at the same time, seen as an important trait of Sicilian identity. At first this might seem contradictory. However, coherence can be found in apparently contradictory answers. Sicilian can be strongly linked to Sicilian identity and, at the same time, its limited role in society can be acknowledged. This would therefore explain the fact that many people, especially amongst the urban sample, classify it as a dialect. The following quotation from the Ols survey illustrates this point:

L'impulso a ritenere contraddittorie certe configurazioni inattese va frenato. E in effetti, a ben guardare può non esserci nulla di contraddittorio nemmeno nelle accoppiate di risposte apparentemente più inconcepibili: si può giudicare un idioma rozzo e al tempo stesso caldeggiarne un riconoscimento politico-istituzionale forte perché si è convinti che sia proprio la mancanza di tale riconoscimento a mantenerlo in una rozzezza da cui si desidera che esca; lo si può considerare lingua e tuttavia non volere che si studi a scuola proprio perché in quanto lingua nuocerebbe alla diffusione e padronanza della lingua di stato, oppure perché studiarlo ne mortificherebbe la vitalità nativa; lo si può ritenere segno di ignoranza eppure augurarsi che i propri purché non ignoranti lo usino in quanto è partecipe di valori a cui si tiene; lo si può sentire come tratto forte dell'identità culturale e nondimeno constatarne a malincuore la limitatezza comunicativa. (Ruffino, 1990: 164-65)

More than the half of the non-urban respondents, 52 per cent, regarded it as a language. On the other hand, 31 per cent regarded it as a dialect. The rest did not know. An analysis of the reasons given by the non-urban respondents to justify the status of 'dialect' of Sicilian reveal that linguistic as well as extra-linguistic factors have been taken into account in determining the distinction.

- Italian is the official and national language of all the Italian regions
- Sicilian lacks a unitary form
- Sicilian is spoken only in Sicily
- It is in decline amongst the young generations

However, the reasons given by the respondents who regarded Sicilian as a language were:

- Sicily is a special statute region and geographically detached from the rest of Italy
- Sicilian is a popular regional variety
- Sicilian has a written form
- Sicilian derives from Latin

These results show that the distinction between language and dialects is not obvious and clear-cut and that subjective rather than objective criteria can determine the distinction. As Gumperz (1982:20) has pointed out: 'socio-historical factors play a crucial role in determining boundaries'.

Another point discussed in this section of the questionnaire was the presence or absence of a unitary form of Sicilian: 87 per cent of the urban respondents denied its existence. This reply reflects not only the linguistic diversity of the island, but also the fact that the respondents do not identify a particular variety of Sicilian as the one which could serve as a unifying linguistic norm in the island. The replies of the non-urban respondents showed that a fair number of them acknowledged the existence of a unitary form of Sicilian. While 55 per cent did not think that a unitary Sicilian existed, 31 per cent of the sample disagreed. 7 per cent replied that both a Standard Sicilian and a range of local varieties existed. 7 per cent did not know.

The respondents were asked whether it was fair to make a distinction between Romance languages spoken in Italy alone (Sardinian, Ladin and Friulian) and Italian dialects (Neapolitan, Venetian, Piedmontese, Calabrese, and so on). 43 per cent of the urban respondents did not accept the distinction between Romance languages and Italian dialects, since they argued that all the Italian regions are characterized by

specific linguistic varieties. 37 per cent accepted the distinction on the grounds that, while Romance languages derived from Latin, the origins of the Italian dialects were less obvious, and also that Romance languages are linguistically more distant than the dialects from the national language. 69 per cent of the non-urban respondents answered yes, 10 per cent answered no, 7 per cent did not know, and the rest did not reply. The majority of the respondents who accepted the distinction argued that Sardinian, Friulian, and Ladin were linguistically, culturally, and historically more distant from Italy and the Italian language. On the other hand, the few who did not accept the distinction claimed that it was inappropriate since it introduced discrimination between the different local tongues spoken in Italy. Other respondents objecting to the distinction claimed that there are different varieties of Sardinian, Friulian, and Ladin, in the same way as there are different varieties of Sicilian, Piedmontese, and so on.

The problem of the lack of a Standard form is acknowledged by Grassi (in Parry, 1994: 180-81) who questions the distinction between Italo-Romance languages and Italian dialects and argues that the criterion of standardization, which is essential to distinguish between 'language' and 'dialect', is lacking in the case of Sardinian and Friulian. If the criterion standardization is taken into account to distinguish between 'Romance languages' and 'Italian dialects', the position of Sardinian is not different from that of the Italian dialects, including Sicilian.

The following tables summarize the findings of this section of the questionnaire for both the urban and the non-urban groups.

Q8: In your opinion, is Sicilian a language or a dialect? (%)

	Dialect	Language	I do not know
Urban	73	27	0
Non-urban	52	31	17

Q10 Does a unitary Sicilian exist?

	Yes	No	Both a Standard Sicilian and a range of local varieties	I do not know
Urban	13	87	0	0
Non-urban	55	31	7	7

It is worth underlining, however, that many non-urban respondents classified Sicilian as a language and acknowledged the existence of a unitary Sicilian. Only a minority of urban respondents shared these views. This finding is very interesting since it shows that there is some uncertainty amongst the sample towards these issues. Varvaro stresses that, although a unitary norm in Sicily does not exist, Sicilian is much less fragmented than the other Southern dialects spoken in Italy:

Il siciliano è un dialetto meridionale atipico per la sua relativa modernità, cioè per la scarsità di arcaismi, ma anche e soprattutto perché è assai meno frazionato dei dialetti meridionali, anche se non è così omogeneo quanto si è ritenuto sulla base della conoscenza di un dialetto letterario, 'colto', che è stato spesso scambiato con la lingua effettivamente parlata. (1981: 219)

9.2.3 The link between Sicilian language and Sicilian identity

The majority of the urban respondents were positive about the future chances of survival of Sicilian: 50 per cent replied that Sicilian would still be spoken in one hundred years, 23 per cent in fifty years, and the rest did not think that Sicilian would be spoken in the future. 97 per cent of this group regarded the safeguarding of Sicilian as important. However, some considered the question on the safeguarding of Sicilian rather provocative and pointed out that 'il siciliano si salvaguardia da solo'. Only one respondent replied negatively to the question on the importance of safeguarding Sicilian, which she regarded as 'un limite al progresso'. The fact that Sicilian, despite its status of dialect, was valued positively by the majority of the urban respondents was clear from the replies to the question 'For which reasons is it important to safeguard Sicilian?'. The safeguarding of Sicilian was seen as very closely linked to the safeguarding of the cultural and traditional heritage of the island. The statement 'Per i siciliani è importante il dialetto' was made by several respondents. Moreover, the specific identity and culture of the Sicilian people were underlined by a few of them. The fact that dialect words and expressions can be exploited to express irony, immediateness, and incisiveness was also regarded as an important characteristic of the dialect and worth preserving.

The views of the non-urban respondents regarding the future of Sicilian were mixed: 41 per cent of the respondents did not think that Sicilian would be spoken by future generations, 34 per cent believed that it would still be spoken in fifty years, and 24 per cent in one hundred years. 93 per cent of the respondents, however, stated

that it was important to safeguard the future of Sicilian. The main reasons given to justify their reply were:

- The safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the region
- The importance of protecting the language spoken by their ancestors
- Sicilian is the language of Sicily and unifies all the Sicilians
- The language is a sign of the identity of the people
- The dialect provides a more immediate and direct way of communicating

The percentages of the responses given by both groups are reported in the following two tables:

Q13: Do you think that Sicilian will be spoken by future generations? (%)

	Yes, in 50 years	Yes, in 100 years	No
Urban	23	50	27
Non-urban	34	24	41

Q14: Do you think that it is important to safeguard Sicilian (%)

	Yes	No
Urban	97	3
Non-urban	93	7

The respondents were asked ‘What does it mean for you to be Sicilian?’. The urban respondents emphasized the positive qualities of the Sicilians. However, one emphasized the personal emotional link with the island and its inhabitants, and did not think that the ability to speak Sicilian was the only trait defining the Sicilian identity. Similarly, the majority of the non-urban sample replied that they were very proud of being Sicilian and underlined all the positive qualities of the Sicilian people. Moreover, several non-urban respondents underlined the uniqueness and the specificity of Sicilian culture, tradition, history, and identity. A few pointed out that being Sicilian means also being Italian.

97 per cent of the urban respondents regarded Sicilian identity as important and 80 per cent linked the safeguarding of the language with the safeguarding of identity. One significant comment was ‘il siciliano è il marchio culturale distintivo della Sicilia’. However, another statement made by a different respondent ‘La

sicilianità non scaturisce dal solo uso del dialetto' indicated a more cautious approach in the linking of language and identity. 93 per cent of the non-urban sample acknowledged the importance of Sicilian identity and linked the safeguarding of the language with that of identity. 96 per cent of the respondents did not consider their regional identity to be in conflict with national and European identities.

The results show that amongst the non-urban respondents there was generally a strong feeling of Sicilian identity and also a strong link between language and identity. Fluency in Sicilian was regarded as something to be proud of, rather than something to be ashamed of. Marcato describes the positive connotation of the concept 'dialetto' in these terms:

Ritenere che il dialetto rappresenti una cultura arretrata e sia privo di una tradizione letteraria, è opinione piuttosto diffusa, che concorre alla progressiva diminuzione dei parlanti dialetto. Ma vi sono anche tendenze opposte, per cui il dialetto viene considerato un elemento importante di identificazione della comunità, un codice dalle possibilità espressive che mancano alla lingua. (2002: 19)

One significant reply to the question 'Do you think that the safeguarding of Sicilian is also a way of protecting the Sicilian identity?' illustrates this point: 'Sì perché oltre alle varie tradizioni regionali, vi è un unico elemento che rende i siciliani tutti uguali: la lingua'. Another respondent replied that 'Il siciliano unisce i siciliani e protegge l'identità siciliana'. The following comments summarize the general views of the respondents on the importance of balancing the different levels of identity: 'Essere siciliano non significa ignorare che si è italiani o europei', 'Si è italiani anche con dialetti diversi e pure europei con lingue diverse', or 'Come una famiglia è composta da persone diverse, allo stesso modo l'Europa è composta da regioni diverse ma che stanno bene insieme'. The replies of the urban sample also revealed a strong connection between Sicilian language and Sicilian identity. The language was perceived not as the only trait of the Sicilian identity but as a very important one.

It is interesting to compare this finding with that of the Ols survey. The statement with which the researchers of the survey tried to elicit some feedback from the informants about the connection between language and identity was rather provocative: 'Chi non sa parlare in siciliano non è un buon siciliano'. Therefore, considering that the statement was so strong, it was more likely to encounter opposition amongst the respondents, especially those living in urban areas, where the use of the national language is very extensive. Nevertheless, the results of the Ols

survey show quite a high consensus among the respondents living in two of the main Sicilian cities, but not among those living in Messina, which according to the survey, emerged as the urban centre with the highest percentage of negative attitudes toward the local variety (Ols, 1990: 292):

Chi non sa parlare in siciliano non è un buon siciliano

Palermo	
D'accordo	61,3
Non d'accordo	31,9
D'accordo e non d'accordo	3,4
Non sa, non risponde	3,4
Catania	
D'accordo	60,1
Non d'accordo	35,7
D'accordo e non d'accordo	1,4
Non sa, non risponde	2,8
Messina	
D'accordo	37,1
Non d'accordo	56,7
D'accordo e non d'accordo	5,2
Non sa, non risponde	1,0

9.2.4 Reactions to measures to safeguard Sardinian

The respondents were asked whether Sicilian should be granted the same rights as the 'minority languages', that is whether Sicilian should be used in more official situations such as in meetings of the municipal, provincial, and regional councils, schools and universities, the media, and religious ceremonies.

As for the use of Sicilian in local politics, 41 per cent of the non-urban respondents were in favour with regard to the meetings of the local council, while 24 per cent were in favour in relation to the meetings of the provincial and regional council. Those who opposed the introduction of this measure argued that it would create problems of understanding amongst the participants, while those in favour claimed that the use of Sicilian in local politics would help to safeguard and promote it. A few stated that it would improve communication amongst the participants: 'C'è più comprensione e ci si trova più uniti e aperti ai problemi locali'. The immediateness of the dialect was also seen as a quality to exploit in the political debates: 'Intercalare frasi e modi di dire in siciliano renderebbe più vivo il dibattito'.

97 per cent of the urban respondents were against the use of Sicilian in the municipal council, and 93 per cent were against the use of Sicilian in the provincial and regional councils. The majority of the respondents regarded the introduction of

Sicilian into local politics as anachronistic, confusing, and penalizing for those who do not speak the dialect. The use of the national language was regarded as necessary in the political context. The following comments were made by two different respondents: 'Già non si capiscono con l'italiano, figuriamoci ...' and 'Potrebbe causare fratture all'interno dell'unità statale, alimentando, magari, dei propositi secessionisti'.

As far as the use of Sicilian in the media is concerned, 55 per cent of the non-urban sample were in favour of newspapers or magazines, 62 per cent in favour of radio programmes, and 65 per cent in favour of a television channel in Sicilian. Several non-urban respondents agreed more about the use of Sicilian in radio or television programmes than in newspapers and magazines, since they felt it should be used more in oral than in written contexts. However, many were in favour of the introduction of Sicilian in the media and argued that it would be a good way of promoting it. Several pointed out that they would be very interested in the broadcasting of plays in Sicilian. Those who were against claimed that there would be problems of understanding and that the media needed to use a language that would be accessible to everybody. Regarding the urban sample, 63 per cent were in favour of magazines and newspapers in Sicilian, 73 per cent of a radio channel, and 67 per cent of a television channel. These initiatives were described as interesting because they would give the opportunity of knowing about the Sicilian culture and traditions. A few respondents also made some comments regarding the importance of safeguarding Sicilian through the media and of the role of the media in strengthening the regional identity.

41 per cent of the non-urban respondents were in favour of the use of Sicilian in the celebration of religious ceremonies. The introduction of Sicilian into the national curriculum was widely approved by many respondents: 72 per cent were in favour of teaching it in nursery and primary schools, 62 per cent in middle schools, and 86 supported the introduction of the study of Sicilian language, literature, and culture in high schools and universities. The reasons given in favour of this measure were mainly the safeguarding of Sicilian, the fact that it would stimulate the young generation to acquire Sicilian, and the importance of encouraging bilingualism in Italian and Sicilian. Many respondents stated that it was necessary to integrate Sicilian and Italian in the national curriculum. The teaching of literature and culture

was also regarded as very important for the students, especially in high schools and universities.

Among the urban sample, the majority were against the celebration of the mass and the introduction of Sicilian into the curriculum of nursery and primary schools. The main reasons given were the necessity of using the official language in the celebration of religious ceremonies, and the importance of teaching the children to use the national language correctly. Some respondents were in favour of the use of Sicilian in middle schools, and 53 per cent were in favour of teaching it in high schools and universities, since the acquisition of Italian would be already consolidated at this stage. The following comments made by some urban respondents regarding the introduction of Sicilian in education illustrate the general views of the sample: 'Non vedo la necessità di insegnare un dialetto a scuola; dialetto che comunque i ragazzi imparano in quanto lo sentono parlare ai familiari ed amici. Piuttosto ritengo che a scuola sin dalla materna i bambini di tutte le nazioni imparino una lingua che sia comune per tutti, affinché la comunicazione fra i popoli non venga ostacolata dall'uso di lingue diverse'; 'Non c'è bisogno che lo imparino a scuola, lo impareranno nella vita'; 'Il siciliano lo si impara già fuori delle scuole'.

The following table reports the respondents' views about possible ways of safeguarding Sicilian:

Q33 Which systems could be used to safeguard Sicilian? (%)

	Urban	Non-urban
Speak Sicilian in the family	73	96
Convince the others to speak it	7	10
Radio or television programmes	50	55
To teach Sicilian from nursery schools onwards	7	76
Cultural initiatives (magazines, associations)	53	52
Others	3	10
It is too late	0	0

The media and the family are regarded by the urban informants as the most appropriate channels to maintain Sicilian. A very low percentage of urban respondents approved the introduction of Sicilian in education. Marcato (2002: 137) warns against the danger of promoting a sporadic use of the dialect in schools, which would have the effect of reducing it to 'oggetto da museo', rather than of enhancing linguistic awareness and the consideration of diversity and variety. The non-urban

respondents also acknowledged the role of the family in passing on the language to the next generation. The analysis of the data of the non-urban sample reveals a general awareness of the issue of preserving the linguistic and cultural heritage of the region and the willingness to expand the functions of Sicilian into other areas, such as local politics, the media, and education. Some non-urban respondents found the box 'It is too late' rather pessimistic and stressed that it is not too late to protect Sicilian.

It is interesting to compare these results with those of the Als. The linguistic behaviour of both urban and non-urban areas was under investigation. The data emerging from the survey confirm that there is an increase in bilingual behaviour in Sicily. More people claim that they use both Sicilian and Italian, depending on the circumstances, instead of saying that they are using mainly Italian or dialect:

La percentuale di parlanti monolingui non supera la quota del 10% in nessuno dei luoghi qualitativamente diversi dallo spazio siciliano, neppure a Palermo dove, a un quasi azzeramento del numero dei dialettofoni esclusivi, corrisponde una crescita molto contenuta di monolingui italiani. (D'Agostino, 1995: 179)

The following table shows the results of the Als survey:

Percentuale di monolingui e non monolingui e 'qualità' dello spazio

	Italianofoni Monolingui	Dialettofoni monolingui	Non Monolingui
Centri rurali	1.04	8.22	90.7
Centri semi-rurali	1.83	6.42	91.75
Centri urbani	5.77	5.77	88.46
Poli regionali	5.19	2.13	92.68
Palermo	8.11	0.54	91.35

The increase in bilingual behaviour registered in the Als survey may well be connected to the respondents' views on the importance of the family in passing on Sicilian to the next generation, which was clearly stated by both urban and non-urban respondents. In my analysis, however, the urban respondents indicated the family and the media as the most appropriate channels to promote Sicilian, while the non-urban respondents agreed with the various possible ways of safeguarding Sicilian. These different views may be related to the very low percentage of those monolingual in Sicilian registered by the Als survey in urban areas, especially in Palermo.

9.2.5 Reactions to national legislative measures

The respondents were asked if they were aware of the existence of law 482. 10 per cent of the non-urban respondents and 20 per cent of the urban respondents said they were. The high percentage of respondents who were unaware of its existence is not surprising, since the law does not concern the protection of Sicilian. The sample was also asked their opinion about the law. This question could be posed to all the respondents, including those who were not aware of law 482, because its content was summarized in the initial part of the section.

Q34: What do you think of this law (tick one or more boxes)? (%)

	Urban	Non-urban
Fair	17	45
Necessary	7	17
Useless	30	17
Unjust	30	10
Other	16	11

A high number of non-urban respondents had a positive view of the law. Those who regarded it as fair or necessary thought that it would help to safeguard the local languages or traditions. A minority of non-urban respondents did not regard the law as a positive development. Those who considered it unjust claimed that it was discriminatory against the regional languages spoken in Italy. However, an interesting comment was made by one respondent. He claimed that there is no need for legislation to safeguard your own language: the important thing is not to forget it. Some respondents had rather negative views on the law since it could have the effect, in the long term, of diminishing the importance of the national language. Moreover linguistic chaos in Italy was seen as a potential danger if action to protect regional languages was taken in every Italian region. The majority of the urban respondents disagreed with the law.

59 per cent of the non-urban respondents and 23 per cent of the urban respondents stated that they would like to have law 482 applied for the protection of Sicilian. The non-urban respondents who were in favour stated that it would safeguard and promote the Sicilian language, traditions, and culture and also acknowledged that Sicilian should be granted the same rights as Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian. Those who were against claimed that Italian is the official language, and needed to be used in formal and official contexts. An interesting comment from

an urban respondent sums up the general position of the sample: 'Diffondere e mantenere vivo un dialetto è una cosa, renderlo lingua ufficiale è un'altra'. However, a minority of urban respondents regarded the law as unfair, since it excluded Sicilian: 'Ritengo che questa legge sia ingiusta perché dovrebbe essere estesa al siciliano'.

9.3 Categories

So far, the analysis has been carried out on the urban and non-urban samples as a whole. In the following sections, the urban and non-urban samples will be analysed according to different categories: sex, age, and social status (education and employment). In this way, interesting comparisons can be made between the general situation of the sample and the more specific groupings within it.

9.3.1 Analysis based on the sex of the respondents

The first subdivision was made according to the sex of the respondents. There were fifteen males and fifteen females in both groups.

9.3.1.1 Linguistic competence and behaviour

In the non-urban sample, the Sicilian linguistic competence of the males was very high. 80 per cent claimed that Sicilian was their mother tongue and 93 per cent were able to speak it. They were all able to understand it. Moreover, the frequency of use of Sicilian in oral interaction was also quite high: 27 per cent claimed to speak it always, 47 per cent often, 13 per cent sometimes, 7 per cent rarely, and 7 per cent never. Of the females, 43 per cent claimed that Sicilian was their mother tongue. However, 71 per cent were able to speak Sicilian and all the females could understand it. 28 per cent used Sicilian always, 21 per cent often, 21 per cent sometimes, and 28 per cent rarely.

As for the urban sample, linguistic competence in Sicilian in both groups was very high, even though more males than females stated that Sicilian was their mother tongue and more males than females declared themselves able to speak Sicilian: Sicilian was the mother tongue for 40 per cent of the females and 67 per cent of the males. Moreover, 80 per cent of the females and all the males could speak Sicilian. The active use of Sicilian was also higher in the males: 67 per cent of them used it

often, 27 per cent sometimes, and the rest rarely. 47 per cent of the females used Sicilian often, 33 per cent Sicilian sometimes, and the rest rarely.

The following table shows the linguistic domains in which Sicilian is used:

Q6b Do you speak Sicilian? (%)

	Urban		Non-urban	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
With the family	87	47	60	71
With your children	0	7	60	36
With your spouse	20	40	67	36
With your parents	60	40	67	43
With your grandparents	40	7	47	28
With your friends	100	87	80	64
In the shops	7	0	40	21
In the offices	7	0	27	7
At school/university	7	0	0	0
At work	27	0	27	7

These figures show that a high percentage of non-urban males ensure intergenerational transmission since 60 per cent speak Sicilian with their children. The use of Sicilian among the non-urban females in the family is also very high. However, a much lower proportion of non-urban females choose to use Sicilian with their children. As for the urban sample, Sicilian is used more amongst the males, even though in two contexts (with spouse and children) the percentage of females is higher than that of males. The following table shows the linguistic preferences of the parents of the respondents:

Q7: Which language do/did your parents use among themselves? (%)

	Urban		Non-urban	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Sicilian	87	60	90	50
Italian	0	27	0	37
Both	13	13	0	13

It has been seen that the females have always been more unwilling to admit that they are able to speak the local variety and to use it, even in more familiar contexts. This tendency, which has been identified in other sociolinguistic studies analysing the relationship between gender and language (Lakoff, 1973: 45-80, Wardhaugh, 1992: 322), is usually explained with the argument that women prefer a prestigious linguistic code, especially with their children, since they are more sensitive to issues of social prestige and therefore use the linguistic form that is associated to socially

superior positions. The ISTAT survey of 2000 indicates that women often opt for the prestigious linguistic form in a variety of situations:

La scelta del linguaggio è inoltre influenzata dal genere: le donne mostrano una maggiore propensione a esprimersi soltanto o prevalentemente in italiano in famiglia (45,7 % a fronte del 42,5% degli uomini) e con gli amici (51,1% contro il 44,7%). Il divario fra maschi e femmine è maggiore tra i giovani e diminuisce nelle classi di età successive per poi annullarsi tra gli anziani. ('Lingua italiana e dialetti in Italia', www.istat.it/Comunicati/Fuoricale/allegati/Lingua-ita/ver3.doc [accessed 27 May 2004])

This point is also observed in the survey of the Ols: Sicilian functions as a sign of identification especially for the males:

Sulla rozzezza e volgarità del siciliano si trovano d'accordo più le donne che gli uomini. Seppure in misura non cospicua, il siciliano è percepito in qualche modo come un idioma prevalentemente 'maschile'. (Vecchio, 1990: 171)

An interesting result of this study, however, is the very high percentage of urban females declaring themselves able to speak Sicilian. It is worth noting that 73 per cent of them were exposed to Sicilian at home. This figure is actually lower than that of the Ols survey: in Catania 80 per cent of the females declared that their parents used Sicilian among themselves, and 13.1 per cent replied that their parents used both Italian and Sicilian. In Messina, 77.1 per cent of the females declared that their parents used Sicilian among themselves, and 16.6 per cent both Italian and Sicilian. Moreover, the Ols survey figures reveal, in the case of Palermo and Catania, that the percentage of females exposed to Sicilian at home is actually higher than that of the males. Regarding linguistic competence in Sicilian and its use in family contexts, the females score slightly less or the same as males in Palermo and Messina, while they score even higher than the males in Catania.

All this suggests that, in urban areas, females do not reject the local variety. On the contrary, many of them speak and use it. It would, therefore, be superficial to conclude that, in urban areas, females have a negative perception of Sicilian. The analysis of the third section of the questionnaire will show that Sicilian is regarded by many females as a very important trait of Sicilian identity. Females attach great importance to the acquisition of the national language and desire a high standard of fluency in the national language for their children. However, they can still decide

that it is positive for themselves and their children to speak the local language, as long as the acquisition of the national language is consolidated.

9.3.1.2 *The distinction between language and dialect*

The same variety can be classified by some as a language, by others as a dialect. In the previous chapter, it has been suggested that the word ‘language’ conveys a higher status than the word ‘dialect’, which is usually regarded as a deformation of the national language. The following statement by Marcato shows the complexity of the linguistic situation in Italy, as well as making the point that ‘language’ and ‘dialect’ can both be used to describe the same variety, in order to attribute to it a greater or lesser dignity:

Parlare di **dialetti italiani** equivale ad adoperare un’espressione non priva di ambiguità. Forse sarebbe più opportuno riferirsi a **dialetti dell’Italia** piuttosto che italiani: si eviterebbe in tal modo di incorrere in uno degli stereotipi che riguardano il termine *dialetto*, spesso creduto una ‘corruzione’ dell’italiano. Il dialetto, insomma, pare subordinato, nell’opinione comune, in diversi modi alla lingua; di qui la considerazione che l’uso della parola *lingua* possa conferire maggiore dignità ad un dialetto; di conseguenza si creano delle opposizioni del tipo *dialetto veneto* ~ *lingua veneta* per designare la medesima varietà, ma con minore (dialetto) o maggiore (lingua) prestigio. (2002: 19)

93 per cent of the urban females and 67 of the urban males regarded Sicilian as a dialect. The main reason given was the fact that it is spoken only in Sicily. Another was the fact that it is similar to Italian. The males who regarded Sicilian as a language made a strong connection between ‘language’ and ‘prestige’ or ‘language’ and ‘identity’. When the non-urban respondents were asked if Sicilian was a language or a dialect, their response was rather mixed. The following table compares the replies of the two groups in the urban as well as the non-urban sample.

Q8: In your opinion is Sicilian a language or a dialect? (%)

	Dialect	Language	I do not know
Urban females	93	7	0
Urban males	67	33	0
Non-urban females	57	28	14
Non-urban males	46	40	13

The finding that more men than women are willing to give the high status of language to Sicilian is in line with that of other studies, which show the preference women have for more standard and prestigious linguistic forms (Labov, 1981: 177-99; Trudgill, 1972: 179-95). Moreover, there might be a correlation between fluency in the local variety and the status this particular variety enjoys among its speakers. The males are more fluent in Sicilian than the females, and are therefore more ready to regard it as a language; the females are either less fluent in the local variety or less prepared to admit to being able to speak it. Consequently, they reserve the status of 'language' exclusively for the national language. However, the analysis of the previous and following sections of the questionnaire shows that Sicilian is viewed very positively by both females and males. Thus, the lower status that the females attribute to Sicilian does not prevent a positive consideration of the local variety, which is regarded by them as an important element of local identity.

9.3.1.3 The link between local language and local identity

The urban females were more pessimistic than the urban males about future chances of survival of Sicilian: 40 per cent of them did not think that Sicilian would still be spoken in the future. On the contrary, the males were very positive about the future of Sicilian: 73 per cent thought that it would still be spoken in 100 years, a further 13 per cent in 50 years, and 13 per cent thought that it would disappear. However, the link between local language and local identity was very strong in both groups. Both groups gave equal importance to the safeguarding of the local variety and linked it with that of local identity. A few interesting comments were made by some respondents in both groups: one female underlined the importance of the local variety for the Sicilian people 'Il dialetto è importante per noi siciliani'; two males strongly asserted the connection between language and identity: 'La lingua configura l'identità di un popolo' and 'Se non si protegge il dialetto, non si può dire di essere siciliani'.

A high number of non-urban respondents in both groups (40 per cent of the males, 43 per cent of the females) did not think that Sicilian would be spoken in the future. The majority of the males and all the females thought that it was important to safeguard it, in order to protect the cultural heritage of the region. Several males underlined the link between local identity and local language. However, when the females were asked 'What does it mean for you to be Sicilian?', they made a very

strong connection between language and identity. An interesting statement made by a female respondent, which summarizes the overall attitude of the non-urban females was: ‘Oltre alle varie tradizioni regionali vi è un unico elemento che rende i siciliani tutti uguali: la lingua’.

These data show that men as well as women in both groups make a strong link between safeguarding of the local identity and safeguarding of the local language. Moreover, being Sicilian is associated with very positive aspects, and the Sicilian cultural heritage is very highly valued. A study that examines the identification between gender and social group acknowledges that women as well as men can choose to use the vernacular as a form of solidarity with a specific social group: Lesley Milroy (1980: 42), in her study of the linguistic situation in three working-class areas in Belfast, found out that in the Clonard, a Catholic area in West Belfast, young women preferred the vernacular and also were in the forefront of extending vernacular forms in their social group.

An interesting result of my analysis is that the urban females value their local variety highly and regard its preservation as of paramount importance for the maintenance of local identity. This positive attitude might explain the fact that their linguistic competence in Sicilian is very high. Urban females appreciate the importance of acquiring the national language for the fulfilment of personal objectives and ambitions; they understand the importance of achieving high standards in the national language for the future of their children. However, this position does not mean rejection or negative perception of the local variety. On the contrary, for many females, the local variety becomes a very important trait for the definition of Sicilian identity, as long as the achievement of a high standard in the national language is not jeopardized.

9.3.1.4 Reactions to measures to safeguard Sicilian

The following table summarizes the different views of the urban as well as the non-urban males and females about possible actions to safeguard Sicilian:

Q33 Which systems could be used to safeguard Sicilian? (%)

	Urban		Non-urban	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Speak Sicilian in the family	80	67	93	93
Convince the others to speak it	7	7	20	0
Radio or television programmes	73	20	60	50
To teach Sicilian from nursery school onwards	13	67	80	64
Cultural initiatives (magazines, associations)	73	47	53	57
To use Sicilian in the local council	27	13	60	20
To celebrate the mass in Sicilian	0	7	47	20
Others	0	7	20	0
It is too late	0	0	0	0

These data show that the non-urban males are more willing than the non-urban females to introduce Sicilian in more formal contexts. However, 93 per cent of the non-urban females and males agree that Sicilian can be safeguarded if it is spoken in the family. This is a very important finding, which could well indicate that women do not reject Sicilian in order to gain prestige and social advancement but, on the contrary, are aware of the possibility of using different linguistic codes, according to the situation. The use of Italian does not necessarily exclude the use of Sicilian in suitable contexts.

Urban males and females have different views about the best way to protect Sicilian. Although both groups are equally opposed to the use of Sicilian in local politics, the females prefer the introduction of Sicilian into education, while the males regard the media, especially the television and the radio, as a very appropriate context for the promotion of Sicilian. Both groups are in favour of the use of Sicilian in the family, even though the percentage of the urban males is higher than that of the urban females.

Alongside the Als survey, the ISTAT survey in 2000 (*Lingua italiana e dialetti in Italia*, www.istat.it/Comunicati/Fuoricale/allegati/Lingua-ita/ver3.doc [accessed 27 May 2004]) shows that the alternating use of the national language and the local variety is an increasing phenomenon in Italy. Sicily is one of the Italian regions with the highest percentage of speakers claiming to use both the national language and the local dialect:

IN FAMIGLIA			
	Solo o prevalentemente italiano	Solo o prevalentemente dialetto	Sia italiano che dialetto
Sicilia	23.8	32.8	42.5
Italia	44.1	19.1	32.9

CON GLI AMICI			
	Solo o prevalentemente italiano	Solo o prevalentemente dialetto	Sia italiano che dialetto
Sicilia	28.4	26.6	44.2
Italia	48.0	16.0	32.7

CON GLI ESTRANEI			
	Solo o prevalentemente italiano	Solo o prevalentemente dialetto	Sia italiano che dialetto
Sicilia	57.1	12.7	29.4
Italia	72.7	6.8	18.6

It is interesting to link the findings of the present study with those of the ISTAT survey. The increase in bilingual behaviour in Sicily could well be a consequence of the widespread use of Sicilian in the family and of the awareness of the importance of the role of the family in passing on the regional or local variety to the next generation. It is important to underline, however, that, in the present study, the variable 'sex' is not particularly relevant to determine different attitudes between males and females towards the importance of using Sicilian in the family. Both males and females are in favour of promoting Sicilian through the family channel. Moreover, in the non-urban sample, the percentage of females and males in favour of the use of Sicilian in the family is identical. This finding is supported by Berruto in his analysis of the results of the Ols survey. When he considers the variable 'sex', he writes:

Ma è senz'altro vero che globalmente dalla presente ricerca risulta un'incidenza della variabile sesso sorprendentemente molto meno evidente di quello che ci si sarebbe aspettati e addirittura nella stragrande maggioranza dei casi assolutamente irrilevante (abbondano le percentuali praticamente identiche per uomini e donne per ogni tipo di contesto in ogni situazione regionale). (1992: 270)

9.3.1.5 Reactions to national legislative measures

Only 20 per cent of urban females and males were aware of law 482. In the non-urban sample, 78 per cent of females and 87 of males were unaware of law 482. The following table shows the attitudes of the four groups towards the law:

Q34: What do you think of this law (tick one or more boxes)?

	Urban		Non-urban	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
Fair	13	20	64	33
Necessary	7	7	14	13
Useless	33	13	13	20
Unjust	27	40	0	13
Other	20	20	7	27

The four groups were asked if they would like to have law 482 applied to Sicilian:

	Urban		Non-urban	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
Yes	20	20	64	53

These figures show that urban males and females generally disagree with legislation to protect local or regional languages and are not in favour of including Sicilian in the safeguarding. The urban males opposed this possibility with stronger arguments than the females. They criticized the law with the following comments: 'Anche se bisogna tutelare i dialetti, è necessario salvaguardare la lingua nazionale'; 'Anche se ho definito il siciliano come lingua poiché ha tutte le caratteristiche semantiche e morfologiche per essere considerato tale, bisogna tenerlo sempre entro i limiti dell'ambiente locale'.

In the non-urban sample, females approved legislation to protect local languages more than males and were more in favour of legislation to protect Sicilian. These findings indicate a general positive attitude, on the part of the non-urban females, towards the safeguarding of Sicilian. In section 8.3.1.4, the majority of them disagreed with the introduction of Sicilian in politics. On the other hand, half of them agreed with the use of Sicilian in the media and religious ceremonies and many of them also approved the introduction of Sicilian in education. This positive attitude may well be attributable to the fact that women are more sensitive than men to issues of linguistic prestige. In this way, legislation could provide the means of increasing the present status of Sicilian.

9.3.2 Analysis based on age groups

The urban sample was divided into two groups, according to the age of the respondents: young and old. The analysis excluded the middle-aged group, since the number of respondents aged 36-50 was not significant. The first (G1) consisted of those aged 21-35; the second (G3) consisted of those aged 51 and above. There were eighteen young respondents and nine older respondents.

The non-urban sample was divided into three groups, according to the age of the respondents: young, middle-aged and old. The first (G1) consisted of those aged 21-35; the second (G2) consisted of those aged 36-50; the third (G3) consisted of those aged 51 and above. There were ten young respondents, ten middle-aged respondents, and ten old respondents.

9.3.2.1 Linguistic competence and behaviour

As for the urban sample, 33 per cent of the young respondents and 89 per cent of the older ones replied that Sicilian was their mother tongue. In the first group, 83 per cent were able to speak Sicilian and 94 per cent could understand it, while all of the second group could speak and understand it. 72 per cent of young respondents and 89 of older ones claimed that their parents use or used Sicilian among themselves. The following tables show how often and in which contexts the local variety is spoken:

Q6a Do you speak Sicilian: (%)

	G1	G3
Always	0	0
Often	61	67
Sometimes	17	22
Rarely	22	11
Never	0	0

Q6b Do you speak Sicilian? (%)

	G1	G3
With the family	61	67
With your parents	67	44
With your children	0	11
With your spouse	47	67
With your grandparents	44	0
With your friends	89	89
In the shops	0	11
In the offices	0	11
At work	17	11

It is interesting to point out that the percentage of urban respondents speaking Sicilian with friends is the same for both G1 and G3. However, G1 and G3 mean something very different when they state that they use Sicilian with their friends: while for the older respondents the use of Sicilian with their friends is common practice and they use it for serious conversation, for the young respondents it is more probable that, as in the case of Sardinian, it means that they use it *in battute* or *per scherzare*. The replies to questions on linguistic competence show a decline in competence in Sicilian amongst the non-urban younger generations. The figures suggest that one of the reasons might be in the family's failure to pass the language on to the next generation. The findings on the decline of the local language amongst the younger generations are in line with those of the ISTAT survey in 2000 (*Lingua italiana e dialetti in Italia*, www.istat.it/Comunicati/Fuoricale/allegati/Lingua-ita/ver3.doc [accessed 27 May 2004]):

L'uso prevalente dell'italiano decresce col crescere dell'età in tutti i contesti relazionali. Per l'uso in famiglia, la quota varia dal 65, 4% dei bambini al 25, 6% degli anziani.

Viceversa, l'uso esclusivo o prevalente del dialetto cresce col crescere dell'età, passando da una quota molto bassa (6,4%) di bambini che parlano soltanto dialetto in famiglia al 40,1% degli ultrasessantacinquenni. Le differenze generazionali nell'uso esclusivo o prevalente di italiano e dialetto in famiglia cresce fino a 64 anni per poi diminuire.

In the non-urban sample, all the young respondents regarded Italian as their mother tongue. However, 89 per cent of the middle-aged respondents and all the older respondents replied that Sicilian was their mother tongue. The following table shows the linguistic competence in Sicilian of the three age groups:

Q2 Do you speak Sicilian? (%)

	G1	G2	G3
Yes	60	89	100
No	40	11	0

The figures regarding linguistic competence according to the age category show a decline of the language in intergenerational transmission. 75 per cent of the young respondents who were unable to speak Sicilian claimed that they were not very interested in learning it and did not give any explanation for this. However, the

linguistic passive competence of the young respondents was very good, since all of them claimed that they could understand Sicilian.

Moreover, the decline of Sicilian in intergenerational transmission was also evident when the three groups answered questions on their active use of the local or regional variety. The following table shows the frequency with which Sicilian is used by the three groups:

Q6a Do you speak Sicilian: (%)

	G1	G2	G3
Always	0	11	60
Often	40	44	30
Sometimes	10	33	10
Rarely	40	11	0
Never	10	0	0

The linguistic behaviour of the three groups in different domains was considered:

Q6b Do you speak Sicilian? (%)

	G1	G2	G3
With the family	40	67	90
With your parents	50	67	50
With your children	0	55	90
With your spouse	0	78	80
With your grandparents	40	22	20
With your friends	30	89	90
In the shops	0	11	80
In the offices	0	0	60
At work	10	22	30

The respondents were also asked ‘Which language/dialect did your parents use among themselves?’ (%):

	G1	G2	G3
Italian	50	11	0
Sicilian	50	67	100
Both	0	22	0

The analysis of this section of the questionnaire shows that, despite the decline in the non-urban younger generations, Sicilian is still quite alive among this section of the population. The fact that all the non-urban young respondents understand Sicilian and also use it in a variety of familiar contexts is quite encouraging for its future. Sicily, in fact, together with the province of Trento and the regions of Veneto and

Calabria, is one of the Italian regions in which there is a more prevalent use of dialect in the family: 32.8 per cent of the informants of the ISTAT survey claim to use the dialect exclusively or mainly in the family (Lingua italiana e dialetti in Italia', www.istat.it/Comunicati/Fuoricale/allegati/Lingua-ita/ver3.doc [accessed 27 May 2004]). Moreover, the decline of the local dialect is a general tendency in Italy, related mainly to the different roles the Italian language can perform. Nevertheless, the use young Sicilians make of dialect is still much higher than that of their peers in other Italian areas:

Il sottofondo dialettale è diverso da un territorio all'altro e si riflette variamente nella lingua dei giovani; mentre è a portata di mano in Friuli, in Veneto, in Trentino o in Sicilia per i giovani di Milano o di Genova 'il dialetto costituisce tutt'al più un'entità ricercata usata proprio per il suo carattere ibrido' [Radtke 1993: 214]. (Marcato, 2002: 51-52).

The findings on the urban sample show that Sicilian is still a frequent linguistic choice in urban areas, even among young people. However, it has to be underlined that the majority of urban respondents live in the cities of Catania and Messina, which, according to the Ols survey, are more conservative in the use of dialect than Palermo. 'Palermo si presenta come la città più italoфона. Catania e Messina seguono la stessa tendenza ma in misura minore' (Ferreri and Lo Piparo, 1990: 71).

The Ols has devised a way of measuring fluency in Sicilian called *Tasso di Sicilianità Linguistica* (TSL). The respondents were asked what language they used in different situations. If somebody used exclusively Sicilian, s/he would score 1. On the other hand if s/he never used Sicilian, s/he would score 0. The equal use of Sicilian and Italian would give a score of 0.5. If somebody used more Sicilian than Italian s/he would score 0.75. In the opposite case, s/he would score 0.25 (Ols, 1990: 24). The data of the Ols survey indicate that in Palermo parents use Italian with their children much more than in Catania and Messina:

Nel reticolo comunicativo che ha i Figli come interlocutori a Palermo accade una vera e propria rottura idiomatica: tra il TSL riferito al coniuge (0,60) e quello riferito ai Figli (0,37) va registrata una notevole differenza (0,23). Al confronto a Catania e Messina i Figli fanno innescare solo debolmente il processo che porta al mutamento linguistico: i rispettivi TSL non raggiungono neanche lo 0,50 che è perno dell'alternanza fra idomi diversi. (Ferreri and Lo Piparo, 1990: 69-70)

The situation of the TSL in the three different Sicilian cities is illustrated in the following table (Ols, 1990: 69):

CONTESTI	Messina	Catania	Palermo
Coniuge	0.77	0.75	0.60
Figli	0.61	0.56	0.37

The fact that a high number of parents in Catania and Messina use Sicilian with their children, creates a balanced bilingualism in Italian and Sicilian. The Ols figures on the different situations in the three main Italian cities might well explain the vitality of Sicilian among the urban respondents analysed in the present study.

9.3.2.2 *Distinction between language and dialect*

The analysis of the replies of the urban respondents showed a pattern opposite to that observed in the non-urban sample: the younger the age, the higher the percentage of respondents giving a high status to Sicilian: all the older respondents regarded Sicilian as a dialect, while 33 per cent of the young respondents regarded it as a language. Sicilian was described as a language for linguistic, cultural, and historical reasons, because it is the native language of the Sicilian people and unites all the Sicilians. It was regarded as a dialect mainly because it is spoken in a limited region of the nation. Therefore, among the urban young respondents, these figures register a change in the perception of the status of Sicilian. Moreover, the reasons the young respondents gave to justify the status of Sicilian as a language show that they view their regional variety as an outward expression of local loyalties and identities.

In the non-urban sample, the age variable shows that the younger the age, the higher is the percentage of respondents giving a lower status to Sicilian: 70 per cent of the young respondents, 55 per cent of the middle-aged respondents, and 40 per cent of the older respondents regarded Sicilian as a dialect. The lack of a standard form of Sicilian was one of the main reasons given by the three different age groups to justify their position. This finding is not surprising, since a standard variety is usually associated with the cultural, educational, and political establishment in a geographical area:

The standardization process itself performs a variety of functions. It unifies individuals and groups within a larger community while at the same time separating the community that results from other communities. (Wardhaugh, 1992: 31).

In Sicily, there is no acceptance of a unitary variety which could perform one of the functions mentioned above: culture, education, and politics are the traditional domains of the national language. However, it would be too simplistic to analyse these data on the status of Sicilian as a sign of rejection of the local variety, particularly amongst the young respondents. Several recent studies on the language used by young people in Italy reveal, especially in some regions including Sicily, a high presence of dialect elements:

In zone in cui il dialetto è ancora vitale si verifica, oltre all'uso di elementi dialettali stabilizzati nel lessico giovanile, l'inserimento nel discorso di occasionali inserti dialettali, di lunghezza variabile, che porta alla realizzazione di commutazioni di codice o di enunciati mistilingui. Risalgono probabilmente a episodi di alternanze di codice di questo tipo le realizzazioni dialettali attribuibili a giovani raccolte da Giuseppina Mosca a Palermo (del tipo: *Ti rumpu a matriciri cuorna* 'ti rompo la matrice delle corna' cioè 'ti rompo la testa', *quartiati* 'sta attento perché è l'ora delle botte', *scinni ca ti smacinu* 'scendi che ti faccio a pezzi', *allargati ch'a pittura è frisca!* 'allontanati che la pittura è fresca', cioè 'allontanati, quella ragazza è impegnata'). (Cortelazzo, 1994: 305).

Cortelazzo (1994: 303) states that 'l'uso di forme dialettali, sia insediatesi stabilmente nel lessico giovanile, sia inserite occasionalmente nel discorso, fa sí che l'identità del gruppo si estenda dal parametro generazionale a quello geografico'. The use of dialect amongst the young generation does not mean revival or recovery of the past but an alternative to the linguistic variety used by the adults or the common linguistic forms (Marcato, 2002: 51). Dialects are used by the younger generations also for the 'notevole carica di emotività di parole spesso intraducibili, particolarmente adatte a conferire al discorso quella vivacità ed efficacia espressiva e comunicativa affidata, fino a un paio di decenni addietro, all'uso del dialetto, oggi dichiaratamente abbandonato' (Tropea, 1996: 281).

9.3.2.3 *The link between local language and local identity*

The aim of this section of the questionnaire was to see if the age variable could reveal, in the different groups, dissimilar views on the future of Sicilian and also if there was a perception that the loss of Sicilian could also mean the loss of Sicilian identity.

Q13: Do you think that Sicilian will be spoken by future generations?

	Urban		Non-urban		
	G1	G3	G1	G2	G3
Yes, in 50 years	50	22	40	44	10
Yes, in 100 years	55	33	0	33	50
No	22	44	60	22	40

In the urban sample, although the link between language and identity was seen as very strong by both groups, the young respondents gave very clear and detailed arguments to support their position. Furthermore, the younger respondents did not seem to be affected by prejudices and stereotypes usually associated with the notion of 'dialect' as much as the older respondents. This is probably because older people, for whom dialect is a more natural way of communicating, were themselves victims of prejudices and discriminations and therefore reflect their personal negative experiences onto their views on local varieties. Young people, on the other hand, had less negative experiences in this respect and seem more capable of making clear judgements on the role of local and regional languages and identities in modern society.

Young urban respondents were asked questions meant to assess their views on the importance of maintaining their local variety and identity. Sicilian was regarded by them as a very important feature, though not the only one, of Sicilian identity: 'È importante salvaguardare il siciliano per mantenere l'identità siciliana', or 'La lingua configura l'identità di un popolo, 'Il siciliano è un marchio culturale distintivo della nostra terra', 'Se non si protegge il siciliano non si può dire di essere siciliani'. Furthermore, several young respondents talked about the distinctive identity of the Sicilian people: 'Essere siciliano è un simbolo distintivo'; 'Essere siciliano significa avere un'identità specifica'. On the other hand, some young respondents made a less strong link between language and identity: 'Per me essere siciliana non è solo una questione di uso del dialetto: implica anche un legame viscerale che sento di avere con l'isola e con le altre persone che la abitano. La sicilianità non scaturisce solo dall'uso del dialetto'; 'Proteggere il siciliano è una cosa distinta dalla protezione dell'identità siciliana'.

The older urban respondents generally agreed about the importance of the Sicilian language and identity and the role language plays in defining identities.

These figures refer to the whole region as well as to the three main Sicilian cities. The following table, however, groups the replies of the respondents, according to the size of their place of residence:

Chi non sa parlare in siciliano non è un buon siciliano

	AMPIEZZA DEI CENTRI (in migliaia)				
	-5	5-20	20-50	50-100	100...
D'accordo	66.9	64.7	54.3	59.0	56.9
Non d'accordo	26.1	30.5	37.9	36.5	37.6
D'accordo e non d'accordo	3.8	2.8	3.2	2.4	2.9
Non sa, non risponde	3.2	2.0	4.6	2.1	2.6

This table shows that the smaller the size of the place of residence, the stronger is the link between being Sicilian and being able to speak Sicilian.

The results of the Ols are in line, to some extent, with those of the present study. In the non-urban sample, in fact, the connection between language and identity is stronger amongst the middle-aged and older respondents and weaker among the young respondents. In my analysis, however, the urban young respondents make a strong link between language and identity. In the Ols survey, with the exception of Messina, the percentage of urban young respondents linking language and identity, although it is lower than that of the older respondents, it is higher than that of the two preceding age groups. The connection between language and identity amongst the urban young respondents and also their positive attitude towards local variety and identity could be a sign indicating a change of direction in the perception of local and regional varieties.

9.3.2.4 Reactions to measures to safeguard Sicilian

The different age groups were asked to indicate in which ways Sicilian could be promoted:

Q32: Which systems could be used to safeguard Sicilian? (%)

	Urban		Non-urban		
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G3
Speak Sicilian in the family	89	55	80	100	100
Convince the others to speak it	11	0	0	33	0
Radio or television programmes	78	22	20	67	80
To teach Sicilian from nursery schools onwards	11	0	60	78	90
Cultural initiatives (magazines, associations)	67	67	50	67	40
To use Sicilian in the local council	0	44	0	55	70
To use Sicilian in the provincial council	0	44	0	33	40
To use Sicilian in the regional council	0	44	0	33	40
To celebrate the mass in Sicilian	0	0	0	33	60
Others	0	0	0	22	10
It is too late	0	0	0	0	0

In the non-urban sample, the young respondents felt strongly that Italian was the only language suitable in formal and official situations. Only a few approved of the use of Sicilian in local radio and television programmes and in newspapers and magazines. The main reason given to justify their interest in the introduction of Sicilian in the media was the performance of Sicilian plays. The urban young respondents were also against the use of Sicilian in formal contexts. The acquisition of the national language was regarded as the essential task of education, given that many children learn Sicilian at home: 'I bambini, generalmente, imparano il dialetto prima di andare a scuola. Qui devono imparare la lingua nazionale', or 'Non è necessario insegnarlo nelle scuole perché lo si impara ugualmente fuori dalla scuola'. However, many young respondents viewed the use of Sicilian in the media very positively: 67 per cent were in favour of newspapers and magazines in Sicilian, while 78 per cent were in favour of radio programmes and a television channel in Sicilian.

A higher percentage of non-urban middle aged and older respondents were in favour of the introduction of Sicilian in education. These groups thought that the promotion of Sicilian should be targeted at the younger generations and at the achievement of bilingualism in Italian and Sicilian: 'Per integrare siciliano e italiano' or 'Integrare il siciliano alla lingua italiana significa controllare due culture'. A middle aged teacher wrote: 'Sono convinto che il siciliano dovrebbe essere integrato nelle scuole'. The urban older respondents were generally against the introduction of Sicilian into education, except for high schools and universities, where its use was approved by 78 per cent of them.

The Ols dedicated a part of the investigation to *Ideologia e comportamenti* in Sicily. In question 9, the informants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with some statements, of which three are relevant to this section of the analysis:

- Nella scuola dell'obbligo si dovrebbe dedicare qualche ora allo studio di poesie e commedie scritte in siciliano
- Nella scuola dell'obbligo si dovrebbe dedicare qualche ora allo studio del siciliano
- Le leggi e i regolamenti della Regione e dei Comuni siciliani dovrebbero essere scritti anche in siciliano (Ols, 1990: 152)

The three statements aimed to elicit the informants' views on the expansion of the functional use of Sicilian in areas such as education and politics, in order to achieve 'valorizzazione politico-istituzionale e assunzione riflessa della produzione letteraria e della struttura linguistica' (Ols, 1990:153).

First, the survey of the Ols analysed the general situation in Sicily, and afterwards introduced some variables. The main distinction was based on the informants' place of residence. Therefore, the sample was split into the *Provincia* (the province) and *Capoluoghi* (provincial capitals). The first finding was the correlation between the higher linguistic competence of the *Provincia* and their lack of confidence in promoting Sicilian, compared to those living in *Capoluoghi*. The Sicilians living in the *Provincia* used Sicilian more than those living in *Capoluoghi*. However, they associated it less with education than those living in *Capoluoghi* (Ols, 1990: 298):

A scuola si dovrebbero studiare le opere scritte in siciliano

Capoluoghi	
D'accordo	88.8
Non d'accordo	8.6
D'accordo e non d'accordo	1.6
Non sa, non risponde	1.0
Provincia	
D'accordo	78.6
Non d'accordo	15.5
D'accordo e non d'accordo	2.2
Non sa, non risponde	3.7

A scuola si dovrebbe studiare il siciliano

Capoluoghi	
D'accordo	75.7
Non d'accordo	20.6
D'accordo e non d'accordo	2.2
Non sa, non risponde	1.5
Provincia	
D'accordo	68.9
Non d'accordo	25.2
D'accordo e non d'accordo	2.6
Non sa, non risponde	3.3

In my study, however, there was a correlation between the higher linguistic competence of the non-urban sample and their positive attitude towards the promotion of Sicilian. The three age groups of the non-urban sample were in favour of introducing Sicilian into formal and official contexts, in particular education. This finding is in contrast with that of the Ols survey. Given the size of the sample, the results of the Ols survey are more likely to reflect the current situation in Sicily. However, another possible explanation could be found in the fact that my analysis examines the views of respondents who live in smaller and more rural places (Partinico and Balestrate) and make a strong connection between language and identity.

The survey of Ols indicates that the age variable is very significant in terms of reaction these statements provoke: the younger the respondents, the more articulate are the replies:

Resta confermato il minore scarto nella generazione più anziana, la quale presenta altresì una percentuale di 'd'accordo' quasi per intero al di sopra del 50% [...] I soggetti più anziani, come già quelli meno istruiti, presentano un tracciato mediamente più alto e più piatto di quello risultante dalle risposte dei più giovani e più istruiti. (Vecchio, 1990: 161)

In the present study, similar findings have been identified. The older the respondents, the more similar and less articulate are their replies. The young respondents have more precise views on how to safeguard Sicilian than the other age groups: the non-urban young respondents are against the introduction of Sicilian in local politics but approve the integration of Sicilian in the educational curriculum. The urban young respondents are in favour of the use of Sicilian in the media. The non-urban middle-aged, and, to a greater extent, the older respondents, generally express their agreement on the different ways of preserving Sicilian. The majority of

the urban older respondents are against the use of Sicilian in the different formal contexts listed in the questionnaire.

9.3.2.5 Reaction to national legislative measures

The following tables show the percentage of respondents unaware of the existence of law 482 and their reactions:

Q33: Are you aware of the existence of law 482? (%)

	Urban		Non-urban		
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G3
No	78	89	80	100	90

Q34: What do you think of this law (tick one or more boxes)? (%)

	Urban		Non-urban		
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G3
Fair	11	22	40	55	40
Necessary	5	0	10	22	20
Useless	28	22	30	22	0
Unjust	44	22	20	11	0
Other	11	33	20	0	30

The table shows that the response of both urban groups was varied, even though there were more negative than positive views. 11 per cent of G1 and 33 per cent of G2 did not have an opinion and therefore ticked the 'other' box. The two groups talked about the importance of using the national language in formal and official contexts, the uselessness of preserving a dialect through legislation, and the anachronism of the law.

As for the non-urban sample, there was more agreement about law 482 in the second and third age groups than in the first. Those in G2 and G3 who had positive views about the law generally stated that it would help to protect the local traditions and languages and those who were negative about the law did not support their reply. The young respondents, however, argued their reasons in a much more detailed way:

- Law 482 is fair because it safeguards local languages, but unfair at the same time since it promotes a plurilinguism which can be dangerous for the future of the national language
- Law 482 is fair and necessary, since it promotes Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian
- Law 482 is unfair because it discriminates against the other varieties spoken in Italy
- Legislation to promote a variety is useless; it is important to continue to speak it: 'Per preservare la propria lingua, non c'è bisogno che ci sia una legge a proteggerla, l'importante è non dimenticarla'.

The different age groups were asked if they would like to have law 482 applied to Sicilian:

	Urban		Non-urban		
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G3
Yes	22	22	40	78	60
No	72	67	40	11	0
I do not know	5	11	20	11	40

In the urban sample, although the views on law 482 and on the possibility of including Sicilian in the legislation were similar in both groups, the young respondents were slightly more negative about the law and also opposed more strongly the introduction of legislative measures to protect Sicilian. As for the non-urban sample, the group opposing mostly legislation to protect Sicilian was G1, the young respondents.

It is interesting to compare this table with the following table of the Ols (Ols, 1990: 302). The informants were asked to express their opinion on the possibility that local and regional laws should also be written in Sicilian.

Leggi e regolamenti regionali e comunali si dovrebbero scrivere anche in siciliano

	TOT.	Età (nati nel ...)					
		1919	1920	1930-9	1940-9	1950-9	1960-9
PALERMO							
D'accordo	40.6	46.1	47.2	48.5	32.1	42.1	26.7
Non d'accordo	51.1	35.4	44.8	43.7	61.5	52.1	65.3
D'accordo e non d'accordo	5.3	7.7	8.0	7.8	6.4	0.0	5.7
Non sa, non risponde	3.0	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.8	2.3
CATANIA							
D'accordo	38.8	53.1	37.3	46.9	39.5	35.8	29.7
Non d'accordo	57.7	46.9	58.8	49.0	55.2	64.2	64.1
D'accordo e non d'accordo	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1
Non sa, non risponde	2.8	0.0	3.9	4.1	5.3	0.0	3.1
MESSINA							
D'accordo	32.0	36.4	41.2	40.0	13.3	36.8	28.2
Non d'accordo	66.0	63.6	52.9	50.0	86.7	63.2	72.0
D'accordo e non d'accordo	1.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Non sa, non risponde	1.0	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PROVINCIA							
D'accordo	38.9	54.5	44.6	47.6	40.0	27.4	27.1
Non d'accordo	52.7	35.6	41.2	46.0	51.4	66.8	66.2
D'accordo e non d'accordo	4.7	3.3	6.4	4.3	6.1	3.9	4.2
Non sa, non risponde	3.7	6.6	7.8	2.0	2.5	1.9	2.5

This table shows that, in urban as well as non-urban areas, the age variable influences the respondents' position: the young respondents express more doubts about the application of such measures, while the older generation generally raise fewer objections. This different reaction among the different age groups might be a consequence of the higher level of competence in Sicilian and the lower command of the national language among the older respondents. However, there is another issue to discuss regarding whether, in local politics, local varieties should or should not be used: that of practicality, which the younger informants seem to appreciate more than the older ones. In the present study, the importance of not adding further complications to the sufficiently complicated political arena in Italy is a point underlined by several young respondents.

9.3.3 Analysis based on the social status of the sample

The non-urban sample was split into two groups, where G1 is made up of those with lower status (manual workers with primary or middle-school leaving certificates) and G3 of people with higher status (professionals with a university degree). As explained in section 7.6 of Chapter Seven, those with the *maturità* were not considered, since they were all young and therefore their response has already been analysed in the section dedicated to the age category. In section 7.6, the potential

problems deriving from such an omission were also highlighted. There were eleven in the first group, and nine in the second.

The urban sample was split into three groups, G1, G2, and G3, where G1 is made up of those with low status (manual workers with primary or middle-school leaving certificates), G2 of people employed in the public sector, with the *maturità*, and G3 of people with high status (professionals with a university degree). There were five people in the first group, sixteen in the second, and nine in the third.

9.3.3.1 Linguistic competence and behaviour

The following three tables show respectively:

- the percentage of respondents able to speak Sicilian
- how often they speak it
- in which contexts they use it

Q2 Do you speak Sicilian? (%)

	Urban			Non-urban	
	G1	G2	G3	G1	G3
Yes	100	100	67	100	89

Q6a Do you speak Sicilian: (%)

	Urban			Non-urban	
	G1	G2	G3	G1	G3
Always	0	6	0	60	11
Often	40	62	55	40	22
Sometimes	60	31	11	0	55
Rarely	0	0	33	0	12
Never	0	0	0	0	0

Q6b Do you speak Sicilian? (%)

	Urban			Non-urban	
	G1	G2	G3	G1	G3
With the family	60	68	55	82	55
With your children	40	0	0	82	33
With your spouse	40	37	22	82	44
With your parents	80	56	62	64	33
With your grandparents	3	25	11	36	11
With your friends	80	100	89	82	78
In shops	0	0	11	64	22
In offices	0	0	11	45	0
At school/university	0	0	11	0	0
At work	40	0	11	27	22

These findings show that the 'social status' variable affects competence in the regional language: the lower the status of the respondents, the higher their competence in the local language. In the urban sample, respondents with higher status are less likely to be exposed to the dialect at home. Several urban respondents in the lower status group use Sicilian with their children, while none of those in the two other groups does. As for the non-urban sample, both G1 and G3 have a good command of Sicilian but those in the lower status group regard Sicilian as their mother tongue, they speak it always or often, and use it in all the contexts listed in the table, though in a minor degree in the domains of work and offices. These contexts, however, are more formal than those of family and friends, and this would explain the lower percentage. Nevertheless, 64 per cent of the respondents in G1 use it in shops and 45 per cent in offices. Lo Piparo (1990:22) provides a very interesting framework for analysis, distinguishing between *Dominio privato o familiare*, *Dominio pubblico informale*, and *Dominio pubblico formale*. Since local shops are part of the *Dominio pubblico informale*, the high percentage of non-urban older respondents using Sicilian in that context is not surprising.

These findings show that, in more formal contexts, Sicilian is still quite a frequent choice among less educated people living in non-urban centres. The figures register a lower use of Sicilian among the higher status respondents. The domain in which this group still uses Sicilian a great deal is that of friendship. In the family, in particular with their children, Italian is the most obvious choice.

The results of the present analysis are in line with those of the Ols survey, since both studies show a correlation between education and competence in the local variety. In the Ols survey, the informants living in the *Provincia* speak Sicilian more than those living in *Capoluoghi*. Moreover, the higher their educational level, the less is the use of Sicilian:

I siculofoni hanno quasi tutti un'età superiore ai 44 anni (sono nati prima del 1940), posseggono al massimo la licenza elementare, risiedono nei comuni dai cinquemila ai ventimila abitanti e in quelli che superano i centomila abitanti. Gli italofoeni totali hanno nella maggioranza dei casi un'età inferiore ai 44 anni, (sono nati dopo il 1940), posseggono un titolo di studio medio-alto (ma si addensano soprattutto fra i diplomati), vivono in massima parte nei centri con più di centomila abitanti. (Lo Piparo, 1990: 37)

The following table (Lo Piparo, 1990: 32) shows the results on the use of Sicilian in a variety of situations, among the informants living in the *Provincia*:

Dominio Privato	Senza titolo	Licenza Elementare	Licenza media	Diploma	Laurea
Rabbia	0.97	0.91	0.85	0.74	0.59
Anziani	0.99	0.96	0.88	0.84	0.75
Genitori	0.97	0.97	0.87	0.85	0.64
Fratelli	0.93	0.88	0.79	0.66	0.54
Coniuge	0.96	0.91	0.84	0.49	0.50
Figli	0.90	0.80	0.50	0.14	0.38
Nipoti	0.73	0.56	0.33	0.00	0.29
Bambini	0.63	0.37	0.19	0.11	0.27
Dominio Pubblico					
Tavola	0.96	0.89	0.78	0.64	0.50
Amici	0.86	0.79	0.65	0.52	0.52
Quartiere	0.87	0.69	0.53	0.49	0.42
Lavoro	0.80	0.65	0.37	0.15	0.15
Sacerdote	0.65	0.38	0.21	0.15	0.20
Medico	0.60	0.38	0.20	0.17	0.19
Uffici	0.57	0.29	0.11	0.06	0.12
Insegnanti	0.47	0.17	0.08	0.04	0.10

These figures indicate that Sicilian is a frequent choice in the *Provincia* and it is spoken in more and less formal contexts. However, the educational level variable is related to the linguistic choices of the informants. It is worth noting the linguistic behaviour of the *laureati*: their TSL is quite high when they speak with their parents and the older generations. It is much lower, however, when they communicate with younger people: *figli*, *nipoti*, and *bambini*. The *tasso di mobilità*, that is the vitality of both Italian and Sicilian, or bidirectional mobility (Bentley, 1997: 207), of the *diplomati* should also be noted. Their TSL varies from a maximum of 0.85 to a minimum of 0.04. This is a clear indication of the usual exaggerated aspiration upwards of the middle socio-educational group. Bentley (1997: 208), analysing the data of the Ols, observes that ‘in Palermo and Catania the highest percentage of mobility corresponds to fairly low educational levels (*licenza elementare*), while in the provinces mobility pertains above all to people who have finished secondary school’.

9.3.3.2 Distinction between language and dialect

In this section, the 'social status' variable was used to assess how the respondents classified Sicilian (table Q8), if they thought that a unitary norm in Sicily existed (table Q10), and if they accepted the distinction between Romance languages spoken in Italy and Italian dialects (table Q 11). The following tables show the respondents' replies:

Q8 In your opinion, is Sicilian a language or a dialect? (%)

	Urban			Non-urban	
	G1	G2	G3	G1	G3
Language	20	19	22	27	45
Dialect	80	81	78	36	55
Does not know/ does not reply	0	0	0	37	0

Q10 In your opinion, does a unitary Sicilian exist or only different varieties? (%)

	Urban			Non-urban	
	G1	G2	G3	G1	G3
Unitary Sicilian	0	0	11	36	11
Different varieties	100	94	78	27	77
Both	0	6	11	18	0
Does not know/ does not reply	0	0	0	19	11

Q11 In your opinion, is it fair to distinguish between Romance languages and Italian dialects? (%)

	Urban			Non-urban	
	G1	G2	G3	G1	G3
Yes	40	50	50	73	44

The three urban groups strongly agreed that Sicilian is a dialect and that different varieties of Sicilian exist, rather than a unitary form. However, they were less willing to accept a distinction between Sardinian, Ladin, and Friulian, classified as Romance languages and the other Italian varieties, classified as dialects. Analysis of the 'social status' variable indicated that the higher the status, the more logical and coherent were the reasons for classifying Sicilian as a dialect. The second and third groups were more conscious of the possibility of enhancing the prestige of a specific variety by calling it a 'language'. Moreover, they showed more awareness, as regards the distinction between language and dialect, of criteria such as the presence or the lack of a norm and the linguistic closeness of the regional variety to the national language.

In the non-urban sample, the views regarding Sicilian being a language or a dialect were more mixed. A fair percentage of higher status respondents, however,

classified Sicilian as a language, although the majority denied the existence of a unitary Sicilian. The lack of a standard form of Sicilian influenced the replies of the respondents who disagreed about the distinction between Romance languages and Italian dialects. The replies of the lower status group to this section of the questionnaire were rather confused and uncertain. 73 per cent of G1, however, agreed that there should be a distinction between Romance languages and Italian dialects but were unable to give a reason for their reply.

The type of replies given by the different age groups from both samples reflect the conclusion the Ols survey reached when analysing the replies of the informants according to their educational level: 'In pratica, più è basso il livello di istruzione, meno articolate sono le risposte, [...] mentre nei livelli di studio più alti si ha una ponderazione più attenta delle singole frasi, con esiti di maggiore articolazione' (Vecchio, 1990: 158).

One of the statements on which the Ols informants had to express their agreement or disagreement was: 'Il siciliano è una lingua, non un dialetto'. In this case, the findings of the Ols survey differs from that of the present study: 52.6 per cent of the informants with no educational achievement, 50 per cent of those with the primary school leaving certificate, and 50.1 per cent of those with a degree agree that Sicilian is a language. The present study, however, suggests that, among those questioned, more people with a degree regard Sicilian as a language than those with primary or middle-school leaving certificates. This difference in the two findings may be explained by the smaller sample and by the fact that many respondents from the lower-status group did not want to reply to the question. This refusal may well be caused by the much poorer cultural background of the respondents in the first group. The interviewers of the Ols survey had the opportunity to clarify ambiguities, since part of the interview was carried out *viva voce*.

9.3.3.3 *The link between local language and local identity*

The following table shows the views of the respondents on the future of Sicilian according to the 'social status' variable:

Q13: Do you think that Sicilian will be spoken by future generations?

	Urban			Non-Urban	
	G1	G2	G3	G1	G2
Yes, in 50 years	40	44	22	27	55
Yes, in 100 years	60	19	44	53	11
No	0	31	33	26	34

These figures show that the low-status groups are more positive than the high-status groups about chances of survival of Sicilian in future years. Therefore, there might be a correlation between social status and the more or less optimistic views on the future of Sicilian.

As for the link between language and identity, in the urban sample, although the three different groups valued the safeguarding of Sicilian and linked it to that of local identity, the respondents in the first group emphasized the importance of passing on the language to younger generations, while those of the second and third groups raised the issue of safeguarding the cultural and traditional heritage of the island as well as the specificity of the Sicilian people. In the non-urban sample, both G1 and G2 replied positively to Q17, 'Is the Sicilian identity important for you?', to Q18, 'Do you think that the protection of Sicilian is also a way of protecting the Sicilian identity?', and negatively to Q19, 'Do you think that being Sicilian is in conflict with being Italian or European?'.

As already seen in sections 9.2.3 and 9.3.2.3, the survey of the Ols included a statement, aimed at assessing the *considerazione etnica* of the informants: 'Chi non sa parlare in siciliano non è un buon Siciliano'. Was the ability to speak Sicilian an important trait distinguishing the ethnicity of the Sicilian people? The following table shows the results according to the 'level of education' variable (Ols, 1990: 292):

Chi non sa parlare in siciliano non è un buon Siciliano

PROVINCIA	TOT.	TITOLO DI STUDIO				
		Nessuno	Elem.	Media	Diploma	Laurea
D'accordo	61.7	74.3	70.5	59.0	37.0	37.7
Non d'accordo	32.1	20.6	23.9	35.2	53.6	56.6
D'accordo e non d'accordo	2.9	1.7	1.4	4.1	4.7	5.7
Non sa, non risponde	3.3	3.4	4.2	1.7	4.7	0.0

This table shows that the higher the educational level of the informants, the weaker is the connection between being Sicilian and the ability to speak the language.

The present study, however, though based on a smaller sample, shows that the link between language and regional identity can be equally strong in both groups. Moreover, the higher-status groups can be more aware of the importance the local language can play in the characterization of local identity. It is very difficult to assess the reasons why this point did not emerge from the Ols survey. Higher social classes can play a leading role in the definition of regional identities. It is not surprising, therefore, that the respondents in the higher-status group show more awareness of these issues. This finding is supported by Gabriella Albanese and others in their article ‘Valutazione ed uso di lingua e dialetto nelle quinte elementari di Enna e Acireale’. The following quotation illustrates this point:

Il numero dei dialettofobi decresce col passare progressivamente da un capitale culturale basso ad un capitale alto. [...] In altre parole, più è colta la famiglia di provenienza del dialettofono, meno egli disprezzerà il dialetto. Questo dato costringe a rivedere gli schemi sociolinguistici che troppo semplicemente contrappongono il dialetto alla lingua standard correlandoli con lo *status* socioeconomico e culturale. (1979: 469)

Future studies may shed more light on the consciousness the more educated sectors of society have of the link between local language and local identity.

9.3.3.4 Reaction to measures to safeguard Sicilian

The following table shows the respondents’ views on possible ways of safeguarding Sicilian:

Q33: Which systems could be used to safeguard Sicilian? (%)

	Urban			Non-urban	
	G1	G2	G3	G1	G3
Speak Sicilian in the family	100	75	55	91	100
Convince the others to speak it	20	0	11	0	14
Radio or television programmes	80	56	44	91	66
Magazines and newspapers	60	56	55	73	55
To teach Sicilian from nursery schools onwards	0	6	11	73	89
Cultural initiatives (magazines, associations)	20	50	88	45	57
To use Sicilian in the local council	40	19	22	64	52
To use Sicilian in the provincial council	40	19	22	54	22
To use Sicilian in the regional council	40	19	22	54	22
To celebrate the mass in Sicilian	0	0	22	64	22
Others	0	6	0	0	0
It is too late	0	0	0	0	0

Among the urban sample, the majority of the respondents in the second and third groups opposed the introduction of Sicilian in local politics strongly. While those in the first group thought that it would facilitate communication amongst the participants, the respondents in the second group regarded the initiative as useless and dangerous for the national unity. Those in the third group stated the importance of using the national language in the political context. In the first group, the high consensus (80 per cent) for the use of Sicilian in television and radio programmes was justified with the fact that this initiative would help to promote Sicilian and that Sicilian could be exploited for humorous purposes in the media. The second group described this initiative as useful for the safeguarding of Sicilian and for the strengthening of Sicilian identity. The third group also talked about the safeguarding of the language through the media, though they were more cautious in their comments: 'Sono a favore non proprio di un canale completo, quanto di trasmissioni in siciliano all'interno di canali regionali'. All three groups opposed the use of Sicilian in the celebration of the mass and education. Nevertheless, 55 per cent of the third group were in favour of the introduction of Sicilian in high schools and universities.

It is worth noting that, while all the respondents in the low-status group thought that the family should encourage the acquisition of Sicilian, those in the high-status group gave more importance to the role of cultural initiatives.

In the non-urban sample, G1 stressed the point of targeting the safeguarding of Sicilian at young people, and the fact that there would be a better understanding if Sicilian were used in local politics, media, and religious ceremonies. The responses to Q33 indicate that, in the non-urban sample, the higher the educational level, the better is the ability to distinguish and select the best ways of preserving Sicilian. The respondents in the lower-status group tend to agree generally about the different methods to safeguard the local variety. However, the respondents in the higher-status group are against the use of Sicilian in local politics, especially at provincial and regional levels, and they oppose the celebration of the mass in Sicilian. On the other hand, they strongly agree with the introduction of the Sicilian language and literature in education.

In the questionnaire of the Ols survey, there were two statements on the introduction of the Sicilian language and literature in education with which

informants had to express their agreement or disagreement. The preferences that the higher-status groups express in this study are in line with those of the survey, represented in the following tables (Ols, 1990: 290-91):

A scuola si dovrebbero studiare le opere scritte in siciliano

	TOT.	TITOLO DI STUDIO				
		Nessuno	Elem.	Media	Diploma	Laurea
CATANIA						
D'accordo	85.3	79.6	85.2	88.5	85.8	88.2
Non d'accordo	13.3	20.4	14.8	8.6	10.6	11.8
D'accordo e non d'accordo	1.4	0.0	0.0	2.9	3.6	0.0
Non sa, non risponde	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
MESSINA						
D'accordo	83.5	66.6	91.0	84.7	78.5	100.0
Non d'accordo	11.3	16.7	4.5	11.5	17.9	0.0
D'accordo e non d'accordo	3.1	0.0	4.5	3.8	3.6	0.0
Non sa, non risponde	2.1	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PALERMO						
D'accordo	92.1	91.4	85.9	94.8	97.9	93.7
Non d'accordo	5.7	4.8	12.5	3.6	2.1	3.2
D'accordo e non d'accordo	1.3	1.9	1.6	1.6	0.0	0.0
Non sa, non risponde	0.9	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1
PROVINCIA						
D'accordo	78.6	70.5	74.1	83.6	87.6	95.0
Non d'accordo	15.5	19.3	18.1	14.2	10.5	2.5
D'accordo e non d'accordo	2.2	2.2	2.5	1.7	1.9	2.5
Non sa, non risponde	3.7	8.0	5.3	0.5	0.0	0.0

A scuola si dovrebbe studiare il siciliano

	TOT.	TITOLO DI STUDIO				
		Nessuno	Elem.	Media	Diploma	Laurea
CATANIA						
D'accordo	72.4	75.9	68.2	75.7	70.2	76.4
Non d'accordo	25.5	24.1	29.5	24.3	26.2	11.8
D'accordo e non d'accordo	1.4	0.0	2.3	0.0	3.6	0.0
Non sa, non risponde	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.8
MESSINA						
D'accordo	69.1	58.3	77.3	76.9	57.2	77.8
Non d'accordo	22.7	25.0	9.1	23.1	32.1	22.2
D'accordo e non d'accordo	4.1	0.0	4.5	0.0	10.7	0.0
Non sa, non risponde	4.1	16.7	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
PALERMO						
D'accordo	83.0	89.4	78.3	87.7	83.0	75.0
Non d'accordo	14.4	6.8	18.5	10.7	15.1	25.0
D'accordo e non d'accordo	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.9	0.0
Non sa, non risponde	0.9	1.9	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
PROVINCIA						
D'accordo	68.9	64.6	63.2	70.8	76.3	91.7
Non d'accordo	25.2	26.1	27.7	26.8	21.8	8.3
D'accordo e non d'accordo	2.6	2.9	3.9	1.9	1.9	0.0
Non sa, non risponde	3.3	6.4	5.2	0.5	0.0	0.0

The results of the Ols survey show that the higher the educational level of the informants living in Catania, Messina, and the *Provincia*, the higher is the agreement about the teaching of Sicilian language and literature. Palermo, however, behaves differently, since the percentage of graduates in favour of the teaching of Sicilian is lower than that of the informants with no educational achievement: 75 per cent against 89.4. The following quotation shows that, in the Ols survey, Palermo emerged as the most Italophone city in Sicily:

Al progressivo decremento della siculofonia nei grossi agglomerati urbani corrisponde un più marcato mantenimento dell'idioma regionale nei centri provinciali. Per ciascun interlocutore, infatti, il TSL diminuisce passando dalla Provincia ai Capoluoghi e a Palermo. La Provincia, in particolare, è la più siculofona delle tre aree, Palermo è la più italoфона. (Ferrerri and Lo Piparo, 1990: 60)

It is not surprising, therefore, that the graduates from Palermo are those who are less in favour of the teaching of Sicilian. Moreover, the majority of the urban informants in the present study live in Catania and Messina and this would explain the analogies between my findings and those of the Ols survey in Catania and Messina regarding the respondents' positive attitudes towards the teaching of Sicilian.

9.3.3.5 Reaction to national legislative measures

In both the urban and the non-urban sample, the higher the social status of the respondents, the higher was the awareness of the existence of law 482: none of the urban respondents in the first group, 19 per cent of those in the second group, and 33 per cent of those in the third group, were aware of it. The three different urban groups were asked their opinion about the law:

Q34: What do you think of this law (tick one or more boxes)? (%)

	G1	G2	G3
Fair	40	12	11
Necessary	0	12	0
Useless	20	25	33
Unjust	40	25	33
Other	0	25	0

The first group was more positive about the law than the other two groups. Moreover, the three different social groups were asked if they would like to have it applied to Sicilian (%):

	G1	G2	G3
Yes	40	19	22
No	60	69	67
I do not know	0	12	11

As for the non-urban sample, none of the respondents in the lower-status group were aware of the existence of law 482. 36 per cent regarded it as fair, 18 per cent as necessary, 9 as unfair, and 36 per cent did not know. The law was regarded as fair or necessary to safeguard local traditions. Those who regarded it as unfair said that it discriminates against the other dialects spoken in Italy. 73 per cent replied positively to Q36, 'Would you like law 482 to be applied to Sicilian?', the rest did not know.

89 per cent of the respondents in the higher-status group were not aware of law 482. However, 55 per cent of them regarded it as fair, 11 per cent as necessary, 11 per cent as useless, and the rest did not express a view about it. The law was regarded as fair or necessary to safeguard the linguistic and cultural heritage of the region. 55 per cent replied positively to Q36. Several respondents argued that there should not be discrimination in Italy regarding the protection of local languages. Several respondents wrote that the law should not be applied to Sicilian, since it can be safeguarded without the need for legislation.

These findings show that the low-status groups have the highest percentage of respondents in favour of including Sicilian in the safeguarding provided by law 482. This is in line with the findings of the Ols survey, which shows that the higher the educational level of the urban informants, the lower is their approval of the statement that regional or local laws and regulations should also be written in Sicilian (Ols, 1990: 302).

9.4 Conclusion

The present study has revealed that in non-urban areas, the local variety is still very much alive and that it is not only used in more familiar settings, such as family and friends, but can also be used in more formal contexts, such as at work, in shops, and in offices. In the Als survey, Partinico, emerged as one of the centres in Sicily with the highest number of people using Sicilian both in the family and outside the family (Als, 1995: 196):

Comune	Tasso di sicilianità linguistica (TSL)		
	Contesto familiare	Contesto extrafamiliare	Globale
Partinico	0,85	0,58	0,72

However, the present analysis has also registered a decline of Sicilian amongst the younger generation and a weaker connection between language and identity. It is very difficult to assess to what extent this decline will affect the future of Sicilian. It is worth noting, however, that all the recent surveys record an increase in bilingual behaviour amongst young people. This new tendency might represent an important development for the future of Sicilian. Bentley, analysing her findings on her sociolinguistic survey conducted in the province of Palermo as well as those of the Ols and Als, concludes that:

There are hardly any monolingual speakers in Sicily, while the great majority of the population is competent – at least to some degree – in several varieties/codes. Although the standard is undoubtedly the most prestigious principle, the dialect is still very strong. (1997: 223)

Another finding, which is also in line with the Ols survey, is that more males than females perceive Sicilian as a sign of ethnicity. The gap, however, is not very wide and many women link language and identity.

The level of education also has an impact on the ability to use the language: more educated people speak or use the language less than those with a lower educational level. However, the educated social classes are more aware of the issue of the safeguarding of the local variety and are also more able to select the best ways of preserving the language.

The analysis of the urban sample has revealed that Sicilian is still a living language among the urban population. Although the data of the present study need to be used with care, considering the limited size of the sample, they are often in line with those of more ambitious and larger-scale surveys. Mari D'Agostino (1995: 197-226) explains that the vitality of Sicilian in urban areas is often the consequence of a reproduction of relationships which are typical of the rural society:

Ci sono luoghi della città, a Catania, così come a Palermo, in cui sopravvivono o si ricreano rapporti che sono considerati tipici delle società 'rurali': la strada, il vicinato, il quartiere, sono intesi come un prolungamento della famiglia. La città inizia al di là di questi, superarli significa 'andare in città', 'andare a Palermo, andare a Catania'. (D'Agostino, 1995: 209)

The urban sample was generally not affected by the negative prejudices and views usually associated with the concept of 'dialect'. Moreover, the sample had a positive attitude towards Sicilian and showed awareness of the importance of promoting it. The safeguarding of Sicilian was not perceived as in conflict with the acquisition of the national language. On the contrary, attitudes towards the safeguarding of Sicilian were quite relaxed, since the safeguarding was not perceived as threatening for the acquisition of Italian: Sicilian could have a role in contemporary society and this would not jeopardize the acquisition of the standard and official language of the country.

This positive attitude towards Sicilian could well explain the vitality of the language among the urban respondents. Favour towards the promotion of Sicilian was found especially in groups who can have a very influential role in modern society and can therefore bring about a significant change in the perception of the local variety: the young, the female, and the higher-status respondents.

The young respondents did not associate the ability to speak Sicilian with ignorance and with other negative factors usually associated with those who speak dialect. This could be explained with the fact that they learned Italian as their first language and did not experience the prejudices and discriminations the older generation did. The higher-status respondents, whose acquisition of the national language was indisputable, had very clear ideas about the role of Sicilian in modern society. The females also had more relaxed views about Sicilian, since they appreciated that the acquisition of Italian had been established. They were, therefore,

able to distinguish between the different and complementary roles Sicilian and Italian can have in modern society.

Since urban areas have a leading role in determining linguistic changes, it will be interesting to see, in future studies, what impact the urban centres have, in terms of more positive attitudes toward local and regional varieties, in their area of influence: Mari D'Agostino (1995: 197-213) states: 'Fondamentale, da questo punto di vista, è riuscire a intrecciare l'analisi delle dinamiche interne alla città con quelle che, all'esterno, la città mette in moto'.

In this survey, the majority of the respondents raised doubts about the implementation of legislation to safeguard Sicilian. Many stated that the role of the family in passing on the language to the next generation is of paramount importance and saw no need to formulate legislation to promote Sicilian. However, many non-urban respondents identified in education another context into which the use of Sicilian could be extended. It was felt that education could play a major role, in order to achieve a balanced bilingualism in the local and national languages and to increase the students' awareness of regional diversity. In the urban as well as the non-urban sample, the media, especially the television and the radio, were identified as another possible context through which Sicilian could be promoted. The Als survey acknowledges the importance of having positive feelings towards the local variety, in order to maintain it and ensure intergenerational transmission:

La forza della *lealtà linguistica* agisce con intensità molto differente in un luogo e in un altro, su un individuo rispetto ad un altro individuo. Il 'sentimento di appartenenza territoriale' è infatti un elemento che coinvolge (almeno) tre elementi fondamentali: i rapporti tra gli individui, i rapporti con lo spazio, i rapporti con le lingue. I sentimenti che intercorrono fra gli individui si proiettano su e comprendono i luoghi da essi occupati, alla stessa maniera si proiettano su e comprendono gli idiomi da essi parlati. Solidarietà e ostilità riguardano luoghi, persone e lingue alla stessa maniera. (D'agostino, 1995: 184)

The vitality of Sicilian, which is well documented in the Ols survey and also very noticeable in the present study, could, however, conceal a less optimistic situation for the future of Sicilian. Ruffino (1990: 192), in fact, warns that the Ols data, which show a balanced situation of bilingualism in Sicilian and Italian, could represent 'l'estremo punto d'equilibrio prima di un repentino e vistoso indebolimento della residua vitalità del siciliano'. He makes this statement because, in the Ols survey,

there was a high percentage of informants (60 per cent) who were born in the fifties. Big economic, social, and linguistic changes characterized the Italian society of those years. Therefore, the switch in favour of the national language was typical of the generation born after the fifties.

Moreover, Berruto, in his analysis of the Ols data, stresses that the data point to two different and contrasting possibilities:

L'esame dei dati che sembrano essere più pertinenti per questo problema, quelli per classe d'età, fornisce invero segni contraddittori. [...] Si vedano i dati relativi al rapporto fra lingua materna e lingua attualmente meglio padroneggiata: nel complesso della Sicilia, il 77,6% dice di avere come lingua materna il dialetto, ma solo il 52,8% dice di avere il dialetto come lingua preferita; d'altra parte è anche ampiamente documentato l'apprendimento del dialetto come "lingua seconda", col gruppo dei pari nel periodo della pubertà. Insomma è proprio il caso di dire: ai posteri l'ardua sentenza! (1992: 268)

It will, therefore, be most interesting to see in future years which tendency will prevail in Sicily: a situation of stable bilingualism in Sicilian and Italian or a switch in favour of the national language.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

10.1 General conclusions

In Italy, in recent years, we are witnessing a process of revaluation of local and regional varieties. This new phenomenon deserves special attention, since it implies a significant shift from past attitudes and policies in favour of linguistic assimilation and monolingualism. Local and regional varieties are no longer associated with backwardness and ignorance and the ability to speak them is sometimes regarded as an additional skill.

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that extra-linguistic factors play a crucial role in determining the boundaries between language and dialect and that the official status of 'language' increases the chances of promotion of a local or regional variety. The EU approach towards minority groups is more positive than in the past. In 1992, the EU adopted the European Charter. This is a legal instrument providing an opportunity for Member States to subscribe to common principles in the area of linguistic minorities protection. Minority language protection is, in fact, regarded as a duty that the Member States have towards minority groups, in order to promote economic development and compete with other Member States in the construction of a Single Market. The diversity of regional or minority languages is now seen as a valuable resource to boost economic growth.

Since political unification, the position of Italy towards minority languages and dialects has also improved. As a consequence of the Fascist policy towards dialects and minority languages (Moss, 2000: 107-8), the Republican Constitution makes a specific reference to linguistic equality (Article 3) and a specific commitment to the protection of linguistic minorities (Article 6). In 1999, law 482 was approved. The law protects minority languages previously excluded from protection. The European Charter, which set a context and norms towards which Italy was supposed to work, may have put some pressure on the Italian government to act in favour of the neglected linguistic minorities.

With the approval of law 482, Italy has ‘put its house in order’, apparently, by producing legislation which finally meets the requirements of the 1948 constitution and links up with the EU Charter; but problems still remain: how will the law be put into practice? The lack of a Standard form of Sardinian was perceived as a problem by several respondents who took part in my survey. However, to select a variety to promote to the rank of Standard may not be the right step. Law 482 and Article 6 of the Italian constitution are aimed at the protection of the mother tongue of the Italian citizens. Therefore, would it be fair to impose the Logudorese variety, for instance, on a speaker of Gallurese? Moreover, would it be right to use the local varieties in formal and administrative contexts, where the national language is normally in use?

In the promotion of local or regional varieties, laws are not sufficient. People need to be willing to transform legal recognition into common practice. Moreover, laws might not always be the right way forward. The response of the Sicilian respondents to my questionnaire suggests that the vitality of this variety and peoples’ positive attitudes are not affected by the absence of a national law. On the other hand, the number of Sicilians who use only Italian to young people and in certain contexts, as the Ols and the Als survey show, does not allow us to believe that the future of Sicilian is safe. Berruto (1990:192) points to two different situations in Sicily: the future stability of the dialect or sudden collapse in the next few decades. The Sicilian case may show, however, that legislation is not always necessary to guarantee the continuity of the local or regional variety.

Therefore, along with legislation, in Italy there is a need to stress the importance of fostering positive attitudes towards local and regional varieties. However, the law is the beginning of a new chapter as well as the end of an earlier one.

10.2 Analysis of attitudes

Positive attitudes towards local and regional varieties result in actions aimed at promoting their use. The main initiatives are:

- the teaching of the local variety
- the use of the local variety in the technological world
- the promotion of the local variety through competitions and publications
- the formulation of regional legislation

In Sardinia, there is more acknowledgement than in Sicily, among politicians and sociolinguists, of the importance of using Sardinian in formal and official contexts. In particular, the use of Sardinian in the technological world and as a medium of communication on the internet is encouraged by promoters. Other relevant initiatives are the teaching of the local variety, attempts to use it in official documents, and discussions on the possibility of creating a linguistic norm. Regarding Sicilian, the issue of achieving a norm is a less urgent matter. There are, however, few positions expressing the importance of achieving a common variety in Sicily. The promotion of Sicilian does not seem to challenge its traditional status: Sicilian is described as a dialect rather than as a language. However, this does not have negative consequences on the speakers' and promoters' perception of this variety. The dialect is regarded as an essential part of the cultural and historical heritage of the region.

In my survey, a group of Sardinian and Sicilian respondents were examined regarding four variables: place of residence, age, gender, and social status. These four variables were used to determine: the linguistic competence of the respondents, their perception of their local variety being a language or a dialect, the link between local variety and local identity, and their attitudes towards actions aimed at the safeguarding of their local or regional variety, including legislation.

In the Sardinian sample, females, more educated and younger people tend to use the local or regional varieties less and the standard language more. The linguistic competence of the young urban respondents, however, has not declined further and this might be a sign that, in recent years, there has been a recovery of the language. Young urban respondents do not reject the local or regional language and are in favour of the promotion of Sardinian as long as the importance of the national language is not undermined.

The analysis of the Sardinian sample has shown that the revaluation of the cultural heritage of the island is taking place more in urban than in non-urban areas and among higher status respondents: these groups were more prepared to give the higher status of language to Sardinian. The link between language and identity was strong in the answers of the urban higher-status respondents. Moreover, the higher-status group stressed the specificity and the diversity of the Sardinians. The positive attitude of this group towards issues of regional language and identity could be a

decisive factor for the safeguarding of Sardinian. This social class could extend its influence to other sectors of the society and have a fundamental role in changing attitudes towards the local variety.

Regarding reactions to measures to safeguard Sardinian, the introduction of Sardinian in education was perceived as a positive initiative, especially amongst the urban respondents. This measure, which is already being introduced on an experimental basis in Sardinia, could prove to be a very successful step for the promotion of Sardinian. As for legislation to promote Sardinian, higher-status respondents and males were better informed about law 482. Non-urban respondents and females stressed the problem of the lack of a unitary form of Sardinian and underlined that any policy should take into account the linguistic diversity of the island.

Young respondents were very sceptical about the introduction of Sardinian in more formal contexts and the formulation of legislation to promote a more official use of the language. This attitude could be regarded as worrying since the young people will have a key role in the decision-making process. However, this scepticism might not indicate that the younger people are not interested in protecting their regional variety. The non-urban young respondents emphasized the role of the community and family in passing on the local language. Therefore, despite the existence of legislation allowing the use of Sardinian in formal and administrative contexts, many respondents raised doubts and expressed uncertainty about promoting Sardinian to the official language of Sardinia. Questions of practicality and the implications of the officialization of Sardinian on the relationship between Sardinia and the mainland were the main reservations.

Regarding the Sicilian sample, the present study has revealed that the local variety is still very much alive, especially in non-urban areas, where it is used also in more formal contexts, such as at work, in shops, and in offices. However, the analysis has also registered a decline of the local variety amongst the younger generation and a weaker connection between language and identity. Although more males than females perceive Sicilian as a sign of ethnicity, the gap is not as wide as in the Sardinian sample, and many Sicilian women link language and identity. More educated people speak or use the language less than those with a lower educational level. However, they have more clear views on the best ways of promoting the use of Sicilian.

The linguistic competence in Sicilian of the urban sample was very good, and so were their attitudes towards their local variety. Attitudes towards the safeguarding of the local or regional variety were quite relaxed, since the promotion was not perceived as undermining the importance of the national language. The young, the female, and the higher-status respondents especially favoured the safeguarding of Sicilian.

Despite the vitality of Sicilian and the positive attitude of the sample towards its promotion, the implementation of legislation to safeguard Sicilian was regarded as an unnecessary or useless step. Many respondents stated that Sicilian is spoken in the family and the family performs the role of passing on the language to the younger generation. According to the sample, the vitality of the regional variety did not justify the formulation of legislation aimed at the safeguarding of Sicilian. The respondents generally disapproved of the use of Sicilian in formal domains and clearly indicated that the national language should be used in these situations. However, many non-urban respondents identified in education a context into which Sicilian could be introduced. According to them, the educational system could play a major role, in the achievement of a balanced bilingualism in Sicilian and Italian and in promoting positive attitudes towards regional diversity. In the urban as well as the non-urban sample, the media, especially the television and the radio, were identified as another possible context through which Sicilian could be promoted.

Although Ruffino (Ols, 1990: 192) expresses concern for the future of Sicilian, and Berruto (1992: 267-8) stresses that the data of the Ols point to either a situation of stable bilingualism in Sicilian and Italian or a switch in favour of the national language, the vitality of Sicilian in urban and non-urban areas and the positive attitude of the sample towards the Sicilian language, culture, and identity should be underlined as important findings of this survey.

10.3 Discussion of the results of the analysis

In the Sardinian sample, the awareness of the decline of the language has generated two conflicting trends: the desire to protect Sardinian through the specific measures allowed by law 482 and the acknowledgement of the problems posed by the officialization of Sardinian: the lack of a standard form, the importance of safeguarding the several varieties spoken in the island, the anachronism of using Sardinian in contexts that are normally reserved to the national language. Therefore,

despite the existence of legislation allowing the safeguarding of Sardinian through its use in more formal and official contexts, there is, amongst the people, a high degree of uncertainty about what is the best way forward to promote Sardinian. There are several practical issues to solve and the will of the people needs to be taken into account, in the decision-making process. After all, it would be completely useless to have a law that is not supported by the determination of the people to achieve its objectives.

In the Sicilian sample, the vitality of Sicilian is matched by a very positive attitude towards the regional variety. The Sicilian respondents, in their replies to the questionnaire, challenged the statement that ‘in the south the dialects are a symbol of backwardness and that people may speak them because they are their normal means of communication, but they will often not be keen for their children to learn or use them’ (Moss, 2000: 116). The positive attitude of the sample towards Sicilian may well be a recent reaction against the negative connotations usually associated with the dialect: from an unfashionable way of communicating, Sicilian is now viewed as an important component of the cultural heritage of the island. This recent revaluation of the local variety, however, is not matched by a desire to formulate legislation in favour of the local language. It should be noted that the most recent regional law to promote Sicilian dates back to 1981. Moreover, in the answers to the questionnaire, the majority of the respondents stated that there is no need to protect Sicilian through a specific law since Sicilian is spoken in Sicily and the future of this variety is not at risk.

The Sardinian and the Sicilian cases show that the safeguarding of the local or regional language can happen in different ways: in Sardinia there is a specific law to safeguard the local or regional variety, while in Sicily the positive attitude towards Sicilian and its promotion has not created the conditions for the formulation of legislation aimed at introducing Sicilian in more formal and official contexts.

David Crystal writes that one of the strategies to promote a specific variety is ‘fostering positive community attitude’ (2000: 102). Moreover, he states that ‘an appropriate bureaucracy and technology are important aids in fostering language maintenance, but they can never be its foundation. The foundation must come from within the homes and neighbourhoods of the community members themselves’ (2000: 118). The analysis of the Sicilian sample has shown that the vitality of Sicilian is fostered by a positive community attitude. This could explain the fact that

the Sicilians do not see the need to formulate legislation to safeguard their linguistic heritage. They believe that the family and the community guarantee intergenerational transmission and that the use of Sicilian should not be extended to official and administrative contexts.

The very optimistic picture that one gets from the analysis of the data of the Sicilian sample, however, could hide a less bright future for Sicilian. Crystal (2000: 108) warns that ‘people may refuse to accept that their language is “endangered”, “vanishing”, “dying” – indeed, they may object most strongly to having such labels used about them all, perceiving them to be a denial of their ethnicity (instead of just a statement about language)’. Moreover, he underlines that a community may not see the need for action until it is too late to save the language (2000: 109). Crystal cites two linguists who have noted this type of situation: Graham McKay and Trond Trosterud. McKay (1996: 18) states that ‘unfortunately the stronger the language the more likely it is that the speakers will not see the need for action or the potential consequences of loss until it is too late’. Trosterud (1997: 23) makes similar considerations: ‘A bilingual society can change into a monolingual assimilated one very fast, without fluent speakers realising what is going on until it is too late’. In Sicily, therefore, it will be most interesting to assess, in future years, if the positive attitude towards the local culture and identity will suffice to guarantee the transmission of the local variety to the younger generations.

In Sardinia, the safeguarding of the local or regional variety can take place through a more formal channel: law 482 allows an institutionalized presence of Sardinian. Crystal states that institutionalization gives prestige to the endangered variety and that ‘without prestige, and the power which this brings, no language movement can succeed’ (2000:101). The analysis of the Sardinian sample has shown, however, that attitudes towards legislation aimed at introducing Sardinian in more formal contexts are mixed: some respondents are in its favour, others are against it. The following quotation underlines that, when people discuss the promotion of a specific variety, conflicting attitudes are quite common:

The first thing we should recognize is that, in real life, the issues are not so black-and-white. Within a community, attitudes will be mixed: some members will be in favour of preservation, others will be against it. There will be pride, apathy, guilt, denial, regret, and many other emotions. Moreover, the reasons for support and opposition will be mixed. One family may be particularly proud of its tradition of ethnic identity; another family may not. One person may view ancestral language as useless and irrelevant; another may not use functional arguments at all, seeing it rather as a source of spiritual or psychological strength. (Crystal, 2000: 103)

Despite the existence of a specific law aimed at the safeguarding of Sardinian, therefore, it is not clear yet whether the Sardinian people are in favour of the promotion of their variety according to the measures specified in law 482. It will be most interesting, in the future, to see whether this more pragmatic approach in favour of the institutionalized presence of Sardinian will prevail in Sardinia and whether the people will be able to transform legislation into common practice.

10.4 Final considerations

At this stage, one can ask whether it is right, in modern society, to recover languages and traditions? My view regarding this issue is that as long as there are people who want to act to safeguard these tongues, there should be the possibility to do so. People should not be deprived of the right to defend their own tongue. However, whether or not these attempts are successful, it is difficult to establish in advance. Language is not a static phenomenon. On the contrary, it evolves in ways that, sometimes, are beyond human control. A language may die. This is perceived as an unfortunate thing, but there may be very little left that can be done to rescue that language. I am not arguing that it is impossible to revive a language. The cases of Welsh in Wales (Crystal, 2000: 87, 129), Catalan in Spain (Hoffman, 1996: 93-110), French in Quebec (Fishman, 2000: 133), and Hebrew in Israel (Wardhaugh, 1992: 34) show that a language can be successfully revived for everyday use. This is the challenge the minority groups in the Italian territory, entitled to protection according to the new law 482, have to face. Will Sardinians, Ladins, Friulians, and the other minority groups granted safeguard, be able to transform legislative means into concrete positive actions to promote their language? Now that the possibility to preserve their language and culture, for which they have been struggling for years, has finally arrived, will they work in favour of their own language?

The other question is: if these groups are successful in their attempts to increase knowledge of their language, will this have implications on the other numerous local or regional tongues spoken in Italy? Will there be other groups, in future, claiming legislative measures to protect their own language and culture? In Italy, the Northern League represents a threat to the unity of the country. As discussed in Chapter Five, the Northern Leagues initially used the issue of the local dialect to legitimize demands for political autonomy. Although Bossi, in 1989, put aside the issue of the promotion of dialect (Bonsaver, 1996: 104-5), there are still attempts to use dialect to advance claims of administrative and political independence. In Bergamo, stronghold of the Northern League, the road signs were bilingual in the local variety and the national language until the victory of the centre-left coalition in the administrative elections in June 2004. Since then, the bilingual road signs have been replaced with those in Italian only. Cesare Zapperi, in his article 'Blitz di Ferragosto, Berghem torna Bergamo' reports the view of the mayor Roberto Bruni:

I cartelli in dialetto non servono a valorizzare le tradizioni locali. Sono una barriera, un segnale di chiusura rispetto all'esterno. [...] Non c'è nessuna volontà di negare le tradizioni bergamasche. Semplicemente quei cartelli erano il sigillo del pregiudizio leghista che ci portiamo attaccati addosso. Questo ci fa percepire all'esterno come chiusi in noi stessi, incapaci di valorizzare le tante energie che abbiamo. Paradossalmente, proprio quei cartelli rappresentano una mortificazione perché limitano e rinchiodano una cultura dentro una scritta in dialetto che di per sé non significano molto. (*Corriere della Sera*, 20 August 2004)

While separatist movements are quite strong in the north of Italy, the Sicilians, according to this and other larger-scale investigations (Ols, 1990), do not see their regional identity as in conflict with the national identity and do not show any willingness to distance themselves from the mainland. The historical mosaic of people and cultures inhabiting Sicily has implications for the Sicilian identity (Farrell, 2000: 88) and justifies the words with which the novelist Giuseppe Antonio Borgese describes the island: 'An island not an island enough' (1933: 7, cited in Farrell, 2000: 88). Glossing Borgese, Farrell states that 'geography gave Sicily the potential for being either an island in the centre of the Mediterranean, or an offshore island of Italy'. Rather than separatism, Sicily is opting for a form of 'incomplete hybridity' (Farrell, 2000: 88). This feature allows Sicily to construct a modern Sicilian identity that, rather than distancing itself from Italy, Europe, and the

Mediterranean, functions as a bridge across them. This could well explain the reasons why Sicilians are quite happy in asserting that Sicilian is an Italian dialect: being Sicilian is not seen in conflict with being Italian.

A final consideration is that, in the process of reversing the language shift, it is important to be aware that legislation to revive a language can be vague and does not always take into account the different situations. A language planning policy that works for a specific group might not prove to be successful for a different one. Moreover, legislation is not always the right answer to the various problems posed by the decline of a local or regional variety. Alberto Sobrero, in his article 'I dialetti rinascono dalle ceneri', makes interesting considerations on the possible future role of dialects. He talks about the 'processo di "sdoganamento" del dialetto che caratterizza l'attuale momento storico' (2003: 40) and describes the process in these terms:

Conoscere bene un dialetto – o, a maggior ragione, la parlata di una minoranza linguistica – ieri era una competenza inutile, anzi ingombrante, oggi è quasi un segno di distinzione, di sicuro un patrimonio culturale che si può persino mettere a frutto. (2003: 40).

Sobrero lists the different contexts in which the dialect is presently used: name of restaurants, sport streamers, plays, local media, advertisement, and text messages. Moreover, when he analyses the messages in a column of the weekly magazine 'Salento in tasca', he finds out that 65 per cent of them are written in Italian, 14 per cent in dialect, and 21 per cent in a mixture of dialect and Italian. In these messages, the dialect functions as a stylistic device to express intimacy and familiarity, irony and incisiveness. For these reasons, Sobrero talks about 'riappropriazione del dialetto per particolari usi, persino nella scrittura' (2003: 41). In his words:

A Torino come a Lecce sembra che il dialetto, mentre sta avvicinandosi – dove più dove meno – alla fine, si accinga alla trasfigurazione, per farsi risorsa espressiva, per tornare a occupare un posto significativo nel circuito della comunicazione. Accanto – *chapeau!* – all'inglese. Ancora una volta, in qualche modo, rinasce – e nobilmente – dalle sue ceneri. (ibid.)

It could well be, therefore, that Sicilian will become, in future years, an important stylistic tool to express specific connotations such as immediateness, closeness, and humour and will perform, in oral as well as written communication, those functions for which the Italian language is seen as a less powerful way of interacting.

10.5 Recommendations for further research

It is important to underline that these results cannot be generalized and that universal conclusions cannot be drawn. Despite these limitations, I hope that this thesis has served the purpose of underlining the importance of assessing the attitudes of speakers towards their local or regional variety, in order to achieve a successful safeguarding. Further and more comprehensive studies need to be carried out, in order to draw significant conclusions on how the attitudes of speakers can affect the safeguarding of local and regional varieties. A correct language planning policy needs to take into consideration the views of the people whose life will be affected by the decisions taken during the process of selecting measures aimed at the maintenance and spread of these tongues. In Sardinia, it is ironical that people raise several doubts and uncertainties about national law 482, aimed at responding to their claims for linguistic autonomy. Moreover, further studies need to be carried out in order to achieve significant conclusions on the role the varieties regarded as 'Italian dialects' can realistically have in modern society and to ascertain whether the stabilization of the use of the dialects in certain contexts, such as family and friends, represents a positive development for the future of the dialects or, in the long term, will act to the detriment of the dialect itself.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

Parlamento Italiano

Legge 15 Dicembre 1999, n. 482

" Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche "

pubblicata nella *Gazzetta Ufficiale* n. 297 del 20 dicembre 1999

Art. 1.

1. La lingua ufficiale della Repubblica é l'italiano.
2. La Repubblica, che valorizza il patrimonio linguistico e culturale della lingua italiana, promuove altresí la valorizzazione delle lingue e delle culture tutelate dalla presente legge.

Art. 2.

1. In attuazione dell'articolo 6 della Costituzione e in armonia con i principi generali stabiliti dagli organismi europei e internazionali, la Repubblica tutela la lingua e la cultura delle popolazioni albanesi, catalane, germaniche, greche, slovene e croate e di quelle parlanti il francese, il franco-provenzale, il friulano, il ladino, l'occitano e il sardo.

Art. 3.

1. La delimitazione dell'ambito territoriale e subcomunale in cui si applicano le disposizioni di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche previste dalla presente legge é adottata dal consiglio provinciale, sentiti i comuni interessati, su richiesta di almeno il quindici per cento dei cittadini iscritti nelle liste elettorali e

residenti nei comuni stessi, ovvero di un terzo dei consiglieri comunali dei medesimi comuni.

2. Nel caso in cui non sussista alcuna delle due condizioni di cui al comma 1 e qualora sul territorio comunale insista comunque una minoranza linguistica ricompresa nell'elenco di cui all'articolo 2, il procedimento inizia qualora si pronunci fa vorevolmente la popolazione residente, attraverso apposita consultazione promossa dai soggetti aventi titolo e con le modalità previste dai rispettivi statuti e regolamenti comunali.
3. Quando le minoranze linguistiche di cui all'articolo 2 si trovano distribuite su territori provinciali o regionali diversi, esse possono costituire organismi di coordinamento e di proposta, che gli enti locali interessati hanno facoltà di riconoscere.

Art. 4.

1. Nelle scuole materne dei comuni di cui all'articolo 3, l'educazione linguistica prevede, accanto all'uso della lingua italiana, anche l'uso della lingua della minoranza per lo svolgimento delle attività educative. Nelle scuole elementari e nelle scuole secondarie di primo grado é previsto l'uso anche della lingua della minoranza come strumento di insegnamento.
2. Le istituzioni scolastiche elementari e secondarie di primo grado, in conformità a quanto previsto dall'articolo 3, comma 1, della presente legge, nell'esercizio dell'autonomia organizzativa e didattica di cui all'articolo 21, commi 8 e 9, della legge 15 marzo 1997, n. 59, nei limiti dell'orario curricolare complessivo definito a livello nazionale e nel rispetto dei complessivi obblighi di servizio dei docenti previsti dai contratti collettivi, al fine di assicurare l'apprendimento della lingua della minoranza, deliberano, anche sulla base delle richieste dei genitori degli alunni, le modalità di svolgimento delle attività di insegnamento della lingua e delle tradizioni culturali delle comunità locali, stabilendone i tempi e le metodologie, nonché stabilendo i criteri di valutazione degli alunni e le modalità di impiego di docenti qualificati.
3. Le medesime istituzioni scolastiche di cui al comma 2, ai sensi dell'articolo 21, comma 10, della legge 15 marzo 1997, n. 59, sia singolarmente sia in forma associata, possono realizzare ampliamenti dell'offerta formativa in favore degli

adulti. Nell'esercizio dell'autonomia di ricerca, sperimentazione e sviluppo, di cui al citato articolo 21, comma 10, le istituzioni scolastiche adottano, anche attraverso forme associate, iniziative nel campo dello studio delle lingue e delle tradizioni culturali degli appartenenti ad una minoranza linguistica riconosciuta ai sensi degli articoli 2 e 3 della presente legge e perseguono attività di formazione e aggiornamento degli insegnanti addetti alle medesime discipline. A tale scopo le istituzioni scolastiche possono stipulare convenzioni ai sensi dell'articolo 21, comma 12, della citata legge n. 59 del 1997.

4. Le iniziative previste dai commi 2 e 3 sono realizzate dalle medesime istituzioni scolastiche avvalendosi delle risorse umane a disposizione, della dotazione finanziaria attribuita ai sensi dell'articolo 21, comma 5, della legge 15 marzo 1997, n. 59, nonché delle risorse aggiuntive reperibili con convenzioni, prevedendo tra le priorità stabilite dal medesimo comma 5 quelle di cui alla presente legge. Nella ripartizione delle risorse di cui al citato comma 5 dell'articolo 21 della legge n. 59 del 1997, si tiene conto delle priorità aggiuntive di cui al presente comma.
5. Al momento della preiscrizione i genitori comunicano alla istituzione scolastica interessata se intendono avvalersi per i propri figli dell'insegnamento della lingua della minoranza.

Art. 5.

1. Il Ministro della pubblica istruzione, con propri decreti, indica i criteri generali per l'attuazione delle misure contenute nell'articolo 4 e può promuovere e realizzare progetti nazionali e locali nel campo dello studio delle lingue e delle tradizioni culturali degli appartenenti ad una minoranza linguistica riconosciuta ai sensi degli articoli 2 e 3 della presente legge. Per la realizzazione dei progetti è autorizzata la spesa di lire 2 miliardi annue a decorrere dall'anno 1999.
2. Gli schemi di decreto di cui al comma 1 sono trasmessi al Parlamento per l'acquisizione del parere delle competenti Commissioni permanenti, che possono esprimersi entro sessanta giorni.

Art. 6.

1. Ai sensi degli articoli 6 e 8 della legge 19 novembre 1990, n. 341, le università delle regioni interessate, nell'ambito della loro autonomia e degli ordinari stanziamenti di bilancio, assumono ogni iniziativa, ivi compresa l'istituzione di corsi di lingua e cultura delle lingue di cui all'articolo 2, finalizzata ad agevolare la ricerca scientifica e le attività culturali e formative a sostegno delle finalità della presente legge.

Art. 7.

1. Nei comuni di cui all'articolo 3, i membri dei consigli comunali e degli altri organi a struttura collegiale dell'amministrazione possono usare, nell'attività degli organismi medesimi, la lingua ammessa a tutela.
2. La disposizione di cui al comma 1 si applica altresì ai consiglieri delle comunità montane, delle province e delle regioni, i cui territori ricomprendano comuni nei quali è riconosciuta la lingua ammessa a tutela, che complessivamente costituiscano almeno il 15 per cento della popolazione interessata.
3. Qualora uno o più componenti degli organi collegiali di cui ai commi 1 e 2 dichiarino di non conoscere la lingua ammessa a tutela, deve essere garantita una immediata traduzione in lingua italiana.
4. Qualora gli atti destinati ad uso pubblico siano redatti nelle due lingue, producono effetti giuridici solo gli atti e le deliberazioni redatti in lingua italiana.

Art. 8.

1. Nei comuni di cui all'articolo 3, il consiglio comunale può provvedere, con oneri a carico del bilancio del comune stesso, in mancanza di altre risorse disponibili a questo fine, alla pubblicazione nella lingua ammessa a tutela di atti ufficiali dello Stato, delle regioni e degli enti locali nonché di enti pubblici non territoriali, fermo restando il valore legale esclusivo degli atti nel testo redatto in lingua italiana.

Art. 9.

1. Fatto salvo quanto previsto dall'articolo 7, nei comuni di cui all'articolo 3 è consentito, negli uffici delle amministrazioni pubbliche, l'uso orale e scritto della lingua ammessa a tutela. Dall'applicazione del presente comma sono escluse le forze armate e le forze di polizia dello Stato.
2. Per rendere effettivo l'esercizio delle facoltà di cui al comma 1, le pubbliche amministrazioni provvedono, anche attraverso convenzioni con altri enti, a garantire la presenza di personale che sia in grado di rispondere alle richieste del pubblico usando la lingua ammessa a tutela. A tal fine è istituito, presso la Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri - Dipartimento per gli affari regionali, un Fondo nazionale per la tutela delle minoranze linguistiche con una dotazione finanziaria annua di lire 9.800.000.000 a decorrere dal 1999. Tali risorse, da considerare quale limite massimo di spesa, sono ripartite annualmente con decreto del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri, sentite le amministrazioni interessate.
3. Nei procedimenti davanti al giudice di pace è consentito l'uso della lingua ammessa a tutela. Restano ferme le disposizioni di cui all'articolo 109 del codice di procedura penale.

Art. 10.

1. Nei comuni di cui all'articolo 3, in aggiunta ai toponimi ufficiali, i consigli comunali possono deliberare l'adozione di toponimi conformi alle tradizioni e agli usi locali.

Art. 11.

1. I cittadini che fanno parte di una minoranza linguistica riconosciuta ai sensi degli articoli 2 e 3 e residenti nei comuni di cui al medesimo articolo 3, i cognomi o i nomi dei quali siano stati modificati prima della data di entrata in vigore della presente legge o ai quali sia stato impedito in passato di apporre il nome di battesimo nella lingua della minoranza, hanno diritto di ottenere, sulla base di adeguata documentazione, il ripristino degli stessi in forma originaria. Il

ripristino del cognome ha effetto anche per i discendenti degli interessati che non siano maggiorenni o che, se maggiorenni, abbiano prestato il loro consenso.

2. Nei casi di cui al comma 1 la domanda deve indicare il nome o il cognome che si intende assumere ed è presentata al sindaco del comune di residenza del richiedente, il quale provvede d'ufficio a trasmetterla al prefetto, correlandola di un estratto dell'atto di nascita. Il prefetto, qualora ricorrano i presupposti previsti dal comma 1, emana il decreto di ripristino del nome o del cognome. Per i membri della stessa famiglia il prefetto può provvedere con un unico decreto. Nel caso di reiezione della domanda, il relativo provvedimento può essere impugnato, entro trenta giorni dalla comunicazione, con ricorso al Ministro di grazia e giustizia, che decide previo parere del Consiglio di Stato. Il procedimento è esente da spese e deve essere concluso entro novanta giorni dalla richiesta.
3. Gli uffici dello stato civile dei comuni interessati provvedono alle annotazioni conseguenti all'attuazione delle disposizioni di cui al presente articolo. Tutti gli altri registri, tutti gli elenchi e ruoli nominativi sono rettificati d'ufficio dal comune e dalle altre amministrazioni competenti.

Art. 12.

1. Nella convenzione tra il Ministero delle comunicazioni e la società concessionaria del servizio pubblico radiotelevisivo e nel conseguente contratto di servizio sono assicurate condizioni per la tutela delle minoranze linguistiche nelle zone di appartenenza.
2. Le regioni interessate possono altresì stipulare apposite convenzioni con la società concessionaria del servizio pubblico radiotelevisivo per trasmissioni giornalistiche o programmi nelle lingue ammesse a tutela, nell'ambito delle programmazioni radiofoniche e televisive regionali della medesima società concessionaria; per le stesse finalità le regioni possono stipulare appositi accordi con emittenti locali.
3. La tutela delle minoranze linguistiche nell'ambito del sistema delle comunicazioni di massa è di competenza dell'Autorità per le garanzie nelle comunicazioni di cui alla legge 31 luglio 1997, n. 249, fatte salve le funzioni di

indirizzo della Commissione parlamentare per l'indirizzo generale e la vigilanza dei servizi radiotelevisivi.

Art. 13.

1. Le regioni a statuto ordinario, nelle materie di loro competenza, adeguano la propria legislazione ai principi stabiliti dalla presente legge, fatte salve le disposizioni legislative regionali vigenti che prevedano condizioni più favorevoli per le minoranze linguistiche.

Art. 14.

1. Nell'ambito delle proprie disponibilità di bilancio le regioni e le province in cui siano presenti i gruppi linguistici di cui all'articolo 2 nonché i comuni ricompresi nelle suddette province possono determinare, in base a criteri oggettivi, provvidenze per l'editoria, per gli organi di stampa e per le emittenti radiotelevisive a carattere privato che utilizzino una delle lingue ammesse a tutela, nonché per le associazioni riconosciute e radicate nel territorio che abbiano come finalità la salvaguardia delle minoranze linguistiche.

Art. 15.

1. Oltre a quanto previsto dagli articoli 5, comma 1, e 9, comma 2, le spese sostenute dagli enti locali per l'assolvimento degli obblighi derivanti dalla presente legge sono poste a carico del bilancio statale entro il limite massimo complessivo annuo di lire 8.700.000.000 a decorrere dal 1999.
2. L'iscrizione nei bilanci degli enti locali delle previsioni di spesa per le esigenze di cui al comma 1 è subordinata alla previa ripartizione delle risorse di cui al medesimo comma 1 tra gli enti locali interessati, da effettuare con decreto del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri.
3. L'erogazione delle somme ripartite ai sensi del comma 2 avviene sulla base di una appropriata rendicontazione, presentata dall'ente locale competente, con indicazione dei motivi dell'intervento e delle giustificazioni circa la congruità della spesa.

Art. 16.

1. Le regioni e le province possono provvedere, a carico delle proprie disponibilità di bilancio, alla creazione di appositi istituti per la tutela delle tradizioni linguistiche e culturali delle popolazioni considerate dalla presente legge, ovvero favoriscono la costituzione di sezioni autonome delle istituzioni culturali locali già esistenti.

Art. 17.

1. Le norme regolamentari di attuazione della presente legge sono adottate entro sei mesi dalla data di entrata in vigore della medesima, sentite le regioni interessate.

Art. 18.

1. Nelle regioni a statuto speciale l'applicazione delle disposizioni più favorevoli previste dalla presente legge è disciplinata con norme di attuazione dei rispettivi statuti. Restano ferme le norme di tutela esistenti nelle medesime regioni a statuto speciale e nelle province autonome di Trento e di Bolzano.
2. Fino all'entrata in vigore delle norme di attuazione di cui al comma 1, nelle regioni a statuto speciale il cui ordinamento non preveda norme di tutela si applicano le disposizioni di cui alla presente legge.

Art. 19.

1. La Repubblica promuove, nei modi e nelle forme che saranno di caso in caso previsti in apposite convenzioni e perseguendo condizioni di reciprocità con gli Stati esteri, lo sviluppo delle lingue e delle culture di cui all'articolo 2 diffuse all'estero, nei casi in cui i cittadini delle relative comunità abbiano mantenuto e sviluppato l'identità socio-culturale e linguistica d'origine.
2. Il Ministero degli affari esteri promuove le opportune intese con altri Stati, al fine di assicurare condizioni favorevoli per le comunità di lingua italiana presenti sul loro territorio e di diffondere all'estero la lingua e la cultura italiane. La Repubblica favorisce la cooperazione transfrontaliera e interregionale anche nell'ambito dei programmi dell'Unione europea.

3. Il Governo presenta annualmente al Parlamento una relazione in merito allo stato di attuazione degli adempimenti previsti dal presente articolo.

Art. 20.

1. All'onere derivante dall'attuazione della presente legge, valutato in lire 20.500.000.000 a decorrere dal 1999, si provvede mediante corrispondente riduzione delle proiezioni dello stanziamento iscritto, ai fini del bilancio triennale 1998-2000, nell'ambito dell'unità previsionale di base di parte corrente "Fondo speciale" dello stato di previsione del Ministero del tesoro, del bilancio e della programmazione economica per l'anno 1998, allo scopo parzialmente utilizzando, quanto a lire 18.500.000.000, l'accantonamento relativo alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri e, quanto a lire 2.000.000.000, l'accantonamento relativo al Ministero della pubblica istruzione.
2. Il Ministro del tesoro, del bilancio e della programmazione economica è autorizzato ad apportare, con propri decreti, le occorrenti variazioni di bilancio.

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE SARDINIA

Sto svolgendo una ricerca e ho bisogno della Sua collaborazione. La prego di riempire il questionario e di restituirlo alla persona che gliel'ha consegnato. In alternativa, può inviarlo al seguente indirizzo: Maria Chiara La Sala, Italian Department, University of Leeds, LS2 9JT, England, UK.

La ringrazio per il suo aiuto.

Maria Chiara La Sala

QUESTIONARIO

DATI PERSONALI

Nome e Cognome (facoltativo):

Età (indicare la casella corrispondente alla sua fascia d'età): 15-20 [], 21-25 [], 26-30 [], 31-35 [], 36-40 [], 41-45 [], 46-50 [], 51-55 [], 56-60 [], oltre i 60 []

Sesso: Maschio [], Femmina [],

Telefono: (facoltativo) **E-mail:** (facoltativo)

Luogo di nascita *: **Luogo di residenza*:**

Ha sempre abitato nell' attuale luogo di residenza? Sì [] No []
Se no, specificare dove*

Dove è vissuta Sua madre? *

Dove è vissuto Suo padre? *

*Specificare se città o paese e indicare la collocazione geografica di questa/o in Sardegna)

Titolo di studio:

Condizione professionale: (Indicare la propria condizione, segnalandola nella casella corrispondente)

occupato []; non occupato []; casalinga []; pensionato []; scolaro, studente []

Se occupato/a, che lavoro fa?

1) La prima lingua che ha imparato è stata (indicare la propria scelta, segnalandola nella casella corrispondente):

il sardo	
L'italiano	
un'altra lingua	
quale?	

2) Lei parla il sardo? Sì [] No []

3) Se la Sua risposta è no, Le piacerebbe parlarlo? Sì [] No []

Perchè: _____

4) Lei capisce il sardo? Sì [] No []

5) Se la Sua risposta è no, Le piacerebbe capirlo? Sì [] No []

Perchè: _____

6a) Lei parla sardo (Selezionare una sola casella):

sempre	
spesso	
qualche volta	
raramente	
mai	

6b) In quali situazioni parla sardo? (Selezionare una o più caselle)

In famiglia	
Con i figli	
Con il coniuge	
Con i genitori	
Con i nonni	
Con amici	
Nei negozi	
Negli uffici	
A scuola/università	
A lavoro	

7) Quale lingua impiegano – avano i Suoi genitori fra loro? _____



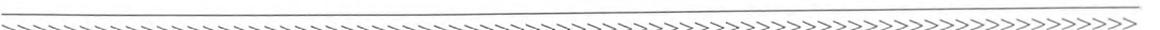
8) Secondo Lei, il sardo è una lingua o un dialetto? _____

9) Perché Lei ritiene che il sardo sia una lingua o un dialetto? _____

10) Esiste un sardo unitario o solo una gamma di varietà locali? _____

11) Secondo Lei, è giusto fare una distinzione fra lingua sarda e dialetti italiani (napoletano, veneziano, piemontese, calabrese, etc.)? _____

12) Per quali motivi Lei ritiene che sia giusto o non sia giusto fare questa distinzione? _____



13) Lei crede che il sardo sarà parlato dalle future generazioni?
Sì fra 50 anni [] Sì fra 100 anni [] No []

14) Secondo lei, è importante salvaguardare il futuro delle lingue regionali, come il sardo? _____

15) Se sì, per quali motivi è importante cercare di preservare il sardo? _____

16) Che cosa significa per Lei essere sardo/a? _____

17) Per Lei, è importante l'identità sarda? _____

18) Lei ritiene che proteggere la lingua sarda sia un modo di difendere anche l'identità sarda? _____

19) Lei ritiene che essere sardo/a sia in conflitto con l'essere cittadino/a italiano/a e europeo/a, oppure no? _____



Indicare la propria scelta, segnalandola nelle caselle dei 'sì' e dei 'no' e spiegare brevemente le ragioni di tale scelta, riportandole nella casella dei 'perché'.

No.	Domande	Sì	No	Perché
20	È a favore dell'uso del sardo nelle riunioni della giunta comunale?			
21	È a favore dell'uso del sardo nelle riunioni del consiglio provinciale?			
22	È a favore dell'uso del sardo nelle riunioni del consiglio regionale?			
23	Lei legge giornali e riviste in sardo?			
24	Lei ascolta programmi radiofonici in sardo?			
25	È a favore di un canale televisivo in sardo?			
26	È a favore della celebrazione della messa in sardo?			
27	È a favore dell'insegnamento del sardo nelle scuole materne?			
28	È a favore dell'insegnamento del sardo nelle scuole elementari?			
29	È a favore dell'insegnamento del sardo nelle scuole medie?			
30	È a favore dell'insegnamento della lingua, letteratura e cultura sarde nella scuola secondaria superiore e all'università?			
31	Lei si collega a siti il cui scopo è tutelare il sardo, diffondendo la sua conoscenza, tramite Internet?			

32) Quali potrebbero essere i sistemi per conservare il sardo? (selezionare una o più caselle)

Parlare il sardo in famiglia	
Convincere gli altri a parlarlo	
Programmi radio-televisivi	
Insegnare il sardo fin dalla scuola materna	
Iniziative culturali (riviste, associazioni, ecc.)	
Altri	
È troppo tardi	



La legge 482 (1999) protegge la lingua sarda. Il sardo potrà essere insegnato nelle scuole elementari e medie, usato nelle riunioni della giunta comunale, nella pubblica amministrazione, scritto nei documenti ufficiali. Inoltre, questa legge permette l'impiego del sardo nei media (televisione, radio, etc.).

33) Lei è al corrente dell'esistenza di questa legge? Sì [] No []

34) Lei cosa pensa di questa legge? (Selezionare una o più caselle)

Giusta	
Necessaria	
Inutile	
Ingiusta	
Altro	
Specificare:	

35) Può spiegare brevemente i motivi della sua scelta nella precedente domanda?

36) Pensa che la legge 482 (1999) sarà seguita da azioni pratiche per proteggere il sardo? Il sardo sarà parlato e insegnato nelle scuole? Ci sarà un uso sia orale che scritto del sardo nelle situazioni ufficiali (giunta comunale, convegni politici, documenti di varia natura)?



Questa sezione è interamente opzionale. Se lo desidera, ha la possibilità di aggiungere ulteriori commenti che non ha avuto l'opportunità di scrivere nel questionario.

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE SICILY

Sto svolgendo una ricerca e ho bisogno della Sua collaborazione. La prego di riempire il questionario e di restituirlo alla persona che gliel'ha consegnato. In alternativa, può inviarlo al seguente indirizzo: Maria Chiara La Sala, Italian Department, University of Leeds, LS2 9JT, England, UK.

La ringrazio per il suo aiuto.

Maria Chiara La Sala

QUESTIONARIO

DATI PERSONALI

Nome e Cognome (facoltativo):

Età (indicare la casella corrispondente alla sua fascia d'età): 15-20 [], 21-25 [], 26-30 [], 31-35 [], 36-40 [], 41-45 [], 46-50 [], 51-55 [], 56-60 [], oltre i 60 []

Sesso: Maschio [], Femmina [],

Telefono: (facoltativo) **E-mail:** (facoltativo)

Luogo di nascita *: **Luogo di residenza*:**

Ha sempre abitato nell' attuale luogo di residenza? Sì [] No []

Se no, specificare dove*

Dove è vissuta Sua madre? *

Dove è vissuto Suo padre? *

*Specificare se città o paese e indicare la collocazione geografica di questa/o in Sicilia)

Titolo di studio:

Condizione professionale: (Indicare la propria condizione, segnalandola nella casella corrispondente)

occupato []; non occupato []; casalinga []; pensionato []; scolaro, studente []

Se occupato/a, che lavoro fa?

1) La prima lingua che ha imparato è stata (indicare la propria scelta, segnalandola nella casella corrispondente):

il siciliano	
l'italiano	
un'altra lingua	
quale?	

2) Lei parla il siciliano? Sì [] No []

3) Se la Sua risposta è no, Le piacerebbe parlarlo? Sì [] No []

Perchè: _____

4) Lei capisce il siciliano? Sì [] No []

5) Se la Sua risposta è no, Le piacerebbe capirlo? Sì [] No []

Perchè: _____

6a) Lei parla siciliano (Selezionare una sola casella):

sempre	
spesso	
qualche volta	
raramente	
mai	

6b) In quali situazioni parla siciliano? (Selezionare una o più caselle)

In famiglia	
Con i figli	
Con il coniuge	
Con i genitori	
Con i nonni	
Con amici	
Nei negozi	
Negli uffici	
A scuola/università	
A lavoro	

Indicare la propria scelta, segnalandola nelle caselle dei 'sì' e dei 'no' e spiegare brevemente le ragioni di tale scelta, riportandole nella casella dei 'perchè'.

No.	Domande	Si	No	Perchè
20	È a favore dell'uso del siciliano nelle riunioni della giunta comunale?			
21	È a favore dell'uso del siciliano nelle riunioni del consiglio provinciale?			
22	È a favore dell'uso del siciliano nelle riunioni del consiglio regionale?			
23	È a favore di giornali e riviste in siciliano?			
24	È a favore di programmi radiofonici in siciliano?			
25	È a favore di un canale televisivo in siciliano?			
26	È a favore della celebrazione della messa in siciliano?			
27	È a favore dell'insegnamento del siciliano nelle scuole materne?			
28	È a favore dell'insegnamento del siciliano nelle scuole elementari?			
29	È a favore dell'insegnamento del siciliano nelle scuole medie?			
30	È a favore dell'insegnamento della lingua, letteratura e cultura siciliane nella scuola secondaria superiore e all'università?			
31	Lei si collega a siti il cui scopo è tutelare il siciliano, diffondendo la sua conoscenza, tramite Internet?			

32) Quali potrebbero essere i sistemi per conservare il siciliano? (selezionare una o più caselle)

Parlare il siciliano in famiglia	
Convincere gli altri a parlarlo	
Programmi radio-televisivi	
Insegnare il siciliano fin dalla scuola materna	
Iniziative culturali (riviste, associazioni, ecc.)	
Altri	
E troppo tardi	



La legge 482 protegge il sardo, ladino, friulano. Il sardo, ladino e friulano potranno essere insegnati nelle scuole elementari e medie, usati nelle riunioni della giunta comunale, nella pubblica amministrazione, scritti nei documenti ufficiali. Inoltre, questa legge permette l'impiego del sardo, ladino e friulano nei media (televisione, radio, etc.).

33) Lei è al corrente dell'esistenza di questa legge? Sì [] No []

34) Lei cosa pensa di questa legge? (Selezionare una o più caselle)

Giusta	
Necessaria	
Inutile	
Ingiusta	
Altro	
Specificare:	

35) Può spiegare brevemente i motivi della sua scelta nella precedente domanda?

36) Le piacerebbe che la legge 482 fosse applicata al siciliano? Perché?



Questa sezione è interamente opzionale. Se lo desidera, ha la possibilità di aggiungere ulteriori commenti che non ha avuto l'opportunità di scrivere nel questionario.

APPENDIX D

DATA - SARDINIA

LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE AND BEHAVIOUR

La prima lingua che ha imparato è stata:

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
il sardo	3	50
l'italiano	97	47
un'altra lingua	0	3

	Centri urbani (%)		Centri non-urbani (%)	
	Si	No	Si	No
Lei parla il sardo?	38	62	73	27
Lei capisce il sardo?	69	31	83	17

Lei parla sardo?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Sempre	3	20
Spesso	10	37
Qualche volta	10	10
Raramente	27	13
Mai	41	13

In quali situazioni parla sardo?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
In famiglia	14	63
Con i figli	3	3
Con il coniuge	7	10
Con i genitori	10	40
Con i nonni	10	3
Con amici	41	47
Nei negozi	3	65
Negli uffici	0	0
A scuola/università	0	0
A lavoro	7	23

Quale lingua/dialetto impiegano – avano i Suoi genitori fra loro?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Italiano	79	27
Sardo	21	60
Italiano e sardo	13	0

DISTINCTION BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND DIALECT

Secondo Lei, il sardo è una lingua o un dialetto?

	Dialetto	Lingua	Entrambi	In alcune parti della Sardegna è una lingua	Non so
Centri urbani (%)	24	65	3	3	3
Centri non-urbani (%)	37	57	0	0	7

Secondo Lei, esiste un sardo unitario?

	Si	No	Non so
Centri urbani (%)	3	20	7
Centri non-urbani (%)	7	23	0

Secondo Lei, è giusto fare una distinzione fra lingue romanze (sardo, ladino, friulano) e dialetti italiani (napoletano, veneziano, calabrese, piemontese, ecc.)?

	Si	No	Non so
Centri urbani (%)	62	27	10
Centri non-urbani (%)	70	27	7

LINK BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

Lei crede che il sardo sarà parlato dalle future generazioni?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Si fra 50 anni	22	30
Si fra 100 anni	16	13
No	62	47

Secondo lei, è importante salvaguardare il futuro del sardo?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Si	90	70
No	10	30

Secondo lei, è importante l'identità sarda?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Si	69	70
No	31	30

Lei ritiene che proteggere il sardo sia un modo di difendere anche l'identità sarda?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Si	69	60
No	31	40

Lei ritiene che essere sardo/a sia in conflitto con l'essere cittadino/a italiano/a e europeo/a, oppure no?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Si	3	7
No	97	93

REACTIONS TOWARDS MEASURES TO PROTECT SARDINIAN

Domande	Centri urbani (%)		Centri non-urbani (%)	
	Si	No	Si	No
È a favore dell'uso del sardo nelle riunioni della giunta comunale?	24	76	47	53
È a favore dell'uso del sardo nelle riunioni del consiglio provinciale?	21	79	43	57
È a favore dell'uso del sardo nelle riunioni del consiglio regionale?	21	79	43	57
Legge giornali e riviste in sardo?	14	86	13	87
Ascolta programmi radiofonici in sardo?	31	69	30	70
È a favore di un canale televisivo in sardo?	70	30	63	37
È a favore della celebrazione della messa in sardo?	48	52	40	60
È a favore dell'insegnamento del sardo nelle scuole materne?	52	48	43	57
È a favore dell'insegnamento del sardo nelle scuole elementari?	65	35	50	50
È a favore dell'insegnamento del sardo nelle scuole medie?	69	31	50	50
È a favore dell'insegnamento della lingua, letteratura e cultura sarde nella scuola secondaria superiore e all'università?	86	14	57	43
Lei si collega a siti il cui scopo è tutelare il sardo, diffondendo la sua conoscenza, tramite Internet?	17	83	7	93

REACTIONS TOWARDS LAW 482

	Centri non-urbani (%)		Centri non-urbani (%)		
	Si	No	Si	No	Non risponde
Lei è al corrente dell'esistenza della legge 482?	72	27	47	47	6

Lei cosa pensa di questa legge?

	Centri non-urbani (%)	Non-Centri non-urbani (%)
Giusta	34	37
Necessaria	17	10
Inutile	27	43
Ingiusta	7	3
Altro	16	7

APPENDIX E

DATA - SICILY

LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE AND BEHAVIOUR

La prima lingua che ha imparato è stata

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
il siciliano	50	62
l'italiano	50	38
un'altra lingua	0	0

	Centri urbani (%)		Centri non-urbani (%)	
	Si	No	Si	No
Lei parla il siciliano?	90	10	79	21
Lei capisce il siciliano?	97	3	100	0

Lei parla siciliano?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Sempre	0	24
Spesso	57	38
Qualche volta	30	17
Raramente	13	17
Mai	13	3

In quali situazioni parla siciliano?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
In famiglia	63	72
Con i figli	3	48
Con il coniuge	30	52
Con i genitori	53	55
Con i nonni	23	34
Con amici	93	76
Nei negozi	3	34
Negli uffici	3	17
A scuola/università	3	0
A lavoro	13	17

Quale lingua/dialetto impiegano –avano i Suoi genitori fra loro?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Italiano	70	72
Siciliano	13	10
Entrambi	10	7

DISTINCTION BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND DIALECT

Secondo Lei, il siciliano è una lingua o un dialetto?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Lingua	73	52
Dialetto	27	31
Non so	0	17

Secondo Lei, esiste un siciliano unitario?

	Si	No	Non so
Centri urbani (%)	87	13	0
Centri non-urbani (%)	55	38	7

Secondo Lei, è giusto fare una distinzione fra lingue romanze (sardo, ladino, friulano) e dialetti italiani (napoletano, veneziano, calabrese, piemontese, ecc.)?

	Si	No	Non so
Centri urbani (%)	43	37	10
Centri non-urbani (%)	69	10	11

LINK BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

Lei crede che il siciliano sarà parlato dalle future generazioni?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Si fra 50 anni	23	34
Si fra 100 anni	50	24
No	27	41

Secondo lei, è importante salvaguardare il futuro del siciliano?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Si		
No		

Secondo lei, è importante l'identità siciliana?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Si	97	93
No	3	7

Lei ritiene che proteggere il siciliano sia un modo di difendere anche l'identità siciliana?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Si	80	93
No	20	7

Lei ritiene che essere siciliano/a sia in conflitto con l'essere cittadino/a italiano/a e europeo/a, oppure no?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Si	0	4
No	100	96

REACTIONS TOWARDS MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD SICILIAN

Domande	Centri urbani (%)		Centri non-urban (%)i	
	Si	No	Si	No
È a favore dell'uso del siciliano nelle riunioni della giunta comunale?	3	97	41	59
È a favore dell'uso del siciliano nelle riunioni del consiglio provinciale?	7	93	24	76
È a favore dell'uso del siciliano nelle riunioni del consiglio regionale?	7	93	24	76
È a favore di giornali e riviste in siciliano?	63	37	55	45
È a favore di programmi radiofonici in siciliano?	73	27	62	38
È a favore di un canale televisivo in siciliano?	67	33	65	35
È a favore della celebrazione della messa in siciliano?	3	97	41	59
È a favore dell'insegnamento del siciliano nelle scuole materne?	7	93	72	28
È a favore dell'insegnamento del siciliano nelle scuole elementari?	10	90	72	28
È a favore dell'insegnamento del siciliano nelle scuole medie?	20	80	62	38
È a favore dell'insegnamento della lingua, letteratura e cultura sarde nella scuola secondaria superiore e all'università?	53	47	86	14
Lei si collega a siti il cui scopo è tutelare il siciliano, diffondendo la sua conoscenza, tramite Internet?	3	97	10	90

REACTIONS TOWARDS LAW 482

	Centri urbani (%)		Centri non-urbani (%)		
	Si	No	Si	No	Non risponde
Lei è al corrente dell'esistenza di questa legge?	72	27	47	47	6

Lei cosa pensa di questa legge?

	Centri urbani (%)	Centri non-urbani (%)
Giusta	17	45
Necessaria	7	17
Inutile	30	17
Ingiusta	30	10
Altro	16	11

	Centri urbani (%)			Centri non-urbani (%)		
	Si	No	Non risponde	Si	No	Non risponde
Le piacerebbe che la legge 482 fosse applicata al siciliano?	14	27	59	20	53	27

APPENDIX F

INTERVISTA A TULLIO TELMON, DOCENTE DI DIALETTOLOGIA ITALIANA ALL'UNIVERSITÀ DI TORINO

Cosa ne pensa della legge 482?

Io penso che occorresse in Italia, quanto meno per dimostrare che la Costituzione non è una carta priva di qualsiasi contenuto, ma che i contenuti e i valori indicati dalla Costituzione sono rispettati. Per quanto riguarda la questione del rapporto tra lingua e dialetto, lingue non minoritarie e lingue minoritarie, è un vero guazzabuglio, tanto grande che negli ultimi tempi io ho preso l'abitudine di parlare di lingue locali sia per designare il dialetto di Cepagatti, che per le minoranze linguistiche. È vero che rispetto alle opinioni che Cortelazzo e Grassi hanno espresso, la legge 482 ha un aggettivo che in qualche modo la giustifica, anche nei confronti delle giuste riserve che loro esprimono, ed è l'aggettivo 'storiche'. Questa legge parla esclusivamente di minoranze linguistiche storiche. Questo ci consente probabilmente di giustificare alcune scelte. Cortelazzo dice che non c'è di fatto una differenza fra il friulano e i dialetti veneti. In realtà io credo, e questo me l'ha insegnato il mio maestro Grassi, che la distinzione introdotta dall'aggettivo 'storico' abbia a che fare con gli orientamenti culturali che nei diversi casi delle diverse minoranze linguistiche sono stati adottati. Mi spiego, se nel Piemonte occidentale esistono due minoranze, la occitanica e la franco-provenzale, questo si spiega col fatto che storicamente (e per storicamente intendo nel lungo periodo del formarsi delle lingue romanze sul tronco del latino parlato) l'orientamento culturale (e per orientamento culturale intendo una somma di cose: le scuole, i mercati, i grandi orientamenti economici) è stato più verso le grandi città al di là delle Alpi, Tolosa, etc. che non verso la pianura. Questo derivava da strutture economiche. La catena delle Alpi era un luogo in cui si ritrovavano queste popolazioni per fare degli affari, per stabilire matrimoni, per creare parentele e tanto dall'una quanto dall'altra parte, nei confronti delle pianure, magari più vicine, magari più comode, c'era uno stacco culturale totale. Questo spiega che, pur essendoci una formidabile barriera naturale come le Alpi, l'abitante di un paesino posto lungo le Alpi a 40-50 Km dal paese della pianura piemontese

preferisse tuttavia attraversare le Alpi e andare al di là delle Alpi, perché trovava gente che lavorava come lui, aveva gli stessi interessi. Questo si deve intendere per minoranze linguistiche storiche, perché storicamente se si esclude tutto ciò che è simile a quello che ho prefigurato prima, vale a dire che ha degli orientamenti culturali esterni, estranei, allora si ritrova tutto un blocco di dialetti, come quelli della Sicilia, del Piemonte, del Veneto, ecc., magari diversissimi dagli altri dialetti italiani, quelli della Toscana, del centro-sud, ma ugualmente accomunati da un orientamento culturale che è quello delle grandi capitali italiane, Milano, Torino, Firenze, Venezia, Roma, Napoli, Bari, Palermo, ecc. Dunque per estranei e diversi che siano, questi dialetti e queste lingue locali continuano ad essere italoentrici, orientati sull'italianità, italianità culturale, economica e di riflesso linguistica. Infatti mentre le acquisizioni dei dialetti del Friuli sono acquisizioni, in termini linguistici, orientate costantemente sul mondo della germanicità, non è lo stesso nel caso del cittadino che acquisisce dal punto di vista linguistico, principalmente dall'italiano, dal toscano, pur essendoci, come nel caso del Piemonte, legami dinastici con la Francia. Questo aggettivo 'storico' è la spiegazione chiave. Restano vere le riserve di Cortelazzo e di Grassi. In quelle di Grassi viene introdotto un ulteriore elemento piuttosto pericoloso da invocare, che è quello della standardizzazione. Agli occhi del dialettologo è un argomento pericolosissimo perché mi accorgo in questo momento, siccome faccio parte di diverse commissioni per l'attuazione di questa legge, che c'è una forte tendenza, anche là dove non è mai esistita standardizzazione, a correre dietro alla necessità sentita o alla volontà invocata di standardizzare, di uniformare, di normalizzare, tradendo proprio lo spirito sia della legge 482, sia dell'articolo della costituzione che l'ha provocata. Perché la tutela che noi invociamo va vista nei confronti della lingua materna di ciascun cittadino italiano. Se la lingua materna di un cittadino italiano di Vipiteno è il dialetto di Vipiteno e non il tedesco di Goethe, quella si deve tutelare, non il tedesco di Goethe, a meno che si scopra che il Sud Tirolo, l'Alto Adige abbia come lingua minoritaria il tedesco e non i dialetti di tipo bavaro-austriaco. Se questi sono i dialetti esistenti, questi si devono tutelare, non una pretesa astrazione rappresentata o dal tedesco letterario o da eventuali *koinai*, come cercano di fare in Friuli. Questi sono gli errori fondamentali. Siccome c'è qualcuno, vedi Grassi, che dice: 'Manca la standardizzazione, ergo questa non è lingua', allora noi facciamo la standardizzazione ma tradiamo lo spirito della tutela. Bisogna introdurre nella mentalità che c'è la necessità di tutelare la lingua materna che è la

lingua locale, adottando come parametro il principio della diglossia. Non c'è niente di male se il cittadino italiano accanto alla propria parlata locale conosce l'italiano e magari pure l'inglese, il francese e il tedesco. Anzi è semplicemente un cittadino più ricco, perché per gli altri conoscere l'inglese, il francese e il tedesco è una cosa tutto sommato alla portata. Meno alla portata è chi conosce anche il dialetto di Vipiteno, di Val d'Aosta o di Villa Badessa.

Lei auspica a una situazione di diglossia, con l'italiano da usare in contesti formali?

Io auspico a qualcosa di più, un plurilinguismo quanto più vasto possibile, perché, come ciascun linguista sa benissimo, anche se è poco conosciuto dall'opinione pubblica corrente, l'apprendimento della lingua non va a discapito della conoscenza delle altre lingue, è un'aggiunta.

Come può avvenire la tutela delle lingue locali se non tramite la standardizzazione? Come inserire queste lingue locali nelle scuole?

Non c'è niente di male nell'inserirle anche nelle scuole. L'essenziale è che venga rispettato scrupolosissimamente, senza nessun cedimento e compromesso, il principio che in ogni località va tutelata la lingua della località e non quella della località più grande perché è assunta come più importante, interessante, degna, standardizzabile. La questione della standardizzazione o la questione della scelta della *koinè* è una questione del tutto secondaria che deve essere lasciata allo sviluppo storico e naturale delle cose. Se in Val d'Aosta, dove viene tutelato tanto il dialetto di Saint Rhemy quanto quello di Etroubles, a un certo punto i cittadini di Etroubles e di Saint Rhemy, quando vanno al mercato ad Aosta, sentono la necessità e diventano in grado di rivolgersi con gli abitanti di Aosta nel dialetto di Aosta, significa che il patois di Aosta incomincia *in nuce* a svilupparsi come potenziale elemento comunitario e, a sua volta, diventerà un'aggiunta, l'aggiunta standard, a tutte le altre lingue locali. Deve essere una cosa del tutto spontanea.

E passando alla Sardegna?

La Sardegna è esattamente come la Val d'Aosta. In Sardegna c'è stata storicamente una tendenziale *koinè*, una lingua di orientamento. Questo processo si è poi interrotto. In questo momento, la situazione della Sardegna è di tante lingue locali quanti sono i paesi della Sardegna, individuabili, ma questo è più il linguista che lo fa o il dialettologo, in gruppi diversi. La realtà è appunto quella della frammentazione ed è quella che coincide, e questo è importante, con il sentimento dei parlanti. I parlanti hanno il sentimento di parlare il dialetto di Arzachena e non il sardo. Il sardo è un'astrazione. Se a un certo punto, per una quantità di motivi di carattere economico, sociale, una di queste varietà, perché è quella del paese più importante o quella del paese che ha le leve del potere economico, viene sentita da questi abitanti come una varietà importante da apprendere in quanto utile, questo avviene nell'ordine naturale delle cose. È essenziale che l'azione di tutela non perda di vista il punto di partenza, cioè il dialetto di Arzachena. Altrimenti, ancora una volta si travisa lo spirito della legge. Tutelare con leggi non serve a niente.

Quindi tornando alla Sardegna, Lei proporrebbe di introdurre la varietà locale nelle scuole in Gallura, per esempio?

Dirò di più. Non tanto un Gallurese ipotetico che non esiste, quanto quello di Santa Teresa.

La legge prevede l'uso di queste lingue in contesti formali, come quello amministrativo. Lei cosa ne pensa?

Ho l'impressione che questo sia un aspetto un po' esornativo perché la legge arriva quando i buoi sono scappati. In questo caso, la fuga dei buoi è una fuga negativa se significa abbandono e dimenticanza della lingua locale ma ha il suo corrispondente positivo in termini di capacità di comunicare da parte di pastori, di non so di quale parte, che hanno imparato l'italiano. Siamo arrivati a essere capaci tutti di parlare l'italiano e questa non è una cosa negativa, tutt'altro.

Secondo Lei, è un po' anacronistico introdurre le lingue locali in contesti formali?

Direi di sì. Direi che è in parte anacronistico nel senso che aggiunge qualche cosa di superfluo e senza funzionalità, perché, in questo momento, a Francavilla, vado all'ufficio postale e sento una quantità di persone che si rivolgono volentieri all'impiegato nel dialetto di Francavilla e la stessa cosa può essere immaginabile in Val d'Aosta o in Alto Adige, in Friuli. Certamente ci sono zone in cui l'abbandono è stato talmente avanzato, che è difficile trovare degli anziani che parlano la lingua locale. In alcune di queste dodici minoranze tutelate dalla 482 si tratta più di un recupero tipo l'irlandese in Irlanda o l'ebraico in Israele che non di una tutela. Intanto c'è questo fatto da prendere in considerazione. Poi c'è da dire che l'azione dei mezzi di comunicazione e la possibilità di utilizzare la lingua locale nell'ufficio postale o nel comune possono dare un rinforzo ideale al parlante, nel senso che il parlante può arrivare a dire: questa mia lingua che io credevo fosse un marchio di povertà, di vergogna, è invece considerata dalla legge degna di essere utile anche in contesti di questo genere.

Per la distinzione fra lingua e dialetto, Lei ha una posizione più vicina a quella di De Mauro o a quella di Grassi e Cortelazzo? La distinzione fra sardo e friulano e dialetti italiani esiste da un punto di vista puramente linguistico o è basata su criteri extra-linguistici, (sviluppi sociali, economici, politici che hanno favorito questa distinzione)? Ritorniamo al concetto di minoranze storiche.

Direi che tanto il sardo quanto il friulano, sono ugualmente lingue neolatine come l'abruzzese e i dialetti abruzzesi. Ciò che li distingue è l'aspetto del diverso orientamento storico culturale. Mentre i dialetti abruzzesi sono vissuti in un bacino di italianità, in altri casi, come in quello del sardo, questo non è avvenuto. Il sardo a causa della latinizzazione più precoce da un lato e conservatività dall'altro, il friulano per vicende storiche come l'occupazione germanica. Il friulano è un esempio tipico di un orientamento linguistico culturale diversificato rispetto agli altri dialetti italiani.

Cosa prevede come possibili sviluppi di questa legge? Ci saranno delle azioni pratiche per tutelare il sardo e le altre lingue minoritarie, si arriverà alla standardizzazione di queste varietà? La legge rimarrà carta o ci saranno delle vere e proprie azioni?

Ci saranno delle vere e proprie azioni perché era una legge attesissima da una serie di movimenti, circoli, e centri culturali. Ci sarà probabilmente una diversificazione nell'attuazione della legge. La prima che mi viene in mente riguarda la Sardegna. Abbiamo constatato nei vari gruppi di monitoraggio di questa legge, che nel caso particolare della Sardegna, probabilmente la legge 482 non avrà quasi nessuna ricaduta, perché la legge regionale è migliorativa rispetto alla 482. Dunque viene attuata presumibilmente quella regionale piuttosto che quella nazionale. E questo è probabile che avvenga anche in Val d'Aosta. In altri casi, invece, come per l'albanese, la legge nazionale sarà applicata.

Lo spirito è molto importante per il recupero della lingua, anche se ci sono molti rischi di separatismo, nazionalismo, e campanilismo. La standardizzazione è un processo artificiale, che trasposto in un contesto politico, può diventare pericoloso (vedi padano), innestare ideologie di discriminazione, identità false.

Parlavamo di identità false che non sono mai esistite. Lei pensa che altre varietà parlate nel territorio nazionale come il siciliano, piemontese, e forse il padano, vorranno trarre vantaggi dalla 482?

Vorranno ma non potranno. La legge è molto restrittiva. Ci si limita a queste 12 varietà elencate per motivazioni storico-culturali. Dal punto di vista strettamente linguistico e socio-linguistico, sono altrettanto minoranze linguistiche gli 8.000 o 9.000 dialetti d'Italia. Dunque a ragione Francavilla o Montesilvano potrebbero rivendicare l'opportunità di tutelare le proprie lingue locali.

Con quali motivazioni?

Con la motivazione sociolinguistica che, nello stato attuale, sono anch'esse minoranze linguistiche in via di estinzione.

E quindi quale sarebbe una buona ragione per negare la tutela?

Io mi auguro che strumenti non necessariamente legislativi ma anche strumenti di diversa impostazione dell'insegnamento scolastico, di diversa impostazione dell'atteggiamento sociale, della risposta sociale a certe domande, possano consentire di arrivare alla tutela. I dati Doxa ci dicono che le regioni in cui maggiormente sono stati abbandonati i dialetti locali a favore dell'italiano, sono Liguria, Piemonte e Lombardia. Soprattutto in Liguria ci sono percentuali di dialettofoni dell'8% e di italoфонia del quasi 100%. Il processo di italianizzazione ha escluso la lingua locale. Inoltre, c'è stata identificazione fra lingua locale e miseria, povertà, inferiorità sociale. Oggi, assistiamo a un'italofonia praticamente totale. Mentre nel 1860, dice De Mauro, il 98% degli italiani non parlava l'italiano, oggi è il contrario. Il 98% degli italiani, o quasi, parla l'italiano. E qui si innesta il meccanismo dell'identificazione fra lingua, prestigio e marca sociale. La lingua italiana era identificata con una superiorità sociale, con un maggior benessere. Questo ha portato le famiglie a scegliere intenzionalmente di escludere l'insegnamento della lingua locale e la scelta per l'italiano. In questo momento, con il 98% degli italiani che parlano l'italiano, questo valore di marca sociale dell'italiano non c'è più. Parla l'italiano tanto il medico quanto l'operaio, quanto il contadino. Tutti parlano l'italiano, dunque per il medico non significa più avere un elemento di superiorità. Questo sta portando, ed è una cosa che si sta vedendo in questo momento, a una rivalutazione delle lingue locali, dei dialetti locali. Tutto ciò che in altri tempi era evitato come la peste perché squalificava, in questo momento non squalifica più, anzi, avere una competenza ulteriore è un elemento aggiuntivo. E infatti si sta osservando che c'è una graduale ripresa della lingua locale. Questo lo si vede anche nelle pubblicità e nei programmi televisivi. È un riuso magari con funzioni non necessariamente molto belle, di genuinità, familiarità, anche queste un po' mistificanti, però il canale attraverso cui sta rientrando il dialetto è proprio questo, ed è dovuto alla fine della sua interdizione sociale.

Secondo Lei, è possibile recuperare il dialetto? Non è un tentativo nostalgico e disperato?

È possibilissimo, e inizialmente ci saranno famiglie che per motivi un po' retrò, di nostalgia, recupereranno il dialetto. Vi sarà anche un aspetto reazionario, ma non necessariamente e soltanto in un primo momento. Dopodiché, probabilmente, il ritorno sarà più generale, più generalizzato. Gradualmente ci si renderà conto della non esclusione. Quello che muoveva il ragionamento del contadino che voleva a tutti i costi insegnare l'italiano al proprio figlio è: 'Così si trova meglio a scuola, così non sarà giudicato un cafone'. In realtà non si rendeva conto che la conoscenza del dialetto da parte di questo figlio, non escludeva la conoscenza dell'italiano. Lui era convinto, in buona fede, che il contenitore testa per quanto riguarda le lingue fosse riempibile.

Precedentemente, Lei ha parlato di questo spirito che è importante per il recupero della lingua. In Sardegna sembra esserci questo spirito, però, al tempo stesso, c'è preoccupazione per il futuro di questi dialetti sardi: il sardo viene parlato pochissimo. Come mai? Lo spirito non è sufficiente?

La mia impressione è che la stessa preoccupazione verrà presto, se non c'è già, per l'italiano nei confronti dell'inglese. La rete sociale è sempre più larga, i rapporti sono sempre più ampi. È inevitabile che, per motivi contingenti, di funzionalità e di utilità, anche a Cagliari sia più frequente la necessità di servirsi dell'italiano. Questo può provocare preoccupazione per chi identifica la lingua e l'ideologia. Non deve creare preoccupazione a chi non fa quest'operazione. Bisogna, in altre parole, imparare ad assumere un atteggiamento liberista nei confronti del divenire linguistico: accade quello che deve accadere, indipendentemente dalla volontà dei singoli. Certamente, là dove si vede, si constata che è possibile, è utile e sacrosanto, nell'applicazione di una riforma costituzionale, arrivare a forme di tutela e aiuto. Questo si può fare, ma non si può andare contro la corrente di un fiume, contro la volontà dei parlanti. I parlanti si possono convincere su alcune cose: continuare a parlare il proprio campidanese non impedisce di parlare inglese, italiano, ecc.

La Sicilia e la Sardegna sono due isole e sono due regioni a statuto speciale. In Sardegna ci sono rivendicazioni di autonomia linguistica ma questo non accade in Sicilia. Perché? Per motivi storici e culturali?

La Sicilia è meno isola, anzi non lo è per nulla. La storia della Sicilia è forse la storia di una delle regioni più immerse nel flusso culturale non direi neanche italiano ma europeo, e in un certo qual modo mediterraneo. Ed è proprio forse la storia della Sicilia che impedisce questo. Oltre a questo blocco dei dialetti italiani, come il francavillese o il palermitano che sociolinguisticamente sono altrettante minoranze quanto lo sono quelle storiche, c'è poi l'altro problema delle minoranze interne che sono del tutto trascurate dalla 482. Tutti i cittadini siciliani che parlano dialetti che geneticamente sono liguri-piemontesi, gallo-italici in località come Aidone, San Fratello, Novara di Sicilia. E così in Sardegna Carloforte e Calasetta. Ce ne sono moltissime così e adesso stanno cercando di trovare o un allargamento della legge 482 che includa queste minoranze oppure un nuovo strumento legislativo. Inoltre, ci sono le minoranze che, non avendo territorialità, sono state trascurate dalla legislazione come pure i giudei italiani di Livorno, di Roma. Alla luce degli ultimi sviluppi, ci si deve preoccupare dei nuovi arrivati, asiatici, filippini che molto spesso nelle grandi città formano delle comunità compatte.

Per quanto riguarda la Sicilia, Lei auspica a una situazione di plurilinguismo spontaneo, senza far ricorso a norme legislative?

Sì, sicuramente, così come per i dialetti del Piemonte. Ci sono delle differenze da regione a regione. Ci sono delle regioni in cui si è formata una specie di *koinè* sul modello della città principale. In Piemonte, il dialetto di Torino è diventato il dialetto di tutto il Piemonte. In Sicilia questo è avvenuto molto meno, in Lombardia non è avvenuto per niente, dipende da una regione all'altra. Fondamentale è, in questi casi, questo ritorno spontaneo all'uso della lingua locale che credo si possa intravedere per il momento soprattutto nelle grandi regioni del Nord. In Abruzzo, per esempio, questo avviene di meno, perché è ancora molto presente il dialetto. Dunque non c'è bisogno di ritornare. In ogni caso, è importante che questa ritorno spontaneo al dialetto, che non è più considerato una marca negativa dal punto di vista sociale, venga favorito e aiutato. È come bagnare una pianta che cresce.

Dunque Lei non vede il futuro di queste varietà locali in modo negativo. Si parla di italiano medio, italiano regionale. Ci sarà una situazione di continuum linguistico?

Io preferisco parlare di gradatuum, piuttosto che di continuum perché ci sono dei passaggi abbastanza netti da un registro all'altro, da un livello all'altro del repertorio. Il repertorio può essere individuale o comunitario. Il concetto della funzionalità sarà quello che sostituirà quello della marca sociale. In questo modo, non ci sarà niente di male se il dialetto di Francavilla verrà limitato in contesti familiari, con amici, alla sagra, perché la sua funzione è questa. Certamente, se devo andare in tribunale, uso l'italiano.

L'italiano regionale è andato di pari passo con l'apprendimento dell'italiano, che è stato imparato, così come avevano imparato il latino i Galli, gli Iberi e ciascuno lo ha fatto diventare una lingua locale. L'italiano è stato imparato da 50 milioni di gente con il proprio dialetto. E questa gente ha dato all'italiano la coloritura locale. Sono i nuovi dialetti.

Vorrei concludere con un suo commento su una frase del Villata: 'Per salvare una lingua, non basta fare leggi per proteggerla e decretare che deve essere parlata e studiata a scuola. L'importante è che la gente continui a parlarla'.

Villata ha ragione, il problema è l'ultima frase 'continui a parlarla'. In realtà non è detto che continui, molto spesso ha già smesso di parlarla e questo è il motivo di una legge. Dove c'è una popolazione che continua a parlarla, si tratta di agire sulla volontà, facendo capire che non è vergognoso. Dove invece si è smesso di parlarla, è più problematico.