

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Adelia Falda for the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology presented on November 4, 2002.

Title: Perceptions of Language Change: A Case Study in Veneto.

Redacted for privacy

Abstract approved: _____

John A. Young

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the current linguistic situation of the Venetian language (a minority language spoken in the northeastern Italian region of Veneto) and its relationship with Italian, the official language of Italy. This is a study of Venetian people and how they are reacting to the changes occurring to their language.

To research the situation, I traveled to Italy, to the region of Veneto. My objective was to investigate and determine whether or not Venetian is, in fact, a language. If it is, is it on the verge of disappearing, or is there a chance that it might be maintained? Will Venetians shift completely from speaking their vernaculars to using only Italian?

To gather data, I used qualitative research – including participant observation, open-ended unstructured interviews with consultants, as well as internet and archival research – in order to be able to glimpse the situation as seen by those who live it. Because I speak Italian and have relatives in the region, I was allowed to take part in many situations where I was able to observe familial language use, as well as the public attitudes concerning Venetian.

I analyzed the Venetian situation by examining the ways in which we look at the words “language” and “dialect” from the linguistic, political and sociolinguistic perspectives, I looked at the situation through anthropological and socio-psychological theories of language choice, and how we understand the indicators of language loss, ethnicity, ethnic group strategies, and changes in identity as they relate to language shift.

Although Venetian is a dialect in the political sense, subordinate to the official language, Italian, I found that the Venetian language is not derived from Italian, and so does

not fit the linguistic definition of a dialect. However, it has been labeled a dialect and is understood as such by most Italians, including Venetians. This labelization has encouraged negative stereotyping and a measure of disuse. However, the recent secessionist movement has highlighted some of the linguistic issues, and brought more attention to the possibility of preserving Venetian.

I recommend changes that alter the negative attitudes towards Venetian and other vernaculars, changes that include focusing on encouraging new and innovative utilization of local languages (art, literature and plays, etc.) and establishing and implementing curricula in the educational system that emphasizes the regional history and its contribution to the present day Italy. Changes such as those mentioned should encourage more acceptance of others and encourage the usage of local languages as well as increase peoples' pride in their ethnic heritage.

©Copyright by Adelia Falda
November 4, 2002
All Rights Reserved

PERCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE CHANGE: A CASE STUDY IN VENETO

by
Adelia Falda

A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the
degree of

Master of Arts

Presented November 4, 2002
Commencement June 2003

Master of Arts thesis of Adelia Falda presented on November 4, 2002.

APPROVED:

Redacted for privacy

Major Professor, representing Applied Anthropology

Redacted for privacy

Chair of Department of Anthropology

Redacted for privacy

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Redacted for privacy

Adelia Falda, Author

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their help and support – I could not have done this without you!

Dr. John Young, Todd Albert, Chester Bateman, Kay Kaufman Falda, Vittorio Falda, Ann Young, Dr. Richard Young, Dr. VandeWater, Dr. Khanna, Dr. Connor-Smith, and all my Venetian consultants who were so kind to talk with me and share their opinions about their language and culture.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITALIAN'S DOMINANCE OVER VENETIAN	7
2.1 THE FAILURE OF VENETIAN TO BECOME A WRITTEN LANGUAGE	8
2.2 PROMOTIONS AND DEMOTIONS OF A MODE OF SPEECH: THE MAKING OF A HIGH LANGUAGE	9
2.3 FORCES OF CHANGE: THE SPREAD OF ITALIAN THROUGH EMIGRATION, URBAN CENTERS, BUREAUCRACY AND THE MEDIA	12
2.4 ITALIANIZATION OF DIALECTS: THE PHASES OF TRANSFORMATION	15
2.5 LANGUAGE DERIVATION: FROM LATIN TO THE COMMON LANGUAGES OF ITALY	17
2.6 GRAMMATICAL VARIATIONS	18
2.7 BILINGUAL OR BIDIALECTAL?	20

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
2.8 ITALIAN BILINGUALISM: SURVEY DATA	21
2.9 POLITICS: THE LEGHE, SECESSION AND PADANIA	24
3. THEORETICAL ISSUES	29
3.1 VENETIAN: LANGUAGE OR DIALECT	29
3.2 ETHNICITY	35
3.3 ETHNIC GROUP STRATEGIES	37
3.4 ETHNICITY, LANGUAGE SHIFT AND CHANGES IN IDENTITY	41
3.5 ACCOMMODATION THEORY	43
3.6 ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES OF LANGUAGE CHOICE	45

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
3.7 LINGUISTIC MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT	46
4. METHODOLOGY	49
4.1 MY STRATEGY	49
4.2 CONSTRAINTS	54
5. DATA	57
5.1 CONSULTANTS' OPINIONS	57
5.2 CONSULTANTS' FAMILIES LANGUAGE PATTERNS	62
5.3 MEDIA	65
6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	79

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
6.1 LOOKING AT THESE ISSUES THROUGH ACCOMODATION THEORY	80
6.2 LANGUAGE SWITCHING	83
6.3 LINGUISTIC SHIFT	86
6.4 ETHNICITY AND SOCIAL MOBILIZATION	88
7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	93
REFERENCES	98
APPENDICES	102

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Possibilities of Increase or Decrease in Status	10
2. Similarities between Florentine and Latin and other Italian Vernaculars	11
3. Three Phases of Language Transformation in Italy	16
4. Spoken Latin is Divided into Four Main Groups of Italian Vernaculars	17
5. Alphabet Changes from Latin to Venetian	20
6. Social Movement Continuum	37
7. Categories of Social Mobilization	38
8. Relational Network Map	50
9. Consultant Language Patterns	64

LIST OF FIGURES (continued)

Figure	Page
10. Magazine Cover	71
11. Lyrics to the song Papa Nero by Gran Calma	73
12. Free the North	75
13. Che Viva El Veneto	75
14. Roma Raus	76
15. Padania Painted Farmhouse	77
16. Hurray Bossi	77
17. Wine Label	78
18. Signs of Language Shift	88

LIST OF FIGURES (continued)

Figure	Page
19. Ethnicity, Ethnic Movement and Ethnic Nationalism	92

LIST OF APPENDICES

<u>Appendix</u>	<u>Page</u>
A. VEGLIA PER SAN SAN MARCO	103
B. LA VENETA SERENISSIMA REPUBBLICA VIVE E VUOLE UN POSTO ALL'ONU	104
C. REPRESSIONE ITALIANA CARCERAZIONE DI LUIGI FACCIA (VSG: VENETO SERENISSIMO GOVERNO)	105
D. Dialetto o lingua? Contributo al corso: "LINGUA VENETA: COMUNICAZIONE E SOCIETÀ	106
E. Veneto's Self-Determination.	108
F. AI VENETI	109
G. PARKE' NIALTRI £A SON SENTHA NA STORIA E NA £ENGOA	112
H. GILBERTO BUSON SPEAKS	113
I. Interview with John Trumper, linguist expert of Venet.	116

PERCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE CHANGE: A CASE STUDY IN VENETO

1. INTRODUCTION

Many would be surprised to find that not all Italians speak Italian fluently; Italy is not as homogeneous as one would guess. The language we call “Italian” is relatively new to Italy, and until fairly recently, most Italians did not speak it. Instead, most people spoke one of numerous regional dialects. These vernaculars, many of which were independent of one another for centuries, were not generally derived from Italian. In fact, a few of these languages were unintelligible between neighbors and a source of misunderstandings. This study looks at the linguistic changes occurring in one of these languages, Venetian (also known as *Veneto*), the language spoken throughout *Veneto*, a northeastern region of Italy.¹

The mode of speech generally labeled “Venetian” is in transition, spoken in a region where the population is increasingly bilingual in both Italian and Venetian. Some people are switching altogether, choosing not to use Venetian. Minority languages often borrow vocabulary from other languages spoken in nearby areas. This phenomenon occurs for many reasons, including the need to supplement the vernacular with modern words so that people living in a modern society can expand the use of their traditional language. However, because the use of Italian is growing, while that of Venetian appears to be shrinking, the adoption of Italian words into Venetian could be seen as diluting Venetian, changing it from a real language to a lesser way of speaking that is perceived as not important or valuable.

People’s perceptions of the importance of a language vary greatly and change as time passes. The perception that a specific language is valuable, and that it should be preserved and/or maintained, can shift, becoming the opposite—the belief that the language is not valuable, is no longer useful (and might even be an impairment), and should be abandoned. What does the future hold for the Venetian language?

¹ Veneto is the name of both the region and the *dialetto*, or regional dialect (vernacular). In English it can be called Venetian, meaning broad Venetian, because Venetian has vernaculars of its own (such as *Padovano*, *Vicentino*, *Veronese*, and *Trevisano*) spoken in various cities in the region.

Are the Venetian people interested in preserving their language? Are they being prevented from doing so? Will Italian and Venetian continue to mix, with the eventual disappearance of Venetian?

A starting point in answering these questions is the determination of the linguistic and cultural status of Venetian: Is it a language or a dialect? The Random House Dictionary of the English Language defines "language" as "a body of words and the systems for their use common to a people who are of the same community or a nation, the same geographical area, or the same cultural tradition," or, as "communication by voice in the distinctively human manner, using arbitrary sounds in conventional ways with conventional meanings; speech" (Flexner and Hauck, 1987: 1081).

These two definitions of language seem to fit Venetian. However, the Venetian mode of speech is usually not considered a language in its own right, but is often mislabeled as an Italian "dialect," defined as "a variety of a language that is distinguished from other varieties of the same language by features of phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, and by its use by a group of speakers who are set off from others geographically or socially," or, "a provincial, rural, or socially distinct variety of a language that differs from the standard language, especially when considered substandard" (Flexner and Hauck, 1987: 546).

At first glance, Venetian seems to fit the definition of a dialect: It is spoken in one geographical area (in what is officially the region of Veneto and the nearby area); it differs in each province within the region; it is used by an ethnic group; it is spoken in both rural and provincial areas; and is considered by some to be substandard Italian. However, Venetian is not a "variety of a language that differs from the standard language" (Flexner and Hauck, 1987: 546), simply because it is not a variety of Italian. Modern Venetian (and other variants in the area) are not derived from Tuscan, as Italian is, but has historically existed side by side with both Tuscan and Latin, as well as many other speech varieties.

John Trumper argues that the status of a vernacular is politically determined. According to Trumper, "There is absolutely no difference between a language and a dialect, because either can become the other." Trumper states that the dominant political power "chooses a tool, that is a dialect to express laws, and therefore it transforms it in language" (Pizzati, August 1999; see Appendix I of this thesis for Pizzati's interview of Trumper). If Trumper is correct, Venetian is a dialect of Italian.

The idea that speech forms, which are not labeled “languages,” are lesser than those that are is not new. A common misperception is that these vernaculars (often called dialects) are defective, incomplete forms of language that can inhibit thought processes, because those using them to communicate are deprived of the complete language and, thus, will never develop a good vocabulary, think clearly, and learn basic intellectual skills. Those doomed to speaking in these lesser forms will be left behind. The idea that “minority languages are not analytical enough” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981: 13) and “like other savage tongues hinder intellectual development” (Binstead, 1931, as stated in Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981: 13) is still believed by many. Furthermore, “there is the suggestion that the culture bound up with the minority languages is not really a culture at all” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981: 13).

Many of these negative stereotypes have been used to describe native languages in non-western areas of the world, but similar thinking has occurred in respect to Veneto and other regions of Italy. False ideas that vernaculars are illogical, incomplete, defective, and only used by the uneducated and slow-witted once permeated Italian popular culture and were accompanied by a general acceptance of the stereotype of the uneducated rural person who was unaware of what was considered by others to be the most basic culture. Thus, the leap was made that rural culture was not truly culture, and certainly not Italian culture (Marcato, 1981: 179). The fact that rural areas were poor in comparison to urban areas just reinforced these ideas. In response to these prejudices, many speakers of regional idioms became ashamed of their mother tongue and village heritage.

These regional and urban-rural tensions increased during the past sixty years because of the forces of modernization. As a result of fundamental economic changes, rapid technological advances, and increased education, peoples from diverse geographical locations have been pulled together and forced to interact economically and socially. Cities producing manufactured goods offered more jobs and opportunities than the small rural towns, encouraging people from many different regions to move into the larger urban areas. Once there, people with diverse linguistic backgrounds had to communicate with one another, and Italian became the *lingua franca* (Personal Communication, M. Pagliarusco, September 4, 1996).

Accents are difficult to control or change, yet many people try to change and remove accents when they are perceived negatively. They may even try to gain new ones

that are perceived to be more prestigious. In much of Italy, regional accents are not considered prestigious; they are often perceived negatively as indicators of low educational and class backgrounds. These accents are used to stereotype people who speak with one, because strong regional accents have become associated with rural people and those who are not highly educated. In many cases the use of local languages is discouraged.

Because most non-Venetian speakers (monolingual Italian speakers or speakers of other regional idioms) are not able to follow a conversation held in Venetian, it has become increasingly necessary for many Venetians to become bilingual (to varying degrees) in Italian and Venetian. In order to give what many perceive as an advantage to their children, some parents in Veneto no longer teach their children the local language, hoping that their children's lack of a local accent (which in many situations has become a negative label and those who speak it the subject of ridicule) will aid them as adults. Their parents hope to provide them with a good education and good skills in Italian, which they believe will improve their children's chances of finding better jobs and a better future within the more mobile Italian society.

During the last sixty years, the place of Venetian discourse in the lives of the Venetian people has changed significantly. For many centuries, Venetian was the one language that people spoke, but Venetian, as a mother tongue, has come to mean poverty and lack of education. Many Venetians have become ashamed of the language and of the life it represents. The evolution of the region of Veneto from the land of the *Serenissima Repubblica* (the name of the independent republic of Venice, literally "the Most Serene Republic") to a dependent region of the *Repubblica Italiana* (the Italian Republic) is just part of the story. Today, the spoken language of Veneto is the subject of political debates as to whether it is truly a language, whether it should be the national language of a new independent nation, and whether it is worth speaking or should be allowed to fade away. An entire spectrum of opinions exists on the future of Venetian. There are people who will admit that they are ashamed of it and what it represents. There are those (mostly the older generations) who have many happy memories and are proud to speak it; there are those who don't value it, but are not ashamed; those who are proud of their history (as they perceive it) and language; and, of course, those who have placed it at the center of political debates. The Venetian tongue continues to change and evolve, and the story continues.

I have been interested in Veneto (both the region and the language), since early childhood. I grew up hearing stories from my father, who is Venetian, about the language he spoke during his childhood and the region he lived in, and I always loved the area and the ideas it represented. I lived in the northern Italian region of Lombardia from age two until the age of twelve (1973-1983), and I speak standard Italian with a typical northern regional intonation. Because only the Italian and English languages were spoken in our home, I never learned more than a few phrases in Venetian. During my childhood, my family often visited my paternal grandmother and cousins in Veneto, who lived a few hours away by car.

As far back as I can recall, I remember thinking it was odd that even though we were all members of the same family, we did not speak in the same way, with some members experiencing real difficulty understanding one another.

For example, the Italian my brother and I spoke was different from that of my Venetian relatives. Even my father would switch modes of speech, changing from the way we spoke (which was his usual manner) to the way his mother and relatives spoke. During our visits, not only would Dad's intonation change while speaking in Venetian with his family, but it would also continue in the same manner when he switched back into Italian. I found that his family also did this. Even when intentionally speaking only Italian, my Venetian relatives would continue using their usual intonations, often mixing Venetian words in our conversations. (The cadence we use while speaking is not usually a conscious choice; rather, we usually speak in the way we learned our first language.)

Recently, as a part of my studies of Veneto, I have learned to understand and appreciate Venetian more than I did as a child. In order to better understand this topic as well as research it, I traveled to Veneto in 1998 and again in 2002. On both occasions, I collected information on the linguistic situation in the region, trying to get a feel for the situation from the viewpoint of those there. My strategy was to focus the research on the question of whether or not Venetian was a language, and if so, was it disappearing? I also wanted to find out what place it held in Venetian society. While in Italy, I listened to the way people spoke; I observed the language choices they made; and I asked questions in order to try and discover what Venetians thought about their mode of speech.

For the remainder of this thesis, I will focus on answering the questions about Venetian, the status it holds (dialect or language), and if there are any indications that in

the future it might be maintained and preserved. The paper is divided into six sections: background, literature and theory, methodology, data, analysis and conclusion. The first section is a historical background that examines the way the present relationship between Venetian and Italian came to exist; it looks at the origin and derivation of both languages and how they are connected. The second section is an exploration of the literature I will use to interpret the present situation in Veneto and the various ways in which the situation can be analyzed. The third section explains the methods I chose and why I chose to use those particular ones, while the fourth section presents the data collected. The fifth section is an analysis of the evidence collected using the theories presented in section three, and the last section, the sixth, revisits the literature and data and suggests ways to improve and change the circumstances in Veneto.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITALIAN'S DOMINANCE OVER VENETIAN

Located in the northwest section of the Italian peninsula, Veneto is bordered by the country of Switzerland to the north, the Adriatic Sea in the west and by several Italian regions: Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lombardia, and Emilia-Romagna. Many cities in Veneto have become well known, especially *Vicenza* and *Venezia* (Venice). Numerous stories have been told of the *Serenissima Repubblica*, the former Republic of Venice. Venetian people are proud of their ancestors' accomplishments, although sometimes perceptions may be more fictional than factual.

According to Frederic Lane, the Venetians were a distinct people "from the sixth century A.D. to the end of the eighteenth." (Lane, 1973: 1)². In the late fifth century, refugees, who had fled the Lombard invaders of northern Italy, settled in the region of Venetia. Settlements continued to grow in this area, and in the ninth century, the city of Venice was formed. In the next century, Venice gained control of the coast of Dalmatia, and in doing so, achieved dominance of the Adriatic. As a result, it grew steadily in power and prosperity because of its growing control over trade between the East and West. After defeating its rival Genoa in 1380, Venice became Europe's leading seapower. The city's wealth and power continued to grow until (1) the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 greatly reduced trade with the East, and (2) European penetration of the Americas shifted power, first, to Spain and, later, to England and France. Nevertheless, during the 1500s, Venice continued to be a major commercial, cultural and artistic center.

Turkish expansion in the seventeenth century ended Venetian dominance of the eastern Mediterranean, and in the 1700s Venice entered a period of political and economic stagnancy. In 1797, the city fell to Napoleon's troops without resistance. Bonaparte signed a peace accord with Austria, trading Venice's mainland territories to Austria, leaving the republic with only the capital city, which was then taken, and pillaged, by France. The following year, the French surrendered the city to the Austrians.

² My discussion of Venetian history is drawn from Lane (1973); Vittoria (1997), and Wiel (1995 reprint 1898).

In 1805, Venezia became a part of the Kingdom of Italy, which was still under French rule, and in 1815, the French returned it to Austria at the Congress of Vienna. In 1866, it was united with the new Italian nation.

This union did not result in the protection of local linguistic variants and rural ways of life, because Italian leaders placed more importance on national integration and power than on the protection of the cultural patrimony. One such leader was Mussolini, whose policies dictated the destruction of much local culture and history. "Much evidence of Italy's minorities was destroyed under fascism. In the early 1920s, when the regime abolished diversity, 'un-Italian' sounding names of people and places were forcibly 'reduced' to Italianate forms" (Corbett, 1994: 45). Italian endings were added to words, such as o, a, e and i, and letters that do not exist in Italian, such as j, were removed. This was done in an attempt to make the country more homogeneous and to blend all people as though they were part of the same ethnic group and had the same cultural background.

2.1 THE FAILURE OF VENETIAN TO BECOME A WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Despite Venice's long and rich history and its significant economic, political, and cultural impact on European history, written Venetian never became firmly established. Examples of written Venetian date back to 1253, but even then it was used only in court papers translated to help Venetian traders, who unlike the aristocracy, were not used to using Florentine when writing and a Venetian vernacular for speaking (Bonsaver, 1996). Edward Tuttle asserts that as early as the 1400s and 1500s, "fully characterized Venetian and Veneto were only attributed to the humblest personages" (1997). He believes this occurred because "the historical grammar of Venetian has been counter-historical, reversing or repressing myriad changes of the preceding six hundred [years]. The prestige of Venetian depended upon the socio-political hegemony of the Serenissima [Venice]" (Tuttle, 1997). Tuttle explains that there are three reasons (as indicated by Stussi) why the written form was not permanent:

- (1) the elite's focus on commercial and civic activities, (2) the absence of a stable court and aristocratic patronage, (3) continued recourse to Latin, due to the protracted domination of scribal, notarial activity by an entrenched clerical caste, or

even to French, given the cosmopolitan nature of its eastern Mediterranean sphere of operations. Since not even cultivated usage was anchored to a prestigious written canon, it drifted along various extraneous currents, initially cleaving to a Latin Padane koine ...and thereafter progressively emulating Tuscan-based Italian (Tuttle, 1997: 263).

Since the more powerful Latin and French were already well established as written languages, the literate population tended to follow the more distinguished written forms. However, the failure of the Venetians to develop a rich written literature did not, in and of itself, doom their language; Venetian continued to be spoken by the people of the region for centuries. The threat to Venetian as a spoken language is the result of complex historical developments that occurred at the national level after the peoples of the Italian peninsula united in one nation. The process by which this occurred is the focus of the remaining pages of this chapter.

2.2 PROMOTIONS AND DEMOTIONS OF A MODE OF SPEECH: THE MAKING OF A HIGH LANGUAGE

Žarko Muljačić states that, “The great number of often very different definitions of dialect shows that the traditional opposition language-dialect (in fact some 500 years old) is fraught with problems” (387). He believes the best way to solve this problem is by using the “already existing triad: high language HL - middle language ML - low language LL (provided that it may be applied not only to varieties of a language but also to different languages). The adjectives high, middle, low, have the distinct advantage of unambiguous reference to positions on a power hierarchy: absolute autonomy, coexistence of heteronomy and autonomy, absolute heterotony” (Muljačić, 1997: 388). According to Muljačić, a vernacular, or Low Language (LL), is placed and kept at the bottom of the hierarchy by a Middle Language (ML), a High Language (HL), or both. This relationship is not permanent, as even the lowest, least powerful LL can change status, becoming more powerful and eventually graduate to ML or even HL status. The reverse could also happen, with a HL losing power and becoming a ML or LL. A ML is in a unique position, subordinate to a HL but, at the same time, it also has power over its own LLs (Muljačić, 1997: 388). (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: Possibilities of Increase or Decrease in Status

Status	Any HL can be demoted to a ML.	Any ML can be promoted or demoted to HL or LL status.	Any LL can increase in status to become a ML or HL.
HL	HL ↓	↑ ML	↑ ML
ML		↓ LL	
LL	↓	↓	LL

In Italy today, all Venetian vernaculars are subordinate to Italian, which has become the High Language of the country. At the same time, because there are several varieties of Venetian, some more prestigious than others, a version of Venetian is also a HL and therefore has LLs of its own.

During 1000-1200, Medieval Latin began to divide into perhaps as many as 700 “fledgling Romance languages,” as Muljačić calls them, in Italy alone. Slowly, with an increase of political and/or economic power, a few of these new languages turned some of the languages spoken nearby into LLs of their own, not only achieving the higher status of Middle Language, but adding the function of acting as a bridge language, connecting speakers of differing lower language (Muljačić, 1997: 390). Generally, the oldest Middle Languages were former Low Languages with developed and firmly incorporated writing systems, or with a unique writing system. Between 1200 and 1350, vernaculars, whose lexis and syntax were enriched by borrowings taken from Latin, Greek and French, rose from LLs to MLs, lessening the status of the other MLs to LLs once again, and reducing the number of MLs to approximately forty (Muljačić, 1997).

In the fifteenth century Humanistic Latin remained the High Language of most of what is Italy today, but it would give way to Florentine and then to Italian. “The development of Florentine to Italian constituted the most rapid transformation of a ML into a HL” (Muljačić, 1997: 391). According to Sabatini, Florentine became the

lingua franca in Italy because it was still quite similar to Latin (see Figure 2.), and because Florence had been a great cultural center for at least three centuries, which led to its dissemination among the literate (Sabatini, 1978: 164).

Figure 2: Similarities between Florentine and Latin and other Italian Vernaculars

<i>Latino</i> Latin	<i>Toscano/Fiorentino</i> Tuscan/Florentine Vernacular	<i>Altri centro-Meridionali</i> Other Central-Southern Vernaculars	<i>setteentrionali</i> Northern Vernaculars
Gentem	Gente	iend(e), ienti	zente, sent
Plāngere	Piangere	chiagn(e), chiānciri	pianze, ciange
Altus	Alto	ald(o), àutu	àut, olt
Càlidus	Caldo	callo, càuro	càud, colt

(Source: Sabatini, 1978: 164)

Sabatini (1978) explains that Florentine was not all that different from Latin, because the Etruscans once lived in the region of *Toscana* (Tuscany), where Florence is located. The Etruscans were a people whose language and culture were quite distinct from the Romans. However, they communicated frequently with the Romans, and “*si erano trovati nelle condizioni migliori per imparare il latino in forma coretta, senza mescolarlo con la loro lingua che era totalmente diversa*” (Sabatini, 1978: 164). (“They found themselves in the best situation to learn Latin in its correct form, without mixing it with their own language that was completely different” (Sabatini, 1978: 166).

In the 1200s, 1300s, and 1400s, a cultural resurgence occurred in many regions of Italy, “*ma i più progrediti e potenti degli altri furono i Fiorentini*” (Sabatini, 166). (“But the most advanced and powerful were the Florentines” (Sabatini, 164). Florence became an important cultural center in Europe, and several famous writers, Dante Alighieri (*La Divina Commedia*), Francesco Petrarca (*Canzoniere*), and Giovanni Boccaccio (*il Decameron*)—who were native speakers of *Fiorentino* (Florentine)—helped make the language culturally dominant. The success of these authors encouraged people from all over Italy, as early as

the 1300s to learn Florentine and write in it. In the late 1400s, the distribution of the published word helped Florentine to spread, and little by little it became the *lingua franca* of Italy, accepted as a language, and used in both the North and the South by the educated when writing.

By the 1600s, 1700s and 1800s, writers and scientists from every region were using this new bridge language, but the only ones who used it daily were the educated and the Tuscans (because it was so close to what they were already using). However, even the educated had trouble speaking this new uniting language, because they had learned it from books and used it mostly for writing. Others continued to speak their local variants. In the 1800s, a Milanese writer, Alessandro Manzoni, wrote a very influential novel, *I Promessi Sposi*, in a simplified version of Italian that resembled the spoken version. This book was a huge success. It influenced subsequent writers, who also introduced colloquial Italian to a broad population. After the unification of Italy (1859-1870), Italian became the official language of the new nation.

With the transformation of Florentine into Italian, some regional HLs, such as Venetian, permanently lost their prestige and status, becoming MLs. This in turn reduced the power of the other recent demotees such as the vernaculars, *Padovano*, *Trevisano*, *Vicentino* and *Veronese* (Paduan, Trevisan, Vicentine and Veronese). These former MLs were turned into LLs of their immediate HL, *Veneziano Illustre* (Muljačić, 1997). These Lower Languages are still used in the provinces that bear their names.

2.3 FORCES OF CHANGE: THE SPREAD OF ITALIAN THROUGH EMIGRATION, URBAN CENTERS, BUREAUCRACY AND THE MEDIA

Italian is widely used today, but this has not always been the case. The Italian language went through a period of development, evolving into a national and literary language from a Florentine vernacular.

During this evolutionary process, many other idioms in other areas of Italy were equally important in those regions, but their power and significance diminished as more and more people used their local vernaculars less frequently while increasingly using what was to become Italian.

Sabatini says the political unification of Italy (1859-1870) was the main event that changed the *condizioni di vita*, the circumstances under which Italians lived (Sabatini, 170). The formation of the Italian state was a precondition for processes of modernization that strongly influenced linguistic choices: Italian became the official language of the new national state, and the creation of a national economy promoted mass migrations, which significantly increased the usage of Italian. As contact increased between the various regions of the country, and also between smaller more isolated communities, Italian began to be used more frequently and to link a growing number of Italians together.

According to DeMauro, after the unification of Italy, three forces contributed to the transformation of Italy from a place where the widespread use of vernaculars was ordinary to the reduction of, and, in some instances, the complete abandonment of local language use. These forces of change were emigration, the creation of urban centers, and bureaucracy. The impact of the first force, emigration, was indirect: Many of those who emigrated abroad were speakers of local idioms. When poverty and a lack of jobs drove younger workers in rural areas to look for jobs abroad, these workers left behind fewer, and mostly older, people in the small towns to preserve the vernacular (DeMauro, 1963).

Italian urbanization had a similar, and even more significant, impact. In the urban centers, extensive communication between various social groups had existed even before the end of the 1800s. The citizens in these areas were much more active and organized, both socially and politically, than their rural counterparts, and a higher percentage of those living in urban areas were literate. In addition, the more dynamic and diverse circumstances of urban centers allowed illiterates to gain a verbal knowledge of Italian. These developments occurred in all of Italy's major urban areas, creating environments similar to the one that already existed in Rome, the only place where, for centuries, this type of milieu had existed. As members of different linguistic groups sought to speak with one another, they increased their usage of Italian (DeMauro, 1963).

One of my consultants, Marco Pagliarusco, remembers when he was about nine or ten years old, during the Second World War, "when the Americans invaded Sicily, there were many refugees from Sicily, coming up to escape the war. Many southerners tried to speak 'proper' Italian, my mother was running the [family] store, and she was the only one they could understand. She was very proud of that. I can still remember her telling me I should learn Italian too!" The American invasion of Sicily and southern Italy brought many

refugees north, seeking refuge and jobs. Communication was a barrier many faced as they looked for better lives, and contact between vastly different languages became much more common (M. Pagliaruso, personal communication, September 6, 1996).

As interactions increased among members of differing linguistic variants, the third force described by DeMauro, the creation of a national bureaucracy and army, had a similar impact on the dissemination of Italian. The newly created bureaucracy did for the middle class what the army did for other economic groups: it acted like a large urban center by pushing many people together in a small space, forcing them to communicate with one another, even though they were not from the same place and, in some cases, did not have much previous contact with the Italian language. These people had to find a common ground, a *lingua franca*, in order to communicate with one another, and they used Italian (DeMauro, 1963).

In the twentieth century, the development of the Italian mass media accelerated this process with the development of newspapers and magazines aimed at a national market and new forms of mass entertainment—the movies, radio, and, in the 1950s, television. People from all over Italy began to listen to the same programs on the radio (and later on television), and were reading, in increasing numbers, the same articles and books written in Italian.

At the same time, children were attending school for longer periods of time; in 1963 a law was passed that required everyone to attend school (free of charge) until the age of 14 (Sabatini, 170). Many were able to attend school beyond the required age and finish high school, learning many subjects including the Italian language. In Italy, most subjects are taught in Italian from kindergarten through the university system, regardless of the region and mother tongue of the students. However, Marcato believes that in most cases the public school system has done a poor job teaching Italian (what she calls a notable failure of public education) to the many whose first language is not Italian. Unfortunately, the level of Italian learned in school is not even enough to use for daily conversations, and often consists of memorized formulas that apply to recurring situations. These formulaic phrases may be adequate for simple, normal speech and repetitive situations but not in complex interaction with others in Italian (Marcato, 1981). Nevertheless, in spite of the public schools' lack of success in teaching Italian, many students whose first language is not Italian succeed in becoming bilingual (to varying degrees) in order to excel

academically. These students are most likely creative and seek help with Italian from several sources, some have access to better schools, tutors, Italian speakers in the home, etc.

Today, although many local languages are still used, they are no longer central to most people's lives. Instead of using their traditional idioms to express all their thoughts, for many occasions people now choose to use Italian, depending on the situation. In some domains, using the vernacular is no longer even an acceptable option; for instance, in some cases, it is not considered professional to speak a local vernacular at work.

All of the factors of Italian modernization discussed in this section—emigration, urbanization, the development of a national bureaucracy and military, the mass media, and education—have powerfully influenced language use in Veneto. Each factor has affected the way Venetians see the world around them and has influenced their reactions to change, strongly altering their language use and linguistic habits.

2.4 ITALIANIZATION OF DIALECTS: THE PHASES OF LANGUAGE TRANSFORMATION

During the past century, the role of the Italian language in Italian society has gone through three phases: (1) beginning with a stable diglossia³, (2) moving to bilingualism, and (3) ending with the abandonment of local vernaculars. (See Figure 3.) At the beginning of the twentieth century, the situation in Italy was diglossic rather than bilingual. Thus, not many Italians spoke both Italian and a vernacular; most spoke only their local language, which was not Italian. The society's High Language was Italian, while the vernaculars were the Low Languages used daily by most people. While the rural populations and lower urban classes were diglossic, the urban middle class was already bilingual. In the second half of the twentieth century, bilingualism spread. In Veneto, specifically, bilingualism both with and without diglossia existed. Bilingualism with diglossia existed where two distinct languages coexisted, separated by domains of use, while bilingualism without

³ Diglossia is defined by Sobrero as "a linguistic situation in which two distinct language varieties existed side by side in every community, each with its particular social functions: a High variety, represented by the national language, restricted to formal and official uses (literature, administration and occasionally correspondence), and a Low variety, represented by the dialect, used in all spheres of daily life" (Sobrero, 1997: 412).

diglossia existed in the larger industrial and urban centers where there was a crossover in domains of use. Today, as fewer people are proficient in vernacular, certain areas exist in which vernaculars are no longer spoken at all, bringing the bilingual or diglossic situations to an end (Sobrero, 1997).

Figure 3: Three Phases of Language Transformation in Italy

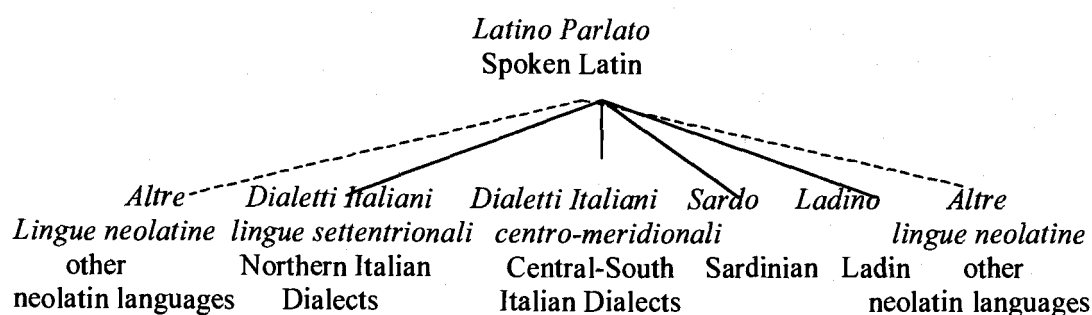
Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Stable Diglossia Two distinct languages coexist; not many Italians speak both.	Bilingualism With and without diglossia exists in Veneto.	Abandonment of Vernaculars Begins and rapidly increases, especially in urban areas.
Stable diglossia ✦ Italian is the High Language, while the vernaculars are the Low Languages. ✦ The rural and lower urban classes are diglossic, while the urban middle class is bilingual.	Bilingualism ✦ Bilingualism with diglossia and without diglossia exist. Bilingualism with diglossia exists where two distinct languages coexist and are used differently. Bilingualism without diglossia exists where there is a mix of domains of use, in larger industrial and urban centers.	Abandonment of vernaculars ✦ Smaller numbers of people are fluent in vernacular. In some places vernaculars are no longer spoken.
Early Twentieth Century	Second half	Late Twentieth Century
→		
Factors that helped the spread of Italian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emigration – many vernacular speakers moved from Italy to countries all over the world • Migration – a more mobile population begins to leave native regions • Modernization – mass media, education, radio, television and technology use Italian 		

(Source: Sobrero, 1997: 412)

2.5 LANGUAGE DERIVATION: FROM LATIN TO THE COMMON LANGUAGES OF ITALY

Francesco Sabatini notes that it is important to recognize that all speech forms labeled dialects of Italy (*dialetti d'Italia*) are derived from spoken Latin, and “none of these languages are a distorted or corrupted form of another or of the Italian language” “*nessuno di essi é una ‘deformazione’ o una ‘corruzione’ degli altri o della lingua italiana.*” (Sabatini, 152). Sabatini divides the Italian vernaculars into four main groups, the *dialetti italiani settentrionali* (Northern Italian dialects), the *dialetti italiani centro-meridionali* (Central-South dialects), *sardo* (Sardinian), and *ladino* (Ladin). (See Figure 4.) The Northern group has three varieties; the Central-South has five; Sardinian has two; and Ladin three (Sabatini, 153). The four Italian linguistic groups are quite different from one another, with the line called *La Spezia-Rimini* dividing the northern vernaculars from the center-southern ones. In this study, we will focus on the following two groups: the *dialetti italiani settentrionali* (Northern Italian dialects), and the *dialetti italiani centro-meridionali* (Central-South Italian dialects).

Figure 4: Spoken Latin is Divided into Four Main Groups of Italian Vernaculars



(Figure adapted from Sabatini, 1978: 153)

The first group is where we find Venetian. The *settentrionali* (Northern) are spoken north of La Spezia-Rimini. These vernaculars shorten the sounds of words and are similar to western languages like French, Provençal and Spanish. For example, double consonants are not pronounced in these idioms, as in the word *vaca* (the Italian is *vacca* [cow]); and the word *stopa* (the Italian *stoppa* [tow]). Many of the vowels and consonants are lost, such as in the word *frer* (the Italian *ferraio* [blacksmith]); *nef* (the Italian *neve* [snow]); *cavél* and *cavéi* (the Italian *capello*, *capelli* [hair/hairs]); and *crea* (the Italian *creta* [clay]). Another characteristic of the Northern group is that the letter *u* and the letter *o* are often, with Veneto as an exception, pronounced as in the French *ü* and *ö*, in words such as the French *brüt* [ugly] and *bö* [ox] (Sabatini, 154).

Tuscan/Florentine is located in the second group. The *centro-meridionali* (Central-South) idioms are spoken south of the dividing line, and are similar to Romanian. These vernaculars kept the double consonants and vowel sounds; for example, Florentine retained the double *c* in *vacca*, *p*'s in *stoppa*, *ferraio*, *capello*, and the single *t* in *creta* (Sabatini, 154).

2.6 GRAMMATICAL VARIATIONS

Marcato writes of a humorous anecdote that lets us glimpse one of the most obvious differences between Italian and Venetian: pronunciation. The Venetian teacher urges his students: “*mi racomando ragassi quando legete batete bene le dopie!*” (Remember, kids, when reading, carefully pronounce the double letters!) (Marcato, 1981: 139). This is amusing because the teacher, while reminding the class to pay attention and pronounce the double letters, does not pronounce them while speaking in Italian. The Italian would be “*mi raccomando ragazzi quando leggete battete bene le doppie!*” (I noticed long ago that Venetians do not pronounce double letters while speaking in Italian, a characteristic that helps Venetian to sound less rigid in comparison with Italian.)

As mentioned above, the Venetian group is one of the northern groups of spoken vernaculars, divided from the central-south group by La Spezia-Rimini line. This subdivision is based on the presence or absence of distinct characteristics by which the northern dialects can be recognized, such as the tendency not to pronounce double or long

consonants. (Marcato; Sabatini). Marcato states that Venetian can be grouped with other northern dialects such as Lombardo, Piemontese, Ligure, and Emigliano-Romagnolo (collectively labeled “*galloitalici*” by Marcato).

Marcato gives examples of modifications that occurred as Latin words changed, such as the vulgar Latin word *caballu(m)*⁴, which became *cavalo* in Venetian, *cava'lo* in Piemontese, *cavao* in Lombardo, and *caval* in Emiliano. Similarly, the Latin word *annum*⁵ became *ano* in Veneto, and *an* in Piemontese, Lombardo and Emiliano (Marcato, 1981: 139).

Silent consonants, when placed between two vowels, change and then disappear. For example, *t* would become *d*, as in the Latin word *amita*⁶, which changed to *ameda* in Milanese; and while it was also *ameda* in ancient Veneto, it changed to become *amia*. The Latin *digitum*⁷ became *dido* in Lombardic, and in Veneto, it became *dedo* or *deo* (Marcato, 1981: 139). Another characteristic of this dialectal group is the switch in pronunciation from the Latin *cl* to *c*, such as the Latin *clamare*, which becomes *ciamar* in Veneto. In the same way, the Latin *gl* changes to *g*, as in the word *glacia*, which becomes the Venetian *giasso*. Consonants like *c* and *g*, placed before vowels such as *e* and *i*, change and become silent *z*, such as in Latin *cimice*, which becomes *zimeze* in Venetian. Vowels have a tendency to disappear if not accented, even if found in the middle of words, as well as those found at the end of words, with the exception of the letter *a* (Marcato, 1981:138).

⁴ *Cavallo* in Italian; *caballum* means horse.

⁵ *Anno* in Italian; *annum* means year.

⁶ *Zia* in Italian; *amita* means aunt.

⁷ *Dito* in Italian; *digitum* means finger.

Figure 5: Alphabet Changes from Latin to Venetian

Original consonant	Becomes	From Latin	To Venetian
<i>T</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>amita</i>	<i>Ameda, then amia</i>
		<i>digitum</i>	<i>dedo or deo</i>
<i>Cl</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>Clamare</i>	<i>Ciamar</i>
<i>Gl</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>glacia</i>	<i>Giasso</i>
<i>C</i> and <i>g</i> , placed before <i>e</i> and <i>i</i>	silent <i>z</i>	<i>cimice</i>	<i>Zimeze</i>

(Data from Marcato, 1981)

2.7 BILINGUAL OR BIDIALECTAL?

Switching without stopping from Italian to a vernacular during a conversation is common today; people switch back and forth continuously as they speak to one another (as long as the parties involved speak both idioms). Berruto argues that because of the variances between Venetian and Italian, and the past independence and spirit of the region, the linguistic circumstances in Veneto should be considered bilingual, rather than bidialectal. He goes on to specify that the switching between dialect and Italian in regular situations “represents code-switching (co-sw.) and not simply style shifting” (Berruto, 1997: 394).

This switching became common after the Second World War, when the use of Italian spread “progressively through social classes” (Berruto, 1997:394). In the past, because the majority of Italians spoke only in a vernacular, Italian was not used very often. The switching between Italian and a local language does appear in written documents—notes, letters, diaries, and literary texts. Plays, such as those written by the Venetian author Goldoni, often include code-switching in characters’ dialogues in order to render the characters more realistic and express ideas more accurately.

Code-switching is also found in written papers such as autobiographies, where the authors are attempting to write in Italian; they do not mean to write in vernacular or to switch, but do so because of their lack of mastery of Italian (Berruto, 1997). Many alternate between Italian and the local language because Italian is used as the High Language, and the local variety is the Low Language with some crossover in certain domains of use. Berruto reports that the structural differences between Italian and the majority of Italo-Romance dialects is equivalent to the variances between two Romance languages, and he estimates that approximately two thirds of Italian speakers display the same manner of speech that exists in many bilingual societies, making them “in a sense bilingual” (Berruto, 1997: 395).

2.8 ITALIAN BILINGUALISM: SURVEY DATA

Corbett (1994) found that the first official survey of Italian language use (conducted five years prior to the publication of her article in the *Atlantic Monthly*) by the national Italian statistics bureau (ISTAT) reported that the “parlance of choice” for a majority of the Italian population (62 percent) at home and/or when angry was either a vernacular or non-Italian language (Corbett, 1994: 45). In fact, vernacular usage was so common that “Respondents were often genuinely confused when asked whether they spoke Italian, a dialect or ‘other’—which some took to mean English, or Chinese” (Corbett, 1994: 45). According to DeMauro and Lodi (1979), as recently as 1951, few Italians (the percentage ranged from 10 to 18 percent) always and only spoke Italian, while many more (from 80 to 90 percent) also spoke a vernacular. “*E anzi, piu’ o meno la meta’ parlavano soltanto uno dei dialetti. I restanti usavano un po’ l’italiano e un po’ il dialetto a seconda delle circostanze...*” (And, in fact, more or less half of the respondent spoke only one of the dialects. The remaining used a bit of Italian and a bit of dialect depending on the circumstances...) (De Mauro and Lodi, 1979:11). The people labeled “the remaining” used both ways to communicate, depending on the specific situation that they were involved in, such as using a vernacular with friends and classmates for daily speech, and using Italian when speaking to strangers or supervisors and for writing.

The results indicated that the older population used a vernacular more often, and when they spoke in Italian, they tended to use many dialectal expressions and to speak with a strong regional accent (De Mauro and Lodi, 1979).

Research presented by De Mauro and Lodi (1979) indicate that the situation changed from 1951 to 1979, with usage of Italian increasing, but local languages still widely used, a "*realtà ancora ben presente*." De Mauro and Lodi say that "*Oggi*" ("today"; they fail to indicate precisely the year of the research) 25% of Italians always speak Italian in their homes, with relatives, and with close friends. De Mauro and Lodi (1979) note that because it is common for people to use vernacular at home and then to try to use Italian when out, the percentage of Italians who usually speak Italian when out and when speaking with strangers increases from 25% to 35%. Interestingly, even when looking at the increase of people who speak Italian outside their home, there is still an average of 29% who "*parlano sempre e solo uni dei dialetti*" (always speak in one of the vernaculars) even when not at home. Often, these people do not speak Italian, so they cannot switch to Italian when speaking with strangers or when not at home (De Mauro and Lodi, 1979: 12).

However, the percentages of people speaking Italian increases significantly in more urbane situations: from 25% to 41% when only taking into account urban centers of over one hundred thousand in population; from 25% to 67% when looking solely at those with a diploma or degree—8.7% of the total population: "*Ebbene, tra i piu istruiti l'italiano e usato sempre, in ogni circostanza, da 67 persone ogni cento*." (Among the most educated, Italian is always used, in all circumstances, by 67 out of one hundred people.) (De Mauro and Lodi, 1979: 11) While the 1951 survey reported that only 10-18% of the nation's population spoke Italian all the time, this number jumped to 25% in 1979, and increased to 35% when only looking at those who speak Italian outside their home, especially while speaking with strangers (De Mauro and Lodi, 1979: 11).

When I conducted my research in Veneto in 1998, I observed that it was not uncommon for those who speak a local idiom at home to try to use Italian when not at home. In a situation where people feel comfortable and are at ease (perhaps at home and among friends), they will most likely speak in their local language. However, in situations where people are not at ease, when they are out in public or are speaking with people in a

situation they are not familiar with, they probably will speak in Italian. Even those individuals who do not usually speak in Italian while out in public may chose to do so when speaking with strangers.

People who do not speak Italian—those who speak only a local language—are more numerous in particular circumstances and in specific regions of the country: 41.7 percent of those in the Veneto-Giuliana area; 45.6 percent of older people; 37 percent in small centers with populations of less than 30,000; and 52.5 percent of those with only an elementary school education, or who did not finish any formal education. Persons who only use vernacular often either do not know how to speak Italian or are not confident in their own ability to speak the language, and opt not to use it whenever possible (De Mauro and Lodi, 1979).

A more recent set of data on the use of local idioms comes from Cortellazzo and Paccagnella, who use data gathered in two studies, one in 1974 and the other, more recently, in 1982. (The data collected in 1982 were gathered on a regional basis, while the 1974 data were not collected region by region and included bilingual areas of the country, such as the northwest area and the northern provinces where German is spoken.) According to the 1974 data, 58 percent of those asked said they would consider speaking Italian (rather than a vernacular) while not at home (sometimes, often, or always); 24.2 percent would use Italian with some family members, while only 14.5 percent said they speak Italian to all relatives. In 1982, the number of individuals who might speak Italian while not at home had increased to 67 percent; however, there were still quite a few, 74.6 percent, who claimed to speak in vernacular with all family members. A sizable percentage, 41.5 percent, replied that they always speak in vernacular with their friends, indicating the strength of vernacular in familial and close-knit relationships (Cortellazzo and Paccagnella, 1992).

Cortellazzo and Paccagnella (1992) note that in Veneto the primary use of a vernacular is in familial situations:

nel Veneto molti dialettografi diversificano l'uso del codice in relazione alla situazione; in questo senso il dialetto è primariamente caratterizzato come codice degli affetti familiari, mentre perde più prestigio al di fuori della famiglia, in tutti quei terreni che erano caratteristici dell'uso del dialetto nella regione.

(In Veneto many dialect speakers diversify the use of the code [the local language] in relation to the situation; in this sense the dialect is primarily characterized as the family code, while it loses more prestige outside the family, in all those locations that were typical of dialect use in the region.) (Cortellazzo and Paccagnella, 1992:271)

2.9 POLITICS: THE *LEGHE*, SECESSION AND *PADANIA*

There is no general agreement among Venetians on the future of their language. In the early 1990s, the future of the nation as a whole became problematic as the political climate changed rapidly, and secession became a popular idea in the North with the *Lega Nord* (the Northern League) pushing for the secession of *Le nazioni del Nord*⁸ (the countries of the North), 14 regions that make up the entire northern section of Italy. While some Venetians did not think Veneto could survive economically without Italy, some hoped that with the support of the Northern League, the North would secede and be “set free” from Rome. Others hoped that *Padania* (the name given to the proposed independent North by the secessionists) would go as far as adopting Venetian as its national language. Yet another group wanted *La Serenissima* to become completely independent once again. There were even some others, more militant, who were captured and imprisoned for taking possession of the bell tower of the cathedral in piazza San Marco.

The political party called the *Lega Nord* (Northern League) advocated separation (and if possible the secession) of the North of Italy from the South (Bonsaver). In 1989 the *Lega Nord* was founded when the *Liga Veneta* (Venetian League), the “mother of all Leagues” as Torpey (1994) calls them, joined the *Lega Lombarda* (Lombard League) to become a political force in the country, pushing for change and persistently asking the central government to give the northern regions more independence. The new group, the *Lega Nord*, led by Umberto Bossi, gained 23% of the Northern votes in the national election of 1992. The new *Lega Nord* had less of the “folklorist emphases” that the *Liga Veneta* had “in favor of the diatribe against Rome that has become [their] trademark”

⁸ “*Le Nazioni del Nord*” (the countries of the North) are fourteen northern regions of Italy: *Alto Adige, Emilia, Friuli, Lombardia, Liguria, Marche, Piemonte, Romagna, Toscana, Trentino, Trieste, Umbria, Valle D’Aosta, and Veneto*. (From the web site of the *Lega Nord*, www.leganordsen.it/documenti/pagliar.html) –1996.

(Torpey, 1994: 311). Bossi “loudly insisted that that Lombards and other Northerners were being robbed by the clique at the center of power” arguing that 70% of the GNP for Italy was produced in the North by only 15% of the population (Torpey, 1994:312). Bossi proposed dividing Italy into three areas—North, Central and South—under a federalist system giving considerable independence to each area (Torpey, 1994).

The *Lega Nord* has been accused of having racist traits and *anti-meridionalismo*⁹ tendencies (Bonsaver, 1996). However, this is not surprising in light of the negative feelings held by many in the North toward the South. Some Northerners believe that there are enormous differences between northern and southern Italians, and that people in the South are lazy thieves, unwilling to work. Some Northerners think that many Southerners are not as intelligent as those in the North. Many point out all these negatives and blame much of the country’s problems on the South. If the economy is weak, it is because “all Southerners are lazy” and no one there works; furthermore, these people are all receiving money from the government (the wasted taxes coming from the North), thereby weakening the country’s economy (M. Pagliarusco, Personal Communication, September 4, 1996). These are only some of the negative perceptions; there are others, including the viewpoint that organized crime is more prevalent in the South. When Southerners migrate north to find jobs, they have a hard time escaping negative labeling, because their regional intonation gives them away when they speak.

Harry Harder states that the *Leghe* (the Leagues) are “another threat to fragmentation” (Harder, 1994: 37). Italy has the reputation of changing governments¹⁰ quite often and not being as unified as some might hope, causing some to wonder if the country is in danger of falling apart. Harder believes that the ideology of the *Leghe* is particularly attractive to northern small businessmen who feel cheated by Rome. They believe that the taxes they pay are being squandered on programs for the South where their money is most likely used to pay off dishonest politicians or ends up in the hands of organized crime. Harder also notes that some businessmen do not pay their share of the taxes, because they feel they are being taxed unfairly (Harder, 1994).

⁹ Anti-Southern sentiment.

¹⁰ Elections are often called, prime ministers resign, and there is general dissent among the many political parties.

The percentages of taxes paid to the Italian state by all of the regions were posted on the web site of the *Lega Nord*.¹¹ According to this site, the northern regions pay 55 percent of the nation's total taxes, middle Italy pays 23 percent, and the southern regions pay 22 percent. According to these figures, Veneto paid 9 percent of the total taxes collected by the Italian state in 1992 (Pagliarini, 1996). Many in the North, not only businessmen, feel the taxation is excessive. This dissatisfaction has grown to become a great source of frustration and is often focused on Rome and the Italian government as a whole. Many northern Italians believe that the central government has let them down and blame the two main parties for all the corruption.

This mistrust began with the changes in the country's economy that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s. During that period, the economic climate promoted quick economic growth as well as new circumstances that transformed the country, such as expanded education and a more secular outlook. Among these changes was the migration north of many from the South, along with the move away from agricultural areas. These developments allowed people to become much more mobile, forever changing the nature of Italian society. Prior to these events, small villages and towns had been the core of both economic and cultural activities (Woods, 1995).

The results of the election held in April 1992 were quite a shock for Italy's dominant political parties. They were especially disturbing for *La Democrazia Cristiana* (the Christian Democrats) who lost 1.6 million votes in the national election, while the *Lega Nord*¹² gained votes (Woods, 1995). According to Dwayne Woods, supporters of the *Leghe* have "an overwhelmingly positive view of European integration and an overwhelmingly negative view of Rome" (1995:188). The European Union is seen as an institutional means for weakening the Italian government's hold on the North and promoting northern autonomy.

The title of the *Lega Nord*'s web site gives us a hint of the site's creators' attitudes: "*Il Nord ha già pagato – Stop al colonialismo. La Padania indipendente vuole il federalismo per spezzare l'oppressione romana che incatena il Nord democratico che*

¹¹ www.leganordsen.it/documenti/pagliar.htm, 1996 (from a study published by the *Ragioneria Generale dello Stato*).

¹² Even though the *Liga Veneta* (Venetian League) was formed prior to the formation of the *Lega Lombarda* (the league in the neighboring region of Lombardia), the *Lega Lombarda* became more powerful and the two joined, forming the *Lega del Nord* (Harder 1994:37).

lavora e produce.” (“The North has already paid – Stop colonialism. The independent Padania wants federalism in order to break Roman oppression that chains the democratic North that works and is productive.”) The national capital, Rome, has become synonymous with government, corruption, and the unfair distribution of taxes.

The *Liga Veneta* claims that even the regional government has failed to enact what it has promised the Venetian people. Article 2 of the *Statuto Regionale del Veneto* (the regional constitution) states “*La regione concorre alla valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale e linguistico del Popolo Veneto*” (“The region agrees on the value of the cultural and linguistic legacy of the Venetian People”). Veneto is the only region in Italy whose constitution defines its populace as a *popolo*, a people, more specifically as *il Popolo Veneto*, the Venetian people (Bonsaver, 1996). This wording, the use of the specific word *people*, strengthens the Venetian claim of being an ethnic group. However, the fact that the Venetians are defined as a *popolo* in the constitution did not lead the regional government to accept the regional vernacular as appropriate for official situations.

Franco Rocchetta’s founded the *Liga Veneta* and was its leader until it merged with the *Lega Nord*. When Rochetta was elected to the *Consiglio Regionale del Veneto* (Regional Council of Veneto) in 1985, his first speech in the regional chamber was an eye opener for the other members. Rochetta began with a short introduction in Italian and then surprised everyone by switching to Venetian for the remainder of the speech. The inability of the president of the council to find a legal reason to prohibit Rochetta from using Venetian allowed Rochetta to continue speaking in Venetian for several months. He was eventually stopped by the *Avvocatura di Stato* (Attorney of the State) who declared that the use of a language, other than Italian, was unsuitable during official meetings. Following Rochetta’s election, several bills¹³ concerned with the improvement and preservation of Venetian were submitted to the regional legislature, but not one became law (Bonsaver, 1996).

The *Liga Veneta* has been accused of exaggerating the historical importance of Veneto and the Venetian people by academics including Manlio Cortelazzo, the author of *Il veneziano, lingua ufficiale della Repubblica? Guida ai dialetti veneti*. These scholars argue that the Venetian language was misleadingly associated with the greatness of the

¹³ Among the 174 members of the Northern league, during the tenure of the XII Legislatura, (the XII legislature) only the Venetians showed interest in issues dealing with language.

Serenissima Repubblica, because it was not used as the Republic's written language (Bonsaver, 1996: 101). Rochetta disputed these findings and also suggested that Venetian has different roots and is not a part of the Western Neolatin group of languages like Tuscan (and therefore Italian), but is part of the Eastern Neolatin group. "The use of the term 'language' in place of 'dialect' is therefore justified since Veneto satisfies whichever definition one can find for the expression 'language' " (Bonsaver, 1996: 97).

3. THEORETICAL ISSUES

This chapter examines the theoretical issues that are relevant to understanding the current situation in Veneto in respect to language use. Because Venetian is commonly regarded as a “dialect” of the Italian “language,” we begin by examining the meanings of these words from linguistic, political, and sociolinguistic perspectives. This discussion leads to the conclusion that traditional linguistic analysis, as well as the terms “dialect” and “language,” have little analytical value in understanding the current usage of, and the interactions between, the Italian and Venetian vernaculars among the Venetian people. Instead, these patterns of language use are better understood from a sociolinguistic perspective.

A sociolinguistic approach to the analysis of Venetian language use leads to an examination of ethnicity and ethnic group strategies, factors that explain the strong attachment that members of an ethnic group may have for their traditional vernacular. However, strong counter pressures also exist that can weaken, or even destroy, a group’s usage of its mother tongue; these factors are explained by accommodation theory and anthropological theories of language choice and shift.

3.1 VENETIAN: LANGUAGE OR DIALECT?

Is Venetian a language or a dialect? At first glance, this would seem to be a very straightforward question that could be easily resolved through linguistic analysis. However, in fact, this question is a complex one, and its answer depends on the theoretical perspective that one brings to an understanding of the terms “language” and “dialect.” This chapter begins with a discussion of this theoretical controversy, because the language-dialect issue has a direct bearing on not only the linguistic understandings, but also the political and psychological attachments and connotations that Venetians bring to the usage of their vernacular. An examination of this definitional dispute is the logical starting point for gaining a theoretical understanding of how Venetians are cross-pressured in respect to preserving or discarding their traditional language patterns.

3.1.1 The linguistic definition: dialect as a subset of language

Why and how are languages and dialects different, and what are the linguistic criteria necessary to make a language a language and a dialect a dialect? Zdenek Salzmänn defines language as “the complex of potentialities for vocal communication with which all humans are genetically endowed. A language is any one of the several thousand systems of vocal communication used by members of different human societies” (Salzmänn, 1993: 272). This definition is quite inclusive, and does not tell us what makes a dialect.

What is a dialect? The Greek prefix “dia” meaning through or apart, and the verb “legein,” to speak, combined together, form the term dialect (Swadesh, 1971: 10). The definition Swadesh gives for dialect is the term used by linguists to group “language variants corresponding to the usage of various subgroupings in a community, based on class, profession, age, sect, ideological group, or whatever” (Swadesh, 1971: 10). Salzmänn defines a dialect as “a regional or social variety of language (for example, one of the several varieties of Southern American English or of the socially differentiated varieties of English spoken in New York City)” (Salzmänn, 1993: 271). He believes that the term “dialect, then, is an abstraction: It refers to a form of language or speech used by members of a regional, ethnic or social group” (Salzmänn, 1993: 126). In Salzman’s view, “dialects that are mutually intelligible belong to the same language. All languages spoken by more than one small homogeneous community are found to consist of two or more dialects. Mutually intelligibility can vary as to degree” (Salzmänn, 1993: 126).

The linguistic view is that a dialect is a subset of a language, a variant used by subgroupings in a community, and/or a social variety of a language. Since Venetian did not evolve from Florentine, as Italian did, but has existed independently for centuries, it would clearly seem to be a language, not a dialect. There is no possibility of Venetian being a subset of or a dialect of Italian, because Venetian is not derived from Italian. Italian comes from one of the *volgari d’italia* (common languages of Italy), a language spoken in Tuscany, called *dialeto Fiorentino* (the Florentine dialect). Evidence shows Venetian was used at the same time as Latin, and Florentine. Nevertheless, Venetian is commonly labeled a dialect of Italian.

3.1.2 Language or dialect: a meaningless distinction

Francesco Sabatini notes that it is important to recognize that all those speech forms labeled “dialects of Italy” (*dialetti d’Italia*) are derived from Latin, and “none of these languages are a distorted or corrupted form of another or of the Italian language” (*nessuno di essi e una ‘deformazione’ o una ‘corruzione’ degli altri o della lingua italiana.*) (Sabatini, 1978: 152). In light of this fact, the commonplace cultural assumption that Venetian is an Italian dialect illustrates two important realities of direct relevance to this study: (1) In practice, it is often impossible to determine whether a vernacular is a “language” or a “dialect,” and thus (2) usage of the term “dialect” to describe a mode of speech is far more indicative of a vernacular’s political and social standing than it is of its linguistic structure and history.

In linguistic theory, the two main parameters used to discern whether a mode of speech is a dialect or a language are structural similarity and mutual intelligibility. However, as Skutnabb-Kangas argues, neither of these guidelines are exact, and using them can be troublesome and, in many cases, useless in determining how to categorize a mode of speech. In determining the relationship between Italian and Venetian, structural similarity is not of much help, because “structural similarity or dissimilarity can only tell apart very dissimilar languages” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002: 1). Venetian and Italian are structurally similar since both are derived from Latin. It is commonly assumed that this similarity exists because Venetian is a dialect of Italian. However, as Skutnabb-Kangas observes in reference to the Scandinavian languages, “despite being structurally very close to each other, Swedish, Danish and Norwegian are called different languages” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002: 1). Skutnabb-Kangas has concluded that the structural similarity criterion is mostly utilized in situations where the answer is obvious: “In other cases, linguistic criteria are not of much help” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002: 1).

The second linguistic parameter, mutual intelligibility, is a similar source of confusion. What degree of mutually intelligibility dictates whether a mode of speech is a language or a variety of another language? For instance, as Swadesh points out, “speakers of different Romance languages can understand each another to a fair degree without special training” (Swadesh, 1971: 57), but this understanding and ability to communicate does not make one mode of speech a variant of another. The concept of mutual

intelligibility is “far from unambiguous,” according to Skutnabb-Kangas, who argues that it is difficult to determine which type of understanding is more important, written or oral, and with whom the criteria of mutual intelligibility should be utilized. Variables such as “age, amount of formal schooling, degree of metalinguistic awareness, amount of exposure to the language or to other languages in general, learning styles, courage, motivation, fatigue” also complicate the situation and affect understandability (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002: 3).

The rate of understanding increases if the person who tests the criteria is multilingual, especially if the languages spoken by the individual are similar in any way, such as the Romance languages. A native Italian speaker can understand some Spanish, most likely both oral and written, but this would not mean that one is a dialect of the other. Mutual intelligibility as a parameter works when looking at languages that are not related structurally. It is not a helpful criterion when trying to distinguish between two modes that are structurally similar, like Venetian and Italian. From a linguistic standpoint, the term “dialect” is so confusing that there is no point in continuing its use. The terms “language” and “dialect” are used interchangeably and do not provide useful distinctions.

In order to be clear and avoid the negative connotations often associated with the term, I have chosen to avoid using the word “dialect” for purposes of linguistic analysis. To debate whether Venetian is a dialect or a language is not useful; but the fact that Venetian is usually considered an Italian dialect does provide insights into the political, social, and psychological implications of this label. The dictionary defines dialect as “a variety of a language that is distinguished from other varieties of the same language by features of phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, and by its use by a group of speakers who are set off from others geographically or socially,” or, more tellingly, as “a provincial, rural, or socially distinct variety of a language that differs from the standard language, especially when considered substandard” (Flexner and Hauck, 1987: 546). The words “language” and “dialect” indicate order; they are methods of placing vernaculars in a hierarchy of power and status. A form of speech labeled “language” is placed on a higher level than one labeled “dialect,” and quite often those labeled languages are national languages, and are used by those who have far more political power than those who speak minority languages labeled “dialects.”

3.1.3 The political definition: dialect as the product of political subordination

To John Trumper, the difference between a language and a dialect is entirely a question of the power relationship between the speakers of the dominant language and those who speak the subordinate “dialect”: “There is absolutely no difference between a language and a dialect, because either can become the other.” Trumper believes that Venetian became a non-language “when Napoleon took Venice and gave it to Austria. “At that point the Venet tongue was not a language anymore, but it had become a dialect...of the German-Austrian language spoken in the southern region of the empire” (Trumper quoted in Pizzati, retrieved 8/27/99; see Appendix I of this thesis). In similar fashion, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas states that “a language is a dialect promoted by elites,” because “there are no linguistic criteria for differentiating between a language and a dialect (or vernacular or patois)” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002: 1).

According to Skutnabb-Kangas, it is the political power of a group that determines “whether something is a dialect of another language or a separate language (and what is being standardized, what not)” (2002: 3). She describes a language as “a dialect with an army (and a navy)” and “a dialect with state borders” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002: 4). A language is something spoken by society’s elites—a way of communicating that reflects the power of those who speak it. A minority group with little power will often speak a “dialect” rather than a “language.” This vernacular, or regional variant, spoken by the subordinate group is labeled a dialect to emphasize the fact that it is not the official, national language, but an “other” form of speech. The label emphasizes the difference between the dominant and subordinate groups who live together and share resources. Oddly enough, a dialect does not always come from the language that it is presently grouped with, but only indicates its subordination in the current power structure. A nation may contain many linguistic minorities whose speech varieties are not directly related to the national language.

3.1.4 The sociolinguistic approach: dialect implies social inferiority

According to Bertrand Menciassi (from the web site of European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages), the idea of grouping languages together in a specific order came from linguists in the nineteenth century. At that time, linguists studied language in the same way scientists studied animals and plants by arranging the languages in groups, or families, and subdividing them into sub-families and branches, based on how they looked and worked and their supposed derivation. Menciassi (2002) believes that the “notions of language and dialect emerged from that out-of-date conception.” By these definitions, a “dialect” is a sub-division in a given linguistic group, i.e., it is characterized by linguistic uses that can be attached to a wider linguistic ensemble for which there usually exists a so-called standard code that regulates written uses.

According to such an approach, Bavarian is a dialect of German spoken in Bavaria, just like Alsatian in Alsace; likewise, Walloon and Picard are dialects of French (Menciassi, 2002). (Following this logic, one could falsely surmise that Venetian is a dialect of Italian.)

To escape this analytical dead end, Menciassi calls for a shift from linguistic analysis to a sociolinguistic approach to language. According to Menciassi, linguists study “the way phonemes and words function, the system they constitute, and the way they are ordered together,” while sociolinguists study “the perception, or rather the identification of this system as being a colloquial or foreign system, a contemporary or ancient system, a slang or prestigious variety” and how this is connected with issues “of belonging, of identity, of processes of unification or separation.” Sociolinguists see “language acts as resulting from social phenomena of exchange and interaction in time, space and specific contexts” (Menciassi, 2002):

In such approaches, the words ‘language’ and ‘dialect’ become irrelevant. The issue is no longer to classify fossil species and to study their mutual relationships, but rather to understand and report on those never-ended and always re-negotiated processes whereby one marks different practices as other....[H]istorical, geographical or social mechanisms of labelling of linguistic practice have nothing to do with linguistics itself, and actually rather result from politics in its broadest sense, i.e. the whole set of relationships established between different groups (Menciassi, 2002).

The sociolinguistic approach to language use captures the reality that issues of self-esteem, ethnic pride, and community solidarity are closely related to the usage of a vernacular labeled a “dialect.” In addition to an ethnic group’s shared history, culture, and ancestry, the language spoken by its members is an important part of the cohesive fabric that ties the group together. Our perception of an ethnic group is affected by how we understand the terms “language” and “dialect” and which term we apply to its vernacular. A snobbish connotation is often associated with the word “dialect”; people frequently look down on those who speak one. As Menciassi has made clear, sociolinguistic analysis directly challenges the hierarchical ranking of language forms, which views dialects as subsets of languages.

This dichotomy between the colloquial and linguistic understanding of what a dialect is, is important in many situations involving minority languages. From a linguistic perspective the various dialects of Italian are not worth less because of their classification as dialects, whereas the colloquial perspective of people such as the Venetians may understand dialect to mean a spoken form that lacks, is deficient and not as complete as a language.

3.2 ETHNICITY

A logical first step in applying sociolinguistic insights to the study of Venetian language use is to examine ethnicity, as our identity is often connected to a language and affects our use of language. As the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences defines it, “an ethnic group is a distinct category of the population in a larger society whose culture is usually different from its own. The members of such a group are, or feel themselves, or are thought to be, bound together by common ties of race or nationality or culture” (IESS, Vol. 5, p.167 in Isajiw, 1974: 116)

Venetian history and a joint cultural heritage bind the Venetian people together today as an ethnic group possessing an “ethnicity.” What is ethnicity? According to Howard, ethnicity is a “creative process” that happens when separate peoples join to form one group. The individual peoples are likely to be culturally separate, but this uniqueness may be more “perception than ‘fact’” (Howard, 1980: 120). This seems to be the situation

in contemporary Veneto: As Veneto becomes more modern and urban, what may at one time have been very distinct cultural features now have become more similar to Italian culture. "As Barth (1969), Bennett (1975), Cohen (1969), Merci (1965), and others have noted, ethnicity involves the strategic selection of symbols for purposes of self-identification and for the identification of others from a range of available symbols. These are often drawn from "traditional" sources, but they do not simply reflect cultural conservatism. Rather, ethnicity is a response to current situations" (Howard, 1980: 120).

While ethnicity and culture are similar in some ways, it is important not to confuse them. "Ethnicity is concerned specifically with the sociopolitical use of symbols perceived to be associated with cultural distinctiveness" (Howard, 1980: 119). Ethnicity does not necessarily stop being important as cultural distinctions between groups decrease. Consequently, processes such as acculturation do not always foreshadow the end of ethnic awareness or create better relations between groups. In reality, activities designed to encourage national integration could unintentionally add to ethnic awareness, because of the increased competition between groups for limited resources (Howard, 1980).

As Barth denoted, members of an ethnic group will be identified as such as long as a connection to their lineage can be found, even if they no longer have any "cultural patterns" in common with their original ethnic group (Isajiw, 1974: 122). Members can lose their ancestral language, religion and many other traditions and still be members of their ethnic group. As integration and acculturation processes advance, inequalities between groups change and become more apparent, and this "strategic maneuvering in relation to perceived inequality provides much of the dynamism of ethnicity." (Howard, 1980: 120) Howard points out that "the political and economic statuses of ethnic groups in collectives (i.e., states) are always different and usually unequal" (Howard, 1980: 120). This reality can keep the subordinate groups in less powerful positions and allow majority control to continue, but it can also become a catalyst for change, as subordinate groups realize their unequal status and regroup in order to fight for a more equal position in society.

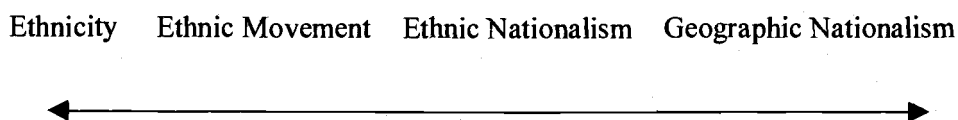
For Venetians, accent alone is a strong identifier of ethnicity, as specific Venetian intonations are usually present while speaking in Italian, which allows their ethnicity to be easily recognized. Being categorized by other people as Venetian often reinforces "self identification" allowing for "new forms of social organization" (Isajiw, 1974: 122). Thus,

language reinforces ethnic identification both through external pressures resulting from others' perceptions of an accent and internal group pressures stemming from a shared sense of language use. As the group continues to change, language may enter the equation as a variable that is sometimes used to better define the ethnic group as one more unique cultural identifier.

3.3 ETHNIC GROUP STRATEGIES

Through the comparative analysis of many linguistic situations—including Irish, Peruvian, Catalan, Occitan, Finnish, Tanzanian and Hebrew—Christina Paulston developed a theoretical framework, which allows us to explain and predict the behavior of various linguistic groups who have access to, or are exposed to, more than one language. She identifies “the independent social determinants, the independent variables, the causal factors of language and shift” (Paulston, 1994: 108) and defines and labels four possible types of “social mobilization”: ethnicity, ethnic movements, ethnic nationalism and geographic nationalism. (See Figure 7.) Each type of mobilization is linked to the others, and each group is affected by the factors, which, in turn, determine the group's possible linguistic outcome and categorization.

Figure 6: Social Movement Continuum



Each movement's unique characteristics, as outlined by Paulston, can be used to predict linguistic outcome of either maintenance or shift, determined by the existing social circumstances, with the two nationalistic movements having the best chances of maintenance (Paulston, 1994). All types of mobilization are either hindered or helped by

multiple factors that differ depending on the specific situation, such as “participation in social institutions, schooling, exogamy, military service, religious institutions; mass-media; roads and transportation; travel, trade, commerce, war, evangelism; occupations; in-migration, back-migration, urbanization, etc.” (Paulston, 1994: 110 – Table 1). We can add others while looking more closely at which factors are at work in each case.

Figure 7: Categories of Social Mobilization

Four Categories of Social Mobilization	Paulston’s Prediction of Linguistic Consequence
Ethnicity	The group will experience language shift.
Ethnic Movement	The group will experience language shift, but much more slowly.
Ethnic Nationalism	The group will maintain the national language as a powerful symbol.
Geographic Nationalism	The group will maintain the national language.
From Table 1 (Paulston, 1994:1b)	

The first category is ethnicity, which emphasizes the shared history of the group, whether based in myth or reality. Personal identity is built on a common religion and culture, and “is a matter of self-ascription” (Paulston, 1994: 31). Many of the commonly held ideals are learned, often accepted without question or commotion, with the people feeling at ease with the situation, past, present and future (Paulston, 1994). Because strife among members of the group is rare and there is no clear goal, ethnic groups are often fully absorbed into larger groups. In situations where many languages are spoken, the ethnic group often will switch language and be completely absorbed into the larger group, as long as the larger group permits the ethnic group to join, and there are incentives to use, as well as access to, the dominant second language (Paulston, 1994).

The second category is ethnic movement. It differs mainly from ethnicity in that it is no longer the pacific, automatic root of members’ identity but a cognizant approach to a

goal, which frequently is created and used in order to gain power over the majority group in the nation or to take control of the national economy and social power. Ethnic movements are focused on keeping the division between the groups strong and separate, unlike ethnicity, which focuses on the essence of the culture. An ethnic movement does not necessarily have a large middle class or an "intellectual elite" (Paulston, 1994: 32), but it is common for groups such as these to have a dynamic leader, who, in most cases, has been a member of the group since birth (Paulston, 1994). When members of an ethnic group become belligerent, or disgruntled with what they see as their place in society, and when they reach the point of believing that everyone opposes them, then what once was an ethnic group has moved to a different level. They have become an ethnic movement, and the group changes focus. The situation worsens into a conflict (which can become violent) between the ethnic movement and the majority group (Paulston, 1994).

Both language and religion are strong emblems that, when available, have helped sustain men during the battles they have fought for what they believed would result in a better life (or, in some cases, life after death). Languages used in this way are often mother tongues, although not necessarily the first mother tongue of the ethnic group (Paulston, 1994). Interestingly, when religion is used as a source of identity, as part of an approach in the contest between the two groups and is added to "cognitive ethnicity" or an ethnic movement, the end result is often that only the religious language is maintained.

The third category, ethnic nationalism, begins when disgruntled members of the ethnic movement want to become independent of the state. There are many differing definitions of nationalism, and as Shafer¹⁴ has determined, there are many versions of nationalists (Paulston, 1994). Paulston credits Kohn for noting that each case of nationalism is different, because the people in each instance of this type of movement have experienced a specific past, yet they all "share certain traits" (Kohn, 1968: 64 in Paulston, 1994). Cottam has helped to identify a few of the commonalities in the way nationalists are defined. He defines a nationalist "as an individual who sees himself as a member of a political community, a nation, that is entitled to independent statehood, and is

¹⁴ Shafer combined several definitions of nationalism and determined that it is not feasible to shrink this phenomenon into one brief definition because of the variety of situations possible (1972:5 in Paulston 34).

willing to grant that community a primary and terminal loyalty” (Cottam, 1964: 3 in Paulston, 1994); this person is willing to go to great lengths in order to achieve the goals set out by the group.

In a situation of ethnic nationalism, language often becomes much more than a way of communicating; ethnic nationalists assert that “the deep thoughts and soul of the nation can only be adequately expressed in the common mother tongue” (Paulston, 1994: 37). Typical nationalistic traits include the ultimate goal of group unity and independence, the view that the other in the situation poses a danger to both the group and its goals, and, most importantly, a strong belief in the ability to gain land. Ethnic and geographic nationalism have similar characteristics with the establishment of an independent country as one of the standard goals along with improving the lives of the members’ families. In a manner similar to ethnic movements, nationalists are often encouraged by their ideals (Paulston, 1994).

Royce and Cottam both emphasize that ethnicity and nationalism are displays of the feelings, conduct, and understanding of the members of the group, and that in specific situations these people will act in ways that can be predicted, including their use of language (Paulston, 1994). Frequently, nationalism occurs as a “protest against oppression, against a common enemy, whether it be against a (dominant) group within the same state or against another state” (Paulston, 1994: 35). While national movements’ goals are often defined and precise and typically validated by past situations, nationalistic groups are inclined “to base their claims on a rationale of equity with others within the nation state” (Paulston, 1994: 36). Some groups, such as the Catalans, the Quebecois and the Flemish Belgians, agree to stay in the situations they are in “as long as they can safeguard their own social and cultural institutions of which language (and language maintenance) becomes a very prominent symbol. When use of their own language is denied, other cultural acts acquire a national symbolism way beyond their actual significance” (Paulston, 1994: 35).

The belief in the right to a national territory is the main dissimilarity between an ethnic movement and ethnic nationalism, and it is also what makes the idea of secession feasible (Paulston, 1994: 37). Also unlike an ethnic movement, a national movement needs a full-fledged bourgeoisie to be able to reach its goals. Without land ownership, one of the main goals of ethnic nationalism, a nationalist group is not seen as advancing its group members’ welfare. The Basques are a good example of this phenomenon; the middle class

is in control of regional economics, but at the same time, middle-class Basques often believe that they “carry an unfair share of Spain’s economic burden with no adequate compensation” (Paulston, 1994: 36). This perception is very similar to that of the northern Italians, who often feel this way.

The fourth and final category, geographic nationalism (labeled by Kohn as more recent) is equivalent to his “open” nationalism, and is “a political society”—a country where the citizenship requirement is not based on the people’s ancestry (Paulston, 1994). Unlike ethnic nationalism, language is not always a “prime symbol of the nation” in the case of geographic nationalism. In addition, as Kohn notes, countries of this type do not grant citizenship based on the idea of a mutual past civilization and shared spiritual beliefs. Rather, the members of these societies “owe their nationhood to the affirmation of the modern trends of emancipation, assimilation, mobility and individualism” (Kohn, 1968: 66 in Paulston, 1994: 37).

3.4 ETHNICITY, LANGUAGE SHIFT AND CHANGES IN IDENTITY

According to Hardin and Banaji, “Language has been identified as a causal influence of the perception of color and sound, consistent with the hypothesis that the language one speaks can organize incoming experience. In addition, experiments demonstrate that not only is perception influenced by temporary manipulations of label or language use, but that perceptual differences are also associated with chronic distinctions imposed by native language” (Hardin and Banaji, 1993:288). We learn to think in our language, and the language learned affects the way we see the world, even in the way our brain organizes the information that we receive through experience. Thus, even as Venetian becomes more similar to Italian, the world view tied to it still differs from the Italian world view. Because language is a way through which we communicate, a symbolic way for us to express our identity, and a way through which we establish our world view, negative stereotyping and beliefs about our language have negative results, which we take personally. For many *Veneti*, Venetian is the only language for which they feel ownership, and losing that language would certainly affect them.

Koenig discusses a situation in which villages were transitioning between Maya and Spanish. She notes that the villagers were reluctant to state their feelings about Maya (their mother tongue), but one comment said it all, "Maya should not exist as a language" (Koenig, 1980: 8). The villagers did not articulate the specific reasons why they felt this way, but it is apparent to Koenig that they connected Spanish with modernity and "progress" and associated Maya with "backwardness and the negative attitude of the townspeople toward them" (Koenig, 1980: 8). While the changes in Veneto have not been as drastic as those in the Mayan villages, Veneto has changed fairly rapidly in the last twenty years, becoming more wealthy and modern. The general perception is that the economy has improved, and the region has become more urban and one of the more productive regions in Italy. Children in rural areas want to be associated with the new positive standing that the region is acquiring, and, like the Mayan townspeople, they want to be associated with progress, not backwardness and negative stereotypes. Some are willing to change their associations and language use in order to avoid the negative and be a part of what they consider to be positive: "the most symbolic step taken to affirm new ethnic membership is the change in the first language" (Koenig, 1980: 8).

Physical distinctiveness between Italians and Venetians is not an issue; the key issues are linguistic. There are Venetians who are no longer teaching their children Venetian, their mother tongue, because they prefer that their children learn Italian. However, there are also those who are quite happy speaking the vernacular, as well as those who are at ease with both Italian and Venetian. "The emphasis on first-language usage serves as a subtle means of maintaining ethnic separateness" (Koenig, 1980: 12).

Many shifts in first language are connected with immigration. In situations where bilingualism is common, a shift happens when the mother tongue of the children is different from that of their parents: "Implicit in such shifts is a change of self-identity and/or group membership" (Koenig, 1980: 2). For example, Venetian children who do not speak Venetian will differ from their Venetian-speaking parents about who they are in relation to their community. The fact that these children feel more at home while speaking in Italian changes their identity as Venetians. Also changed is the way that they perceive the world around them.

3.5 ACCOMMODATION THEORY

Unlike monolinguals, bilingual or multilingual individuals must decide which language to use every time they wish to communicate. Each situation requires the use of the appropriate language, and individuals use varying methods to choose what to use and when. Simon Herman identified three factors that influence the language choices that a bilingual speaker makes: personal needs, background group, and immediate situation. These factors can lead to inner conflict: "In a given situation, then, a speaker may feel herself pulled in different directions by her personal desire to speak the language she knows best and the language expected of her by the social group" (Fasold, 1984: 187).

Howard Giles built on Herman's idea of the bilingual speaker's internal conflict in trying to choose the appropriate language, and has concluded that there is a range of possibilities from which the bilingual speaker can choose. Working from a socio-psychological framework, one of Giles' main goals was to explore how the use of language between groups reflects "basic social and psychological attitudes" (Ellis, 1985: 255). Giles, Bourhis and Taylor have tried to explain when speakers might choose to use the same language as those with whom they are speaking, conforming to their speech, or when they might choose instead to diverge. Giles and his associates believe that individuals' perceptions of possible social change—the likelihood of the social status/position of the speaker's group changing for better or worse, or remaining the same—determine the choices that they make (Fasold, 1984). Unlike other researchers, like Schumann, who believed "social and psychological distances are static" (Ellis, 1985: 256), Giles saw the relationships between groups as fluid and believed that they conformed to "the shifting views of identity held by each group vis-à-vis the other" (Ellis, 1985: 256). The relationship changed as the perception of identity shifted.

The choice to use one language over another will be greatly influenced by the perception of each person making this decision. Would people ashamed of their background choose to emphasize it? Or would they choose the other language? Many Venetians learned Italian in elementary school, and this educational experience made them aware of the difference in status between the two languages.

Ellis quotes Giles, Bourhis and Taylor that "people are continually modifying their speech with others so as to reduce or accentuate the linguistic (and hence) social

differences between them depending on their perceptions of the interactive situation” (1977: 257). Emphasizing accent or intonation can allow one to be more or less accepted in any social situation, and bring to the front the relationship between the individual and that individual’s social and ethnic group.

Possible perceptions of social change are separated into three categories, which predict the choices members of both dominant and minority groups might make. In the first case, the speaker perceives no possibility of social change. In this instance, the member of the dominant linguistic group does not converge (chooses a language or language variety that seems to suit the needs of the person being spoken to), while the member of the minority linguistic group does. Applying this theory to this study, the expectation would be that the Italian speaker does not converge, while the Venetian speaker does. In the second case, when the speaker perceives the possibility of favorable change, there can be a “downward convergence”: the member of the dominant linguistic group might try to talk down to the member of the minority language group, while the member of the minority linguistic group diverges. In the Italian case, this would mean that the Italian speaker might try to mimic the Venetian vernacular, but the Venetian speaker will not switch from the vernacular into another mode of speech that is understood by the Italian speaker.

In the third case, the speaker perceives the possibility of unfavorable change. In this instance, the speaker from the dominant linguistic group diverges, while the speaker from the minority linguistic group neither diverges nor converges: The Italian speaker diverges, while the Venetian speaker neither converges nor diverges.

In a case where the minority language is considered an inferior form of the majority language, downward convergence is not likely to be accepted and might be interpreted as ridicule by members of the subordinate group (Fasold, 1984). Venetian is considered by some to be a substandard variety of Italian. Although it would be unlikely for an Italian from another region to try to imitate Venetian, it is possible for a Venetian—who does not speak Venetian—to try to mimic it when speaking to another Venetian in order to ridicule their joint provenance and the stereotypical Venetian, the uneducated, unsophisticated country bumpkin.

The most likely case in which there would be intentional divergence would be one where the people speaking are not from the same place, and, in addition, there is animosity between the two areas (Fasold, 1984). I did not observe this kind of hostility in Veneto.

However, I saw a news segment where some “deliberate and self-conscious divergence” occurred in Torino. A man from the South entered a coffee shop and tried to interact with those present. He was repeatedly addressed in a local dialect, even though it was clear he did not understand, which resulted in his leaving the premises. In this case, the people purposefully refused to speak in Italian to this man; this situation could have just as easily occurred in Veneto.

3.6 ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES OF LANGUAGE CHOICE

While Giles and his colleagues focus on individual perceptions of social change, anthropologists focus on social arrangement, specifically, on the structure of communities in a multi-ethnic society. The first type of social arrangement fits the definition Fishman gave of diglossia without bilingualism (Fasold, 1984). This type of diglossia exists in a society where the two groups are almost entirely distinct from one another. One group rules the other, and each uses its own language. Excluding a few situations where the groups use a pidgin to communicate, the groups are separate. Most often, the group being ruled does not consider itself to be a part of the other group (Fasold, 1984).

The second type of social arrangement differs from the first group because people in the second group, the Low Language group, consider themselves a part of the more prestigious group. Both Gal and Blom and Gumperz looked at what Gal calls “parallel and coordinate social groups” (Gal, 1979: 161 in Fasold, 1984), two groups within one society, one group more dominant. “But in this case, members of the lower status group see the more prestigious group as a wider category that includes them” (Fasold, 1984: 193). Members of the group that use the Low Language have a dual membership. They belong to two groups at the same time. First, they learn the Low Language in their family and home domain; then, as they get older, they learn the High Language, “which is somewhat foreign, but which, in a sense, includes [their] own” (Fasold, 1984: 193). This obligation to two groups can be a source of confusion for people as they try to choose which language to use. For example, the people in Austria studied by Gal have changed the way they speak. A hundred years ago, they had no need to be fluent in German; they just learned a few words, enough to be able “to get by at markets” (Gal, 1979: 155 in Fasold, 1984) in the

neighboring towns. Now these people, whom Fasold calls peasants, are fluent and have no accent; they are “able to pass as a monolingual” (Gal, 1979: 107 in Fasold, 1984) German.

Anthropologists Blom and Gumperz focused on social arrangement in a situation where “broad diglossia” had developed amid two variants of the same language (Fasold, 1979). Blom and Gumperz found two different types of language switching: “situational switching” and “metaphorical switching.” The first, situational switching, occurs in a situation that is perceived as rather formal and relatively remote from local and personal concerns, or in a case considered more relaxed and personal. In the formal situation, the language used is the standard variety, while in the informal interaction, the local variety is used. For instance, in Veneto, in most official situations, Italian is used (the standard variety), rather than the local language, because official business is considered formal.

With “metaphorical switching” the situation is irrelevant, as the linguistic choice becomes a device through which one can show what type of relationship exists in a specific situation. The language becomes a metaphor for the relationship, not the situation. While Blom and Gumperz were looking at a community in Norway, the same situation can occur in many Venetian villages and towns, where people show their allegiance to both their community and their country or choose to speak in whichever language seems to best represent the relationship.

3.7 LINGUISTIC MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT

Christina Paulston outlines the three likely outcomes of prolonged linguistic contact: language shift, language maintenance, and bilingualism. In addition, a *lingua franca* or LWC (Language of Wider Communication) may also begin to be used as a mode of communication. She cautions that “no language policy will be successful which goes counter to existing sociocultural forces” (Paulston, 1994: 4). Laws dictating the use of one language over another do not guarantee that change will indeed occur, especially in the direction hoped for (Paulston, 1994). There is no way to know whether the laws enacted will encourage or reverse existing language trends, or inadvertently encourage linguistic change that is neither planned nor wanted.

Paulston credits Heath (and her study of language policy in Mexico, 1972) for the finding that decisions on how languages are managed are not made because of linguistic issues. Instead, they are a reflection of the views of those in power, and these decisions are made mainly because of political and economic situations, and the issues involving language are often of secondary importance (Paulston, 1994). Howard agrees, stating that "[e]thnicity as a dependent variable is influenced primarily by political and economic factors" (Howard, 1980: 120). A group that is powerful economically and politically has a strong voice in government, and its linguistic interests are likely to be taken into account, while groups with no power may find themselves without a voice. The more powerful the linguistic group, the more attention it can demand and receive. If a group no longer uses a language, however, legislation alone will not reverse the situation. When the general perception is held that one language is more beneficial than others in terms of jobs and economic opportunities, people may place their economic future over their ethnicity because of their concern with economic advancement.

A necessary stage in the eventual shift of language is bilingualism, along with changes in domains of use, as one language moves into the domains formerly designated for the other. Often, bilingual parents speak to their children in one language and to their own parents in another, passing on only one of their two languages to their children (Fasold 1984, and Paulston 1994). Fasold notes that once a pattern is established, it must be carefully examined in order to assume that this pattern really is an indication of linguistic transition and not a natural change occurring in people's lives (Fasold, 1984). In order to determine whether a group has indeed advanced into the later stages of shift, one must look for several signs:

First, there is usually a sense that the languages are not considered equal one to the other; the language being shifted from is viewed as inferior to the incoming language, and it may also be perceived as inferior to other languages of the same origins, such as the written form and other neighboring variants (Fasold, 1984). Second, there is an uneven shifting of vocabulary from one to the other; usually, the language being shifted from, the "old" language, disproportionately borrows and integrates words from the language being shifted to, the "new" language, while the reverse situation is not nearly as frequent. Finally, often the end of a vernacular is signaled by a switch in the language used within the subordinate group's religious ceremonies; a change in the language used in the religion

signifies the end of the transition, especially if the ethnic group practices a different religion from the majority group, in which case the shift will be almost completed (Fasold, 1984).

Some of these signs of shift can be found in Veneto: (1) Venetian is considered inferior to Italian by some Venetians; many people are bilingual, and some bilingual parents are opting not to teach their children Venetian. (2) The vocabulary is being shared and borrowed, much more from Italian to Venetian than the other way. (3) There has been a switch in languages in religious practices; however, for the most part, the Venetian people share the same religion as the majority of Italians, Roman Catholicism.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 MY STRATEGY

The Venetian region seemed to be a logical choice for this project because of my interest in different languages, my familial ties to the region, as well as my understanding of the situation. My main focus was to investigate and determine whether or not Venetian is, in fact, a language. If it is, is it on the verge of disappearing, or is there a chance (however remote) that it might be maintained? My attachment and interest in Venetian, led me to Veneto in the spring of 1998, with the hope of leaving with a better understanding of the current situation. Prior to my trip, I planned the research methods I would use while in Italy, which included participant observation, interviews with consultants, and internet and archival research.

I wanted to keep the Iterative Process in mind while collecting data on this topic and use it to refine my research process. The Iterative Process, in Beebe's words, is "the use of information collected to change the research process" (Beebe 1995:44). I planned to adapt my research process with daily reviews of the responses I received through interviews with consultants and with the information I collected through other methods (thus changing my strategy if and when needed). I chose to use qualitative research and ethnography because I hoped to be able to glimpse the situation as seen by those who live it.

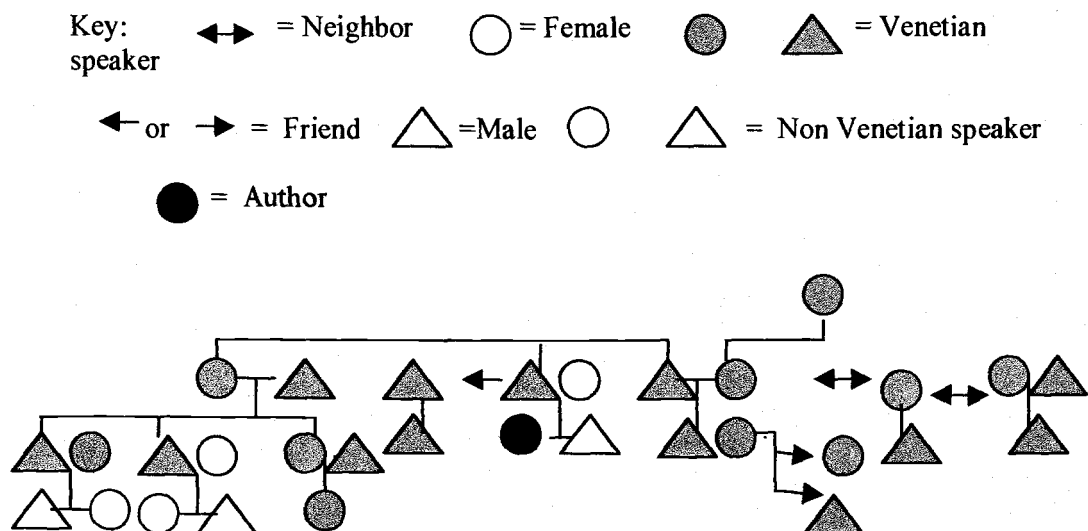
I chose to ask open-ended questions because I felt that my consultants would be more forthcoming with their honest opinions if they felt that I was truly listening to them and letting them lead me through their thoughts, rather than using questionnaires or other methods. In addition, the written format might have been difficult for some older consultants who never formally studied Italian. I would be speaking Italian while conducting these interviews (rather than the language I was inquiring about), and I felt it would be more appropriate to ask questions about a verbal language through oral conversation than through written Italian. The following sections include a map of the

existing relationships between my consultants and me, a discussion of my reasons for choosing specific methods and the constraints encountered, including language and translation challenges.

4.1.1 Map of relational network

The relationship network map (Figure 8) delineates the various types of relationships that existed between the researcher and the consultants. Many of the consultants were relatives, friends and neighbors. All of the consultants either spoke Venetian or were ethnically Venetian (or both). Many of the younger generation were bilingual in Venetian and Italian and also spoke another language, such as English or French.

Figure 8: Relational Network Map



4.1.2 Participant observation

Because of my relationships in this linguistic community, I found that much of the necessary rapport with consultants had been established throughout my life, rather than beginning at the time of this trip. A visiting researcher with no familial ties would have spent much more time establishing rapport. Of course, being a community member also required adherence to cultural protocol such as mandatory visits with relatives and friends.

My indirect membership in the community through my family enabled me, as the researching anthropologist, to gain access to intimate family settings. There, I was able to join in activities that permitted me to observe the linguistic patterns of my consultants, rather than having to rely solely on their personal perceptions. Of course, my presence as a non-Venetian speaker might have caused the consultants to speak more Italian than they normally would on a given occasion.

4.1.3 Interviews

While designing interview questions, I realized that I wanted my consultants to have complete freedom to formulate their answers. I also wanted to avoid incorporating my opinions into the questions as much as possible, so I chose to write open-ended questions. After having written several questions intended for the interviews, I translated them into Italian. I chose to translate them into standard Italian, rather than having a consultant translate them into Venetian, because I felt it would not have been culturally appropriate. (I would have had to memorize the questions and would have sounded quite odd attempting to speak in Venetian.) I decided to ask each consultant the same questions, which would also help me to refine my research.

Interview Questions:

In quali posti e situazioni usa Italiano? (In which places and situations do you use Italian?)

Potete dirmi perche avete deciso di usare Italiano? (Could you tell me why you chose to use Italian?)

In quale posti e situazioni usa Veneto? (In which places and situations do you use Venetian?)

Potete dirmi perche avete deciso di usare Veneto? (Could you tell me why you chose Venetian?)

Quando? (When?)

Potete dirmi perche avete deciso di usare una lingua e non l'altra? (Could you tell me why you chose one language and not the other?)

I intended to conduct as many random semi-structured interviews as possible during my stay (in addition to archival research and participant observation), and I wanted to speak with people from differing ages, genders, occupations, and economic and educational backgrounds. Another condition I placed on interviewees was that they must either have lived in Veneto at one time or be related to someone from the region; this would help me come away with a more complete idea of the linguistic situation seen through Venetian eyes. I tried to be flexible while doing fieldwork.

4.1.4 Direct sources

During my stay I read through several popular Italian newspapers, magazines and books. I watched some television shows and listened to both radio and recorded music. I was able to capture many themes that were circulating at the time, allowing me to understand and grasp the current situation.

I purchased newspapers and small informative books at the local newspaper shop in Fimon and another town. In one case, my timing was perfect, I happened to visit the

grandmother of one of my consultants during her annual house cleaning. She gave me approximately a year's worth of local magazines that contained interesting information about local issues and events, which I might have not found on my own. I also collected a label from a wine bottle declaring the independence of Padania, and I was able to photograph several farmhouses decorated with political graffiti.

4.1.5 Archival research

In addition to library research in the United States, I was able to visit two libraries in Italy, neither of which were research institutions. I found one dictionary in the small library in Fimon, and was advised to look at the larger library in Vicenza.

When I went to the larger library, I did not find anything. I purchased a few books on the history of the region, including a previous study done in Val Leogra that included a tape recording of farmers singing traditional songs in Venetian.

4.1.6 Internet research

Searching for Veneto on the Internet proved valuable, once I finished wading through all the sites referring to venetian blinds and Venice, California. I found several Italian sites including on-line newspapers, (some written in Venetian). One site included written discussions, including a letter written to the United Nations asking for official Venetian recognition (Appendix B), a letter explaining why members of a secessionist group felt compelled to take over the belltower of Saint Mark's cathedral in Venice (Appendix H), an interview with John Trumper (Appendix I), information on Venetian grammar, and the Venetian alphabet.

4.2 CONSTRAINTS

While conducting fieldwork, I realized that certain aspects of my research were not as easy or as predictable as I had hoped. Remaining flexible was the key to success with all of the constraints I encountered: interactions with consultants, note-taking techniques, the timing of my visit, and finally, sorting out the issues involving multiple languages and their translation.

4.2.1 Interaction with consultants

My intent was to set up as many random semi-structured interviews with consultants as I could during my stay in Italy. Due to the informal familial relationships I have with many of the consultants, and to time and other constraints, I was unable to effectively set up structured interviews. It became apparent that in order to gain the information I was seeking, it would be necessary to change my approach. Rather than setting up random semi-structured interviews, I chose to conduct random unstructured interviews. I decided that the best approach was to listen and note everything I saw and was being told, rather than pursue a futile strategy of staying within my original plan.

It was not easy to balance my role as a researcher (attempting to view the situation as an outsider) with my role as family member and indirect community member. Because I had been involved in the lives of most of my consultants for a very long time (some had known me all my life), I was treated in a familiar manner appropriate to the relationship and the rapport we shared. Some of the time, I was not given the chance to fully explain my interest in Venetian, and various assumptions were made by consultants as to the reason I was interested in their experiences. Many people I had not seen in a long while were curious about me, about my life in the United States and the circumstances that led me to become interested in *il dialetto* (the dialect). My interest in Venetian was surprising to many of them in light of my ability to speak English, which was seen by some as equal to (and in some cases more valuable) Italian.

4.2.2 Note-taking techniques

Trying to take notes while engaged in conversation was difficult, disruptive and might have been perceived as inappropriate at times. I found I was able to gather more information and keep conversations going longer if I did not take notes at all during conversations. Unfortunately, this method required a period of concentration immediately following the conversation, which was not always possible, nor was it easy. Taking notes while observing and listening to others converse was done more easily and was not a problem most of the time.

4.2.3 Timing of the Visit

I chose to travel to Italy to conduct my research just before Easter in spring of 1998. Because of the religious significance of the Easter holiday (Pasqua), many consultants were visiting family and traveling during the holidays, making it more difficult to locate them. Fortunately, my family members and friends were available and I was able to speak with some people who normally would have been working and hard to track down. Scheduling visits to government offices and libraries was more difficult, as many were closed for several days during this time. In addition, because I was not familiar with the bureaucratic system and did not have enough time to study and work with the system, I was not able to do as much library and archival research on site as I would have liked.

4.2.4 Language and translation issues

A part of my research was spent speaking with individuals who were at times apologetic that they were not able to speak Italian well; this illuminated the fact that Venetian was used more among friends and family than in more formal situations and with strangers.

It was also clear to me that consultants were trying to speak in Italian more and in Venetian less for my benefit. Going back and forth between Italian and Venetian took some concentration on their part.

Some of the printed matter and web site material I gathered was written in Venetian, much of it using the Italian alphabet. There are sites written in an alphabet specifically designed for the Venetian language. (Reading this type of Venetian was time consuming; and because I had to read each word aloud until I could hear the word and recognize the meaning, the experience made me understand why some Venetians don't read famous works written in Venetian.)

Difficulties with translating information from Italian into English included the translation process, as well as the necessary mental transition required to absorb information in one language and then effectively write it in another language while accurately conveying the author's message.

5. DATA

In order to gather the most complete picture of the changes occurring in Veneto and those changes that had been observed by Venetians, I compiled data from the following varied sources: my consultants, information found in Italian newspapers and magazines, information heard on the radio and seen on television in Italy, information gathered while touring the countryside, as well as information found in music and on Internet sites. The names of consultants and the locations have been changed, and quotes made by consultants were translated into English from either Italian or Venetian.

5.1 CONSULTANTS' OPINIONS

The consultants with whom I spoke most (in the relationship network map) are of Venetian descent, although not all of them currently reside in Veneto, nor do they all speak Venetian. While in Italy, I stayed in Fimon¹⁵, a small town with a population of 3,851 people. Because of my inclusion in all types of conversations, I was able to observe the usual behavior of people in the village and the surrounding areas, without necessarily approaching the specific topic of the Venetian language. While visiting with consultants I have known for a long time or who know my family members, I found that they were more interested in “catching up” than in formal interviews, and it was often not practical nor effective to try to switch subjects. The interviews we did have were casual and unstructured. I was Marco’s daughter, the niece of a local, Chiara’s cousin, and was even known because my mother is not Venetian, but American (a fact that has always brought a lot of attention). Due to these differing circumstances, I was able to get a good sense of what was occurring in this small area. I listened to what the people were talking about in order to discover what was important at the time, and which was not necessarily what was reported by the media.

¹⁵ for more information go to <http://www.vicenzanews.it/comuni/>.

5.1.1 The albertin family

I spoke with three of the four Albertin family members when I visited them at home in the city of Bolzano (located in the region of Trentino Alto-Adige, not in Veneto). Maria Albertin and her husband, Dr. Matteo Albertin, were born and raised in Veneto, but have since moved. Maria is a high school instructor, teaching Italian and history, while Matteo is a psychologist. Maria and her husband have not taught either of their two children, Alessia and Giovanni, Venetian. However, both children will learn another language (in this case, German) in school.

When we spoke about the Venetian language, Maria told me that in her estimation English, Italian and German were languages worth learning, but she did not think Venetian was in this category because, as she elaborated, “Venetian was once a language with beautiful ways of expression, but at this point in time it has lost all of those lovely ways of thinking and speaking.” In her opinion, “you can better express your thoughts of the present world in Italian.” Venetian has not been updated to include many modern technologies used today. Her husband told me that “the Venetian language has been dead for a long time,” and he believes that “yes, the dialect will die in the future.” He went on to say, “the dialect of my parents has already been lost, in part. The words are gone – the same ones are no longer used.” Numerous words his parents used are no longer known by many of the younger speakers of Venetian. This is something I heard several times, as an example of how the dialect is disappearing. Dr. Albertin made a distinction between the words language and dialect, saying that the dialects in the entire region differ from one another; Vicenza has many words that differ from Venezia. In his opinion the language *died* a very long time ago, probably at the time of Napoleon, but the dialect survived. Maria mentioned that many parents try to teach their children Italian at home but can’t speak Italian themselves, and they communicate with each other in Venetian.

Alessia, who is nine years old, told me that “Venetian is cute.” She doesn’t speak Venetian, even though both her parents do. Venetian is not spoken in their home, but she said that sometimes her parents will use an expression or two. Alessia understands some and thinks it’s cute when her father slips and uses Venetian while teasing her or her brother Giovanni.

I can relate to this, as no dialect was spoken in my home either, with the exception of a few phrases frequently used by my father. I also remember thinking that the language sounded so caring and sincere.

5.1.2 Mr. maserati

Mr. Guido Maserati is a retired Postal Inspector who has lived in Veneto all his life. He was born in Monticello, worked in San Paolo, and he has lived in Monticello, Pontevicchio, Novecarri and Fimon –all in the same area of Veneto. When we first met, Guido assumed I didn't speak Venetian and mentioned that he would probably mix it with Italian. He told me that "young people teach Italian to their children, not the dialect – even if they don't speak Italian very well. It's easier for homework, for school." He said that the Ministry of Education was looking into a system to introduce the study of Italian dialects into elementary schools. He guessed that introducing poetry and literary works, but not the actual language, would be the method chosen.

His son works in a bank, where "he speaks to the clients in Veneto." His son has had some difficulties with bank administrators, who believe it is not professional to use the vernacular in the bank, regardless of the customer's preference and ease with Italian. He said that the bank had lost several older customers because they were not comfortable speaking in Italian, which also may have caused misunderstandings. According to Guido, the best way to choose which language you use is to "speak in dialect if they speak to you in dialect or in Italian. Do it for the customers."

Directing bank employees to speak in Italian is an indication of the diminishing value some groups hold for Venetian. Mr. Maserati doesn't think the local vernacular is "dying," because it is still used in the smaller towns, even though it is no longer used as often in larger urban centers. It was not always this way, Guido reminisced, "As a young man, I remember when the priest spoke vernacular in Church. I almost always speak in vernacular, it's more comfortable." Also, according to Mr. Maserati, young people do not speak the same vernacular of the past, because "even dialects change". The vernacular (what I've called Venetian) from Vicenza is not the same as in Venezia (Venice). For example, the words for boy and girl (*bambino* and *bambina* in Italian) would be *filla* and *fillo*, or *putelo* and *putela* in the vernacular from Venezia, while they would be *toseto* and

toseta in the vernacular from Vicenza. Guido loves poetry, but prefers works in Italian to those in vernacular. He said he liked “even Goldoni”¹⁶; in fact, Mr. Maserati really likes speaking in vernacular, but not reading it, and will not read any material written in the vernacular because it is too difficult to understand.

5.1.3 The neighbors: pozzi, mrs. conti and the pagliarusco family

The Pozzi family, the Pagliarusco family, and Anna are all neighbors and friends. Pietro and Silvia Pozzi and their son, Massimo¹⁷, live across the street from Anna. Massimo is nine years old, speaks Venetian as well as any other child his age, and speaks Italian with the typical Veneto regional accent. He is also learning English in school. His mother is proud of his language skills, in part because (as she admitted to me) she has trouble with Italian and cannot help him Massimo with his regular homework or with the study of the other languages he is learning.

Renata, Chiara and the rest of the Pagliarusco family live across the street from Anna and next door to the Pozzi family. Like Anna, the Pagliarusco family has lived there for at least 20 years.

Chiara Pagliarusco is 21 and has lived in Fimon all her life. She works in the main office of an import/export business. She said she uses Venetian at work, but only if she is acquainted with the person with whom she is speaking. Since not all people understand Venetian, she has to decide when she will speak Venetian and when she will use Italian. When making phone calls, she told me she always speaks in Italian, as she calls all over Italy and it would be “unprofessional” to try to converse in vernacular with someone from another region who could not understand the vernacular. She mentioned that when people whom she knows come into the office where she works, she speaks in Venetian. She usually speaks in Italian to people she doesn’t know, and of course, with those whom she knows do not speak Venetian. She mentioned noticing some older people (in their fifties)

¹⁶ Goldoni is a well known Venetian author, who wrote in Venetian and Italian.

¹⁷ Massimo is from Brazil, adopted by the Pozzi’s at seven years of age. He has learned and speaks Venetian like any other Venetian child his age.

whose intent was to write in Italian (using the Italian alphabet and spelling the words as they are pronounced in Venetian) but who unconsciously wrote in Venetian, or mistakenly mixed the two languages.

Anna Conti lives across the street from the Pozzi family. She is in her late seventies. While we chatted, she commented that she would get her Venetian mixed with Italian. Then she told me that “Venetian is used much more often on TV than other dialects. On TV they said ‘*struca’l boton*’¹⁸ instead of using the Italian. ‘*É piu bello*’ (It’s nicer!) [this was said in Italian, referring to the Venetian being nicer than the Italian]. It’s [Venetian] easy to learn because it’s similar to Italian.” Anna was the first and only person to tell me that I should learn Venetian because of the beauty of the language and of my Venetian heritage.

One afternoon, Anna, Renata, Silvia Pozzi and I were talking in Anna’s yard, when Massimo came over to see who I was. When he was told I lived in the U.S., he ran home and returned with his *quaderno Inglese* (notebook from English class). I became his big test as he showed off all he had learned, including 20 minutes of pronunciation practice and the Italian equivalent names of objects in English (to prove that I spoke English).

Although Marco Pagliarusco left this area when he was 12 years old, more than 45 years ago, he returns to visit his brother and the family in the area. Reminiscing, Marco told me that his grandfather used to read a newspaper to him that was printed by the church in vernacular when he was a child. When Marco was in school, the instructor would speak in Venetian to the children. Marco often makes comments about Venetian no longer being the same, and he enjoys teasing his niece and nephew about their lack of knowledge of what he calls “real” Venetian, meaning the one that was spoken when he was a child.

5.1.4 The librarians

Giorgia is one of the librarians at Fimon’s small library. She is in her mid-thirties and is also from the area. “I like the dialect, I also like Italian, but the dialect is so much easier; it’s used more, I use it daily,” she told me. “Young people come into the library; at first they speak in Italian among themselves, and then they speak in dialect, after hearing

¹⁸ ‘*struca’l boton*’, Venetian for press the button.

the lady who speaks in dialect” she said, referring to herself as the “lady who speaks in Venetian.” In fact, while I was at the library, some children entered speaking in Italian and asked the librarian for several books. After about ten minutes, they switched (from Italian) to Venetian. Giorgia works with older people most of the time, and through conversing with them, has learned many words that young people do not understand. She reminded me that the vernaculars vary from town to town, city to city. “Young people are embarrassed of the dialect. If you are not able to speak and write in Italian, you are not educated. You are someone from the country...one goes to school to learn Italian, you write it, you read it...”

Giorgia knows of a man in Fimon who writes poems in Venetian. She told me he borrowed a Venetian-Italian dictionary from the library so he could use ‘real’ Venetian words, not Italianized ones. Unfortunately, Giorgia did not know his name, but has read some of the poems he has written. She said she had difficulties in doing so.

While in Italy, I traveled to a nearby city where I went to a library, hoping to have a better chance of finding some written material in Venetian. There I met Paolo, a librarian who gave me his opinion on languages: “Of course, the dialects will die. Eventually, so will Italian. English is the language now.” He directed me to two other locations where he thought I might find material on Venetian and the usage of the language.

5.2 CONSULTANTS’ FAMILIES LANGUAGE PATTERNS

Figure 9 examines the language patterns that exist among the youngest members in the consultant group. Individuals (represented in figure 9) from families where one parent¹⁹ is not a native Venetian speaker do not speak Venetian (two of the three families who are not living in Veneto), but may understand some of the language. According to Chiara, parents who purposely attempt not to teach their children Venetian often do not succeed if they, as well as their extended family, live in the region, because the children learn the vernacular from their peers at school. During recess most children speak in vernacular among themselves, and often, in order to fit in, those who only speak Italian learn enough Venetian to communicate with their classmates. This may change, however, as people

¹⁹ In this case the mothers do not speak Venetian.

continue to become more mobile. Levels of Venetian comprehension vary greatly, depending upon individual patterns in the family, the age of the child, the parents' level of fluency, and the extended family's fluency in Italian and/or Venetian. Older people can have a great influence on a child's linguistic skills by being available for the child to practice with and mimic. More traditional families, where extended family members live close by and spend time with the younger generation, can help the younger generation retain skills otherwise easily lost. This closeness can also negatively affect a youngster's ability to communicate well in Italian. This is especially true in cases where the child spends a lot of time with a caregiver who is not proficient in Italian but, in theory, is not going to speak to or teach the child Venetian. This is done to give the child what is perceived to be a linguistic advantage (learning Italian without the impediment of learning Venetian as a first language). However, the child will most likely learn a mix between Italian and Venetian, an "Italianized Venetian" that will presumably be adequate for most communication, but will not be either Venetian or Italian.

Figure 9: Consultant Language Patterns

Younger Generation²⁰	Home language	Community Language²¹	Resides in Veneto	Language(s) Spoken	Mother's Language	Father's Language
Gianni	Italian	German / Italian	No	Italian/ German	Venetian	Venetian
Alessia	Italian	German / Italian	No	Italian/ German	Venetian	Venetian
Paola	Venetian/ Italian	Venetian / Italian	Yes	Venetian	Venetian	Venetian
Roberto	Venetian / Italian	Venetian / Italian	Yes	Venetian	Venetian	Venetian
Chiara	Venetian /Italian	Venetian / Italian	Yes	Venetian	Venetian	Venetian
Luca	German / Italian	German	No	Italian	Italian	Venetian
Elisa	German / Italian	German	No	Italian	Italian	Venetian
Massimo	Venetian	Venetian / Italian	Yes	Portuguese/ Venetian ²²	Venetian	Venetian
Lorenzo	English / Italian	English	No	English/ Italian	English	Venetian
Adelia	English / Italian	English	No	English/ Italian	English	Venetian

None of the members of the younger generation are monolingual in Venetian, but four are native speakers, with one exception—one person in the small group was adopted from outside Italy and brought to live in Veneto after the age of five, learned Venetian, and speaks the language like a native speaker. These four individuals are still fluent and speak Venetian daily (four of ten people, three of six families). Conversely, six people from three families do not speak Venetian at all. All three of the families do not live in Veneto, and only one set of parents are both native speakers of Venetian, but they have not taught their children Venetian.

²⁰ Ages range from ten years to mid twenties.

²¹ The community specified here is the current one - Although the language spoken by the surrounding community affects what language the child(ren) may speak/understand, this information is not available for all the children..

²² This child was adopted and moved to Italy and Veneto after he was of school age.

Each of the other two families has one parent that speaks the language, and none of the children do. Even though all the fathers from this group are native speakers, this did not affect the outcome—none of the children speak Venetian.

Those who speak Venetian in this small group live in Veneto and their parents are also Venetian speakers. Although it is not clear how much of an impact extended family has in regards to children learning Venetian, they are an integral part of the Venetian community that provides linguistic support to those children who are learning Venetian. If one does not live in Veneto, there is both a lack of incentive to learn Venetian (no one else in the community speaks Venetian) and a lack of support from other Venetian speakers, such as extended family members.

It seems that living in the region of Veneto is a key component in learning Venetian. The community of Venetian speakers provides a cohesive community and cultural base for the child learning the language. Massimo was able to come from Brasil and learn to speak the language, and was integrated into the community of Fimon. He most likely was able to learn Venetian because he is a child, and the community was willing to include him and teach him. Adults who come to reside in the region may not be able to learn the language as easily, as language acquisition is much easier for children, and because there does not seem to be any organized system in place to teach the Venetian language.

5.3 MEDIA

Most radio and television stations in Veneto broadcast in Italian; and if Venetian is included, it is most likely the announcer's spontaneous comments. Many of the radio and television companies are state owned and operated. The only vernacular (not Venetian) that I heard on television was from several guests on a talk show trying to explain to their mother what the host had just said, because she clearly had not understood. I wondered at that time if anyone else had understood them — the only reason I had was because the host had previously explained the subject.

I was lucky, I heard and was told about "*Il pirata*" (the Pirate) as he was called, who added drama by disrupting the airways and by sabotaging regular television

programming. The unknown, disembodied voice interrupted television viewing of people all over Veneto by delivering a pro-independence, secessionist message. He spoke with a Venetian intonation. One consultant told me that he saw a headline in which the Pirata ended his messages by mentioning that the Veneto Serenissimo Governo was fighting for the country (most likely meaning Veneto) and also mentioned “viva San Marco” (M. Pagliarusco, personal communication, June 1997). I did not learn whether or not this person was ever caught.

5.3.1 Electronic media

As far as electronic media is concerned, a wide variety of web sites are maintained, each presenting various points of view that range from cultural to political and contain selections dedicated to their interests. The site www.veneto.org includes articles from Venetian groups with differing interests, such as cultural awareness, independence movements, and several daily electronic newspapers²³: *Il Gazzettino*, *La Nuova Venezia*, *Il Mattino di Padova*, *La Tribuna di Treviso*, *Corriere delle Alpi*, and *L'Arena*. Only two electronic publications, *El Gadhetin Vèneto* and *La Rena*, are published in Venetian (what is called Vènet on this site). There is an interview with John Trumper²⁴, “an expert on Venet” by Carlo Pizzati, a segment on Venetian grammar²⁵ and one on the Venetian alphabet by Raixe Venete²⁶. Also included on this www.veneto.org are the following articles: “*Veneto's self-determination*”; “*Parke' Nilatri Ła Son Sentha na Storia e na Łengoa*”; “*Gilberto Buson speaks*”; “*Veglia per San Marco*”; “*La Veneta Serenenissima Repubblica vive e vuole un posto all'ONU*”; “*Repressione Italiana carcerazione di Luigi Faccia*”; “*Dialecto o lingua? Contributo al corso: 'Lingua Veneta: comunicazione e società'*”; and “*Ai Veneti*”.

“Veneto's self determination”,²⁷ by Carlo Pizzati, explains that the Lions of the Most Serene Army, or the “eight of the towerbell” (Pizzati, Appendix E) as they've dubbed, “basically acted in a non-violent demonstration”(Pizzati, Appendix E). He defines

²³ www.veneto.org/news/contents.htm

²⁴ www.veneto.org/language/trumper.html

²⁵ www.multimania.com/veneto/arkivio/gramadega_3_1.htm

²⁶ www.veneto.org/language/alphabet.html

²⁷ Appendix E

the demonstration as non-violent even though the demonstrators were waving a “war-era machine gun and riding in a sort of home-made tank into the square” (Pizzati, Appendix E) of San Marco, as they tried to take possession of the bell tower in the Piazza and hang the “flag sporting St. Marks Lion holding the bible in one paw and brandishing a menacing dagger in the other” (Pizzati, Appendix E).

These actions were taken in order to bring the complaints and general dissatisfaction of Venetians to the attention of the politicians in Rome. Mr. Pizzati believes the state overreacted by arresting and imprisoning the men, and they did so because Rome is afraid of the secessionist movement, fearing it might succeed. In Veneto, the mayor of Venice has begun a movement involving mayors for federalism.

The fear Mr. Pizzati speaks of includes:

The fear of Rome for the autonomist movements in Veneto has gone so far that Verona’s District Attorney is try [not my typo] to bring to trial some leaders of the Green Shirts, an organization associated but not directly with the Northern League. Verona’s D.A. asserts these are subversives, that they are armed and that they could destabilize the union of Italy, something protected by the Constitution, one of the longest and less flexible constitutions of world history (Appendix E).

He continues, “The Northern League, and the Green Shirts, declare that they believe in “Ghandian non-violence” and that they are in “favor of a secession” but are non-violent (Pizzati, E).

“*Parke’ Nilatri Ła Son Senth na Storia e na Łengoa*”²⁸ (Why we are without a history and a language) was written by PauŁo de Ła Rina Łanera on behalf of the *Veneto Serenissimo Governo*. This article begins with the author saying that “you can remove a People from your way by using arms or you can tame and make them docile by removing their ethnic identity...” (de Ła Rina Łanera, Appendix G). He is of the opinion that when Italy united in 1866, things worsened rather than improving for Venetians. Language issues were not resolved with the unification, and in cases where this occurs, people are often treated badly because their mother tongue is not the current national language.

²⁸ Appendix - G

"I remember the numerous punishments and psychological violence I suffered at elementary school, because I made a mistake pronouncing or writing a few Italian words"(de la Rina lanera, Appendix G).

"*Gilberto Buson speaks*"²⁹, was written by Mr. Buson, a member of the Lions of the Most Serene Army, the group who tried to take back the belltower. He wrote this piece to share his reflections from prison. He says this act was "the last act of love, reserved, of my life..." (Buson, appendix H) and tells how they approached the tower. "At dawn our eyes saw the GLORIOUS AND INVINCIBLE FLAG OF ST. MARK³⁰ catching the wind and waving in the highest point of our VENETO, as a symbol of VICTORY, as a sign of peace, strength and soul were all in one, indescribable sensations, joy, fear, pride and love of belonging to a unique land" (Buson, appendix H) .

He continues, speaking of the fact that it does not seem real at times, but he knows it is and, "It's all reality, and I am the proof, finding myself enclosed inside a foreign penitentiary" (Buson, appendix H). He does not consider the actions that placed him in the high security prison in Modena a mistake, because if they are, he says "then it means that it was a mistake to be born VENET" (Buson, appendix H). He believes that if he must be imprisoned in order for things to change, then he must.

If to improve we have to go through prison, then I 'dare to think' of being in a system that is different from what they made us believe with these laws. Us Venets have always existed. We are people that came from the land, and we keep in our hearts what time has given us: Always land, always sky, always matter and soul, always strength and sagacity, always courage and a great faith. Everything else does not count. This is feeling VENET, not a fable, but a history made by simple men.
(Buson, Appendix H)

Also included in this site ³¹are the "*Veglia per San Marco*"³² (Vigil for Saint Mark) an advertisement for "The independentist vigil in Piazza San Marco, held on Monday, the 8th of May 2000, to remember the heroic endeavor of San Marco in 1997 by the Serenissimi."

²⁹ Appendix -H

³⁰ Capitalization in original work.

³¹ Taken from <http://www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/> on October 12, 2000.

³² Appendix - A

“La Veneta Serenenissima Repubblica vive e vuole un posto all’ONU³³” (The Venetian Serene Republic lives and wants a place in the UN), is a notice announcing the letter sent by the Congress of the Venetian Nation to the Secretary General of the UN, requesting the admission of the Veneta Serenissima Repubblica to the United Nations.

“Repressione Italiana Carcerazione di Luigi Faccia³⁴”, by Albert Gardin (Italian Repression the incarceration of Luigi Faccia), is a notice written by the Congresso de la Nazione Veneta, condemning what they see as “the campaign of persecution carried out by the machinery of the Italian State against the Venetian patriots”(Gardin, Appendix C). They are fighting the Italian State, because of the campaign to do away with groups seeking independence as well as the Venetian culture itself. They are encouraging people to stop voting in regional elections, elections which they feel are “fraudulent,” promising to work towards “the return to Venetian independence” and to organize “new ways of political organization and the procedures of refusing Italian vote” (Gardin, Appendix C). They operate on the assumption that “the die has been cast, and nothing will be able to stop the process of national blackmail of Venetians.” They claim they want only what is rightfully theirs, nothing more, and write that they will return to Rome anything that belongs to her: “fiscal robberies, repression, colonial culture” and to Venezia what is rightfully hers: “vitality, government, venetian administration and social healing”(Gardin, Appendix C).

They object to the imprisonment of Luigi Faccia, the president of the group Veneto Serenissimo Governo (for the occupation of the belltower), on the basis that the occupation of the belltower of San Marco was “meant to affirm, in the year 1997, the wishes of the Venetian people to become independent once again and sovereign over the territory of the Serenissima.”

“Dialecto o lingua? Contributo al corso: “Lingua Veneta: comunicazione e società”³⁵ (Dialect or Language? Contribution to the course Venetian language: communication and society) also by Albert Gardin, is a discussion of the Venetian languages and what plan should be adopted by Venetians in order to solve the linguistic problem, which he views as a political issue. He brings up what one of the Venetian doge

³³ Appendix - B

³⁴ Appendix - C

³⁵ Appendix - D

is reported to have told his emissary “*e ricordate, davanti al sultan, de parlarghe in venexian*” (remember, when you are in front of the Sultan, speak to him in Venetian)(Gardin Appendix D).

And lastly, the segment titled, *Ai Veneti*³⁶ (To Venetians), by Fausto Faccia, contains a discussion of the reasons that Venetians are being treated badly. It concludes with one solution: Venetians need to unite and work together in order to decide what they want in their collective future. Mr. Faccia says,

Perché soltanto in un'intesa collettiva sta la N[n]ostra unica possibilità di salvezza, quella saggezza che, sola, può permettere di gettare un ponte che si levi da quel 12 Maggio 1797 e ci proietti alla soglia del terzo millennio, fieri e sicuri nel fermo proposito di ritornare a decidere da N[n]oi. il N[n]ostro A[a]vvenire, per il bene comune, come sempre fece la N[n]ostra Veneta Serenissima Repubblica. Viva San Marco!

(Because the only possibility of us saving ourselves lies in a collective agreement, the wisdom that, alone, can allow us to throw a bridge that would lift itself from the 12th of May 1797 and launch us to the threshold of the third millennium, proud and sure with our purpose that we should decide Our Own Future, for the good of all, as Our Veneta Serenissima Repubblica always did. Viva San Marco!)(Faccia, Appendix F).

In addition to a section of history, geography, language, and present-day use, this site (www.veneto.org) includes there is a description of what is called Venet³⁷ (another different name of Venetian), and descriptions of the various dialects of Venetian. A version of a Venetian (there is no standard) alphabet³⁸ is included, contributed by Raixe Venete³⁹.

For those Venetians who are not interested in secession, *I Veneti non secessionisti*, the magazine *La Repubblica Veneta*⁴⁰, can be found on www.netmarket.it/r_veneta/copertina.htm (Figure 9). The image from the cover of the magazine depicts a man walking on the earth carrying balloons with political insignias, and at the bottom of the page “*Un Voto per l'Europa*,” (one vote for Europe) is spelled out in large yellow letters.

³⁶ Appendix - F

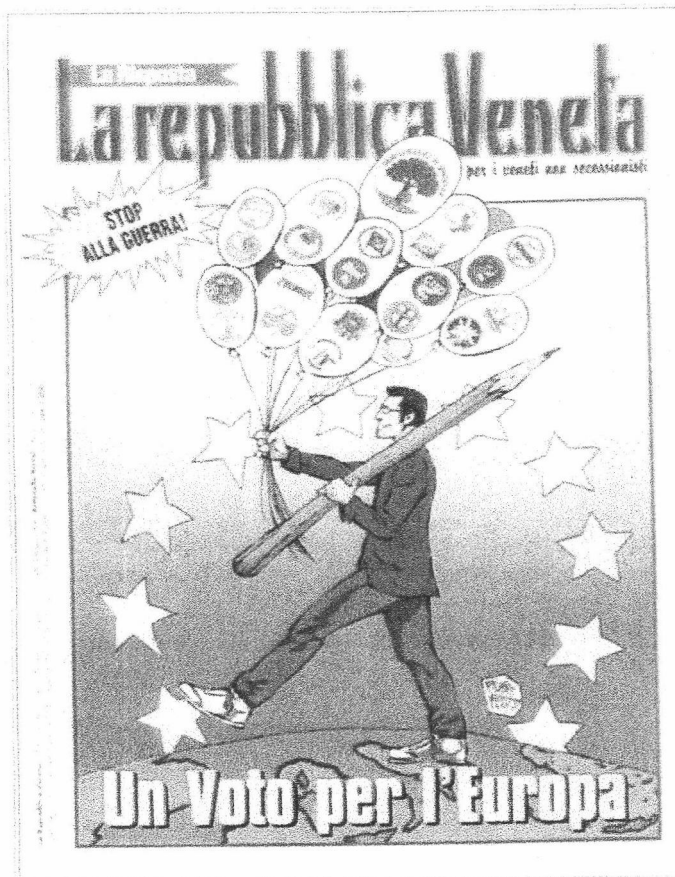
³⁷ <http://www.veneto.org/language/description.html>

³⁸ Appendix I

³⁹ <http://www.veneto.org/language/alphabet.html>.

⁴⁰ From http://www.netmarket.it/r_veneta/copertina.htm, taken 8/99

Figure 10: Magazine Cover



A non-political web site dedicated to the many things Venetian *Parlemose ciaro! Semo visentini*⁴¹. You can find proverbs, poems, stories, typical wines from the region and recipes for typical *Visentin*⁴² dishes. The stated purpose is “*per rendarse omagi o ala nostra cultura e ala nostra gente, che la viva qua o in cao la oltra in chisa’ quale nasion de quale continente*” (to pay respect to our culture and our people, whether they live here or in another who knows which country of which continent) and is written in a form of *Visentin*.

⁴¹ <http://www.goldnet.it/vicenza/veneto/dialet.html>

⁴² Visentin in dialect and Vicentino in Italian, is the dialect from Vicenza.

5.3.2 Traditional written media.

While I was not able to locate much published material in Venetian, I did encounter some skepticism; many of the people I asked seemed surprised at the thought of anything having been published in Venetian. At the little library in Fimon I found two dictionaries, the *Dizionario del Dialecto Veneziano* (Dictionary of the Venetian dialect) written in Venice in 1856, as well as the *Dizionario Veneziano Italiano* (Venetian Italian dictionary) written in Venice in 1928. The most recent dictionary printed is the *Vocabolario Veneto Italiano* (Venetian Italian Vocabulary) printed in Padova in 1954. In a bookstore in Vicenza, I found a copy of the *Dizionario Etimologico Veneto Italiano VIII edizione* (Venetian-Italian Etimological Dictionary, VIII edition). The first edition was published in 1975, while this newer edition was published in 1995. During my last trip in June of 2002, I found *Nuovo Dizionario. Veneto-Italiano Etimologico –Italiano-Veneto. Con modi di dire e proverbi.* (The New Dictionary: Venetian-Italian Etimological-Italian-Venetian. With idiomatic expressions and proverbs).

A local magazine, *Il Basso Vicentino*, features poetry in Venetian as well as a *Dizionarietto* (small dictionary), which provides the readers with definitions of various Venetian words. In the same magazine, the article *Paura del Futuro*⁴³, begins with the statement “*Ora che il benessere c’è, i vicentini hanno paura del futuro. Una recente indagine ha fatto emergere un aumento della sfiducia verso istituzioni e rappresentanze di categorie produttive. Lavoro, ordine pubblico, tassazione. Le cause del disagio.*” (Now that affluence is widespread, Vicentini⁴⁴ are afraid of the future. A recent inquiry revealed an increase in the lack of confidence people have towards institutions and those representing various business sectors, such as labor, public law and taxation. These are the causes of uneasiness.) The article includes the picture (see figure 11) of a man who is afraid of the future. He is holding a sign that says “*ladri, lasciatemi almeno questi*” (thieves, leave me at least these) referring to the money pasted on the side of the sign. Written on the side next to the paper bills, it states “*la mia pensione*” (my retirement).

⁴³ *Il Basso Vicentino*- Feb. 97 pg 5

⁴⁴ people from Vicenza

5.3.3 Music

The article, *Il fascino della musical popolare*, in the local magazine *Il Basso Vicentino*, was written about a Venetian group that plays music they defined as Folk Veneto. The group, Calicanto, has toured in several European countries and also Canada. The author of the article, Gianluigi Coltri, comments that they have had more success outside of Italy than within, and laments that Italy has become dependent on large musical festivals such as Sanremo and what he calls disco-rap-jazz-pop-rock (Coltri, 1991).

As a component of a cultural study done in 1976, local people were recorded singing traditional songs in the nearby valley of Leogra, in *Canti di una Valle Veneta: La Val Leogra (Accademia Olimpica – Vicenza 1976)* (Songs of a Venetian Valley: The Val Leogra – Olympic Academy – Vicenza 1976).

Another musical group using Venetian is the group Pitura Freska⁴⁵. They use Venetian primarily and include a little Italian and English in their lyrics. They are proud of this, and in fact, this is a selling point. The group plays reggae music and sings about many things, from racial differences to drug use. Written lyrics are included with the recording and the languages are made visually distinct by using a different font to distinguish between Italian and Venetian. For example, their song Papa Nero⁴⁶ (a big hit, released while the memory of the controversy surrounding the black Miss Italy was fresh) is in Venetian (regular font) with the Italian italicized to make the language distinction clear to the reader.

Figure 11: Lyrics to the song Papa Nero by Gran Calma

Abracadabra
Còsa nostra Damus
ga magnà par indovinar el bònus?
se tuto previsto
da l'incuinamento al sangue misto
se professia
Nina, Pinta Santa Maria
ja par condicio? *assolutissimamente no*

⁴⁵ more information can be found on the official web site <http://www.cyberlogic.it/piturfreska>

⁴⁶ found in the album Gran Calma

Figure 11 (continued)

Parché ʒe scritto, dito, stradito dai oràcoi
 ła piòvra perdarà i tentàcoi
 e cascarà l tabù col penùltimo Gesù
 e el sarà un òmo dal continente nero
 Rit: Sarà vero?
 dòpo Miss Italia aver un Papa nero?
 no me par vero...
 un Papa nero che scolta ʒe me canson in venessian
 perché el ʒe nero african...

The song speaks of the devining of Nostradamus, from pollution to the sailing of the Niña, Pinta and Santa Maria, and poses the question: it is possible to have a black pope, who will listen to the group songs in Venetian, after having had a black Miss Italy?

Because it's been written, said, overstated by the oracles
 the octopus will loose its tentacles
 and the taboos will fall with the penultimate Jesus
 and he'll be a man from the black continent

refrain: Is it true?
 after Miss Italy a black pope?
 It doesn't seem true...
 a black pope that listens to my songs in Venetian
 because he's a black african⁴⁷...

5.3.4 Pictures and wine labels

While riding to see some old castles in the nearby hills of the area, we drove by a few old stone farmhouses, which had been decorated with political graffiti. I took five snapshots.

In the first picture, (Figure 12) a message has been painted on the building in black paint, which states "*NORD LIBERO*" (Free the North, or literally North free), along with with two green symbols used by the lega Nord.

⁴⁷ my translation

Figure 12: Free the North

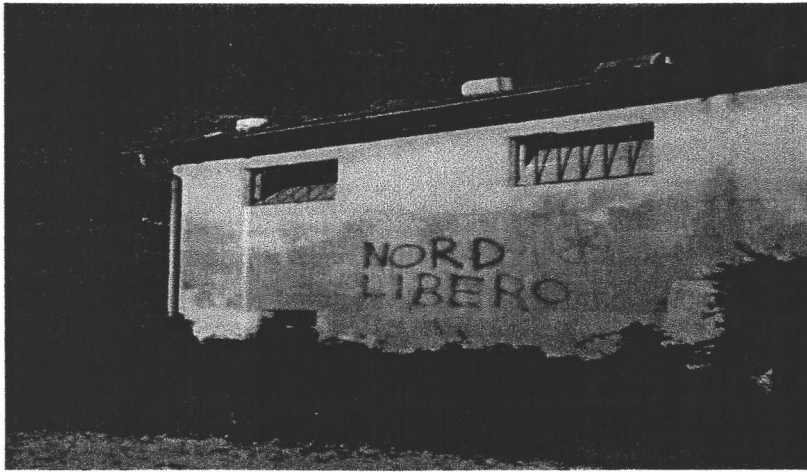


Figure 13: Che Viva El Veneto



In this picture, (Figure 13) we see graffiti in Venetian, spray painted in blue paint with "*CHE VIVA EL VENETO*" (long live Veneto, or literally, Veneto live) and "W Bossi"

written in black paint and in smaller letters. The capital letter W is commonly used as a double v symbol, meaning *viva*, or *evviva* (hurrah, long live,) hurrah for Bossi.

Figure 14: Roma Raus



Figure 14 shows “*ROMA RAUS!*” (Rome get out!) is painted in green on a farmhouse. In this case, the artists used German for additional emphasis, telling Rome to leave them.

Figure 15: Padania Painted Farmhouse



Figure 15 shows the side of an old farmhouse with “*PADANIA*” painted in blue paint, all in capital letters, over the symbol of a flower.

Figure 16: Hurray Bossi

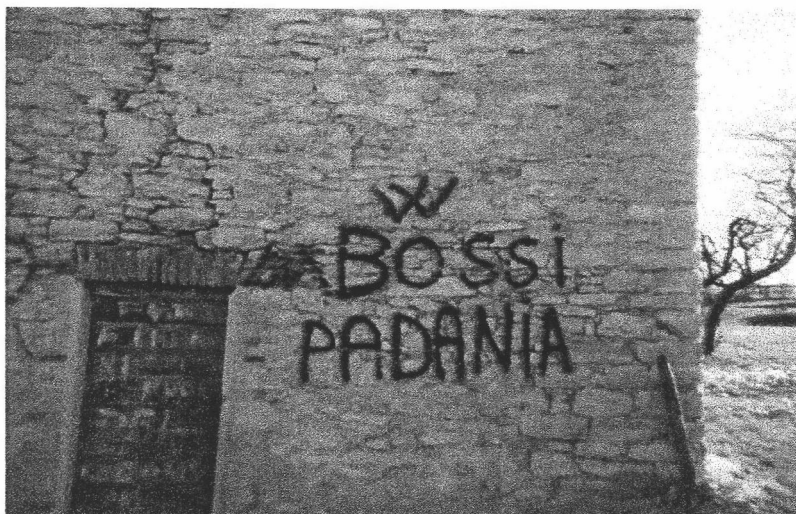


Figure 16 depicts yet another farmhouse. The *W* is followed by “*W BOSSI LA PADANIA*” (long live, or hurray Bossi and Padania), which was added in blue paint.

Figure 17: Wine Label



A special wine bottle was given to me, one made especially for the independence movement (see Figure 17). The label states that the provincial office of the secretary of Venice, the Northern League, Venetian League, declare the independence of Padania on September 15th. The blue soldier on the bottom portion of the label is holding a shield bearing the Venetian lion in his left hand. This is a strong way of announcing feelings of discontent. A lot of activity was occurring in this region, directly and indirectly connected with Venetian ethnic identity, if not language. All this information, gathered in Italy and in the United States, will help to better understand the situation in Veneto.

6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The people of the region of Veneto are now deciding which direction they should pursue in respect to usage of their traditional language: linguistic maintenance, revitalization, or a complete shift to Italian. Actions taken by secessionist groups have brought more attention to the possibility of preserving Venetian, but the likelihood still exists that the language will be lost through a complete switch to Italian by almost all of the Venetian people.

Those who continue to include Venetian in their daily lives have chosen maintenance—to keep using their language as they have in the past. This choice tends to be made by: individuals who do not focus solely on economic rewards; those who do not fear being left behind; those who speak Venetian daily at school and among themselves on almost any occasion; older people who meet at bars and coffee shops to chat; people who live in small towns and villages, where historical pride is strong; and individuals who strongly hold the belief in the ability of their people to be successful in the future. These are some of those who help maintain language use. Language maintenance requires little or no new action—only the continuation of normal life.

Unlike maintenance, language revitalization requires conscious actions in order to be successful, and even with a strong effort on the part of both ethnic group members and the government, it is quite difficult to succeed in revitalizing a language. Much effort is required of all involved in order to give revitalization a chance, as individual aspects of language revitalization can be controversial. Linguistic changes are needed in order to modernize a language; new vocabulary must be added and a standard agreed upon, as well as a written format that will promote the longevity of the language. In addition, endeavors must be made, through political and other means, to bring about the necessary social and political reforms to bring back what some feel has been lost or taken away. All of this will take work. Even if these actions are not fully successful, they will publicize the situation and encourage more people to become involved, which would affirm the idea of holding onto the Venetian language and the Venetians' cultural uniqueness.

The move toward language shift and the eventual loss of the Venetian language has already begun. This shift has been embraced by key segments of the Venetian

population, and has been reinforced by many aspects of modern society. Individuals who have begun the transition from Venetian to Italian, combined with those who use Italian in all domains, have brought the possibility of Italian replacing Venetian much closer to reality, most obviously in cases where children are raised to be monolingual in Italian. Once there are no more children learning Venetian as a native language, the possibility of revitalization is acutely reduced. Unfortunately, modern society has strongly encouraged language shift, and Italian has become the national language, the economic language, the literary language, and the language of success.

6.1 LOOKING AT THESE ISSUES THROUGH ACCOMODATION THEORY

The psychological aspect of language choice can have a strong impact on issues of language maintenance, revitalization, or shift, because our perceptions often dictate the language we choose to use. This dimension of language choice has been captured by accommodation theory. (See Section 3.5 of this thesis for a discussion of this theoretical approach.) For example, Simon Herman has endeavored to account for the internal struggle people go through in order to choose the language that best suits their needs, group identity, and situation (Fasold, 1984). This process can be seen in the decisions that people make, for instance, in choosing not to be associated with a certain group because that association makes them feel embarrassed. Thus, some people choose not to speak Venetian in certain situations, because they do not want to be associated with a culture that has been negatively stereotyped. Changes in speech patterns reflect the types of relationships that individuals believe exist between the dominant and subordinate group (Giles et al 1977 in Ellis 1985: 257). Emphasizing certain aspects of speech can help Venetians feel that they will be accepted in certain social situations, allowing them to choose whether they want to be viewed as members of their ethnic group or whether they would like to accentuate other relationships.

At the time of this study, there was a large range of popular opinion in respect to the future of the Venetian language; some Venetians believed that the language would die out, while, at the other extreme, others believed that Venetian could once again become the language of a republic independent from Italy. According to the predictions made by Giles

and his collaborators (Giles et al (1977) in Ellis 1985: 257), those Venetians, who believe that there is no possibility for positive social change in respect to the status and acceptance of their language and culture, would converge and speak Italian. This is what many parents are doing by trying to slow or prevent their children from learning Venetian. In this study, the Albertin family has converged and chosen only to speak Italian; they have consciously decided not to teach their children Venetian.

In my interviews and observations, I noticed many reactions that were consistent with accommodation theory and its explanation of language convergence. Often, the people with whom I talked apologized for their poor Italian and their Venetian accents, and attempted to speak in their best Italian. Many seemed to regard Venetian as a dying language and/or a vernacular of lesser status. However, I also observed that many Venetian families have chosen not to converge and still use Venetian, often at home with family and friends, and whenever the situation allows.

Accommodation theory also tells us that divergent behavior seeks to push and encourage the positive social change that is perceived to be coming. Many examples of this type of behavior are not focused on language use, but are often anti-establishment and politically motivated. Nevertheless, Venetian secessionists, who believe that their goals are realistic, have often aggressively embraced and used the Venetian language. Examples of this divergent behavior include: Rochetta's speech to the regional parliament, a political message expressed via language; various graffiti on farmhouses with the political messages delivered in several languages; the direct action taken by the Lions of the Most Serene Army and the *Veneto Serenissimo Governo* in order to express their political points; the *Pirata*, the political secessionist who disrupted broadcasting to make his political message heard on pirated radio waves; numerous secessionist web sites; and the social messages delivered by Pitura Freska through song in the Venetian language.

Franco Rochetta's initial speech to the Regional Council of Veneto in 1985 created a "procedural embarrassment," because he spoke in Venetian, rather than in Italian, even though he was capable of speaking in Italian (Bonsaver, 1996: 99). Rochetta's choice of Venetian, and the immediate negative reaction from members of the regional council to his choice of language, along with the rapid implementation of the decision not to accept the

use of any language other than Italian, sent a clear signal to the Venetian people. These actions reinforced the negative stereotype that only the uneducated and those who lack culture speak Venetian.

The colorful graffiti, which I observed on many Venetian farmhouses, expressed unhappiness with the political situation in Italy. The use of German, rather than Italian, to tell Rome to get out (*Roma raus*) of the North was an especially dramatic act of divergence. By refusing to use Italian and instead choosing the language of a neighboring country—the much-hated outsider and former ruling country—the writers were conveying their lack of a positive relationship with Italian and their insufficient sense of linguistic ownership. These graffiti were also an indication of the widely held perception in Veneto that Rome is the entity responsible for much of what goes wrong.

The Venetian graffiti—*che viva el Veneto*, *Nord Libero*, and *Padania*—were all expressions of sentiments that were pro-Venetian, pro-North, and pro-secession. Other secessionists spoke through their actions: the Lions of the Most Serene Army attempted to take control of the Saint Mark's belltower, because they believed that Rome is as oppressive and unjust as historic foreign rulers, such as the Austrians and the French. Another example of aggressive divergence was the voice of *il Pirata*, the pirate of the airwaves, who struck more than once encouraging division and secession.

Other statements made by secessionist groups appear on the web: The *Veglia per San Marco*⁴⁸ (Vigil for Saint Mark) advertises a secessionist vigil to “*ricordare l'eroica impresa del 1997*” (remember the heroic acts of 1997). Another site displays the written request for admission of the *Veneta Serenissima Repubblica* to the United Nations: *La Veneta Serenenissima Repubblica vive e vuole un posto all'ONU*⁴⁹ (The Veneta Serenenissima Repubblica is alive and wants a place in the UN). The site *Ai Veneti*⁵⁰ (To Venetians) talks about the history of Venice through the eyes of the members of the *Veneta Serenenissima Repubblica* and what should be done in the future.

In *Parke' Nialtri Ła son sentha na storia e na łengoa*⁵¹ (Why we are without a history and a language) by Paufo de Ła Rina Łanera on behalf of the *Veneto Serenissimo Governo*, the author speaks about the Italian state and how it is destroying the Venetian

⁴⁸ Appendix A

⁴⁹ Appendix B

⁵⁰ Appendix F

⁵¹ Appendix G

ethnic identity. He also describes how he was punished as a child in elementary school because of mistakes that he made in his use of Italian. In the site, *Gilberto Buson Speaks*⁵², a member of the Lions of the Most Serene Army explains why he supports secession. In his letter, Buson explains the reasons and feelings that compelled him (along with several others) to try to take *Venezia* back from the Italian state—the invader, the foreigner, who remains in control. In this case, the state is viewed as a barrier to Venetian ethnic uniqueness.

The musical group *Pitura Freska* performs using a unique mix of Venetian and Italian. They are creative artists who are proactive and not afraid to use a language that many look down upon. They speak of Venetian through Venetian lyrics, as expressed through these words: “*sara vero?* / *dopo Miss Italia aver un papa nero?* / *no me par vero* / *un papa nero che scolta le me canson in venessian*⁵³” (is it true? / after Miss Italy a black pope? / it doesn’t seem true / a black pope who listens to my song in venetian⁵⁴) The group also uses their language to deliver social messages, such as their belief in human equality: “*Eo ga do brassi, come de mi* / *Eo ga do oci, come de mi* / *Eo ciapa e parte, come de mi* / *Lui si diverte, come de mi* / *Insegna e impara, come de mi* / *Eo ga paura, come de mi* / *Lavora e suda, come de mi* / *Parche se nero african.*” (He has two arms, like me / He has two eyes, like me / He decides to leave, like me / He has fun, like me / Teaches and learns, like me / He is afraid, like me / Works and sweats, like me / because he’s a black African⁵⁵)

6.2 LANGUAGE SWITCHING

Anthropological theories of language choice focus on social arrangements rather than psychological perceptions. (See Section 3.6 of this thesis.) Venetians live in a society where “parallel and coordinate social groups” (Gal in Fasold, 1984: 196) exist, a society where the Venetian and Italian groups can be seen as separate. However, this separation was much more defined in the past than it is today; many Venetians now consider

⁵² Appendix H

⁵³ The bold font distinguishes the Italian from the Venetian, which is in italics.

⁵⁴ My translation; lyrics from the song *Papa Nero*.

⁵⁵ My translation, lyrics from the song *Papa Nero*.

themselves to be Italian. The reason for this state of affairs is that those who feel they are ethnically, linguistically and culturally Venetian are usually bilingual and have the choice to feel ethnically, linguistically and culturally Italian. (Non-Venetian Italians, of course, cannot choose to be Venetian.) Thus, Veneto is not an example of the type of social arrangement that fits Fishman's definition of diglossia without bilingualism (Fasold, 1984), as there is bilingualism with diglossia in Veneto, and, in some cases, only bilingualism. In places where diglossia no longer exists, people are often bilingual and do not differentiate domains of use. (See Section 2.4 of this thesis for a fuller discussion of this process.)

Veneto illustrates the type of social arrangement in which members of an ethnic group initially learn their traditional language in their family and home domains, but as they grow older, they learn the national language, "which is somewhat foreign, but which, in a sense, includes [their] own (Fasold, 1984: 193). Most Venetians consider themselves Italian, and thus have a dual membership, one in the Venetian group and one in the Italian one. My observations support Alberto Sobrero's (1997) conclusion that "bilingualism with diglossia" exists in Veneto, where many are bilingual but have kept, for the most part, a distinction between domains of use, especially in small villages. In large towns and heavily industrialized areas, however, the distinction between domains of use has disappeared, and bilingualism now exists without diglossia. In fact, in some large districts, bilingualism has recently ceased to exist as well, as more and more people are no longer fluent in the local vernacular (Sobrero, 1997: 412-413).

It may be that members of secessionist groups do not consider themselves Italians, but even secessionists speak and write in Italian. Members of the younger generation often speak Italian fluently, like the Austrians Gal studied, whose German was indistinguishable from that of a monolingual German speaker (Gal, 1979: 107 in Fasold, 1984). Like the Austrians studied by Gal, Venetians have rapidly and dramatically changed the way they speak. A century ago, Venetians had no need to be fluent in Italian. Even sixty years ago, most Venetians knew only a few Italian words—not enough to get by, not enough to understand a speech given on the radio.

The modern Veneto described by Sobrero still involves situations where people are bilingual and diglossia exists. Thus, contemporary Veneto is similar to the social arrangements studied by the anthropologists Blom and Gumperz, who, in their study of a bilingual society, found two forms of language switching: situational and metaphorical.

Situational switching occurs when the dominant language is used in formal settings, while the vernacular is reserved for local and personal interactions. With metaphorical switching, the situation does not matter. Instead, the choice of language shows what type of relationship exists between the people conversing (Blom and Gumperz 1972 in Fasold, 1984: 193-195).

One of my consultants, Chiara, uses both Italian and Venetian at work and follows a set of parameters in order to determine when to use each language. Her choices conform to the notion of metaphorical switching described by Blom and Gumperz—the situation is not relevant; the language chosen expresses her relationship to the person with whom she is speaking. Chiara uses Venetian with her friends but with customers she does not know, she often chooses Italian. She did state that she would use Venetian with a customer if she knew that the person spoke the language and felt it was appropriate (the customer would not be offended). Her choice of language at the library, post office, or any government office would most likely be Italian (in accordance with situational switching), unless she knew the person behind the counter, who would then be addressed in the vernacular. However, even then, she may choose to switch back to Italian to show respect. It appears that in some cases, using Italian might be interpreted as being more polite.

Rochetta's speech to the regional council in Venetian was inflammatory, because it challenged the conventions of both situational and metaphorical switching. Both the setting and his relationship to his audience dictated that Rochetta use the nation's dominant and formal language, Italian. He knew that delivering a speech to a political entity in Venetian would cause a commotion. Yet Rochetta made this choice in order to show patriotism, his loving and unashamed relationship with his native language and culture. Unlike his counterparts, who were aghast and promptly tried to stop him, Rochetta made his point, bringing politics and language face to face in the political chamber of Veneto. On a less grand scale, Mr. Ferrari's son, the banker, is faced daily with the decision of which language to use, which language is appropriate. Unfortunately, his judgment of the situation is not the same as that of the bank.

6.3 LINGUISTIC SHIFT

In most cases, a linguistic shift from a region's vernacular to the dominant national language is preceded by several developments; the first is widespread bilingualism (Fasold 240 and Paulston 83). However, the existence of bilingualism does not, in and of itself, mean that a linguistic shift has occurred. Other signs are needed: (1) More older people speak more of the older language, while more and more younger people speak the newer language (which becomes the normal usage). (2) The language being shifted from is considered inferior to the one being embraced. (3) An imbalance of borrowings occurs in which more vocabulary is added from the national language to the regional vernacular than the other way around. (4) Finally, the language used in religious ceremonies shifts from the subordinate to the dominant language.

Bilingualism is the dominant reality in Veneto. Changes in society have made knowledge of Italian more valuable in Veneto than that of Venetian. As time passes, more Venetian youth become bilingual, retaining Venetian for local and familial domains, while using Italian in more non-personal areas of life. The increasing usage of Italian by many Venetians may be an indication that they have begun to shift and are on the way to becoming monolingual in Italian. It is important to note that most cases of shift occur intergenerationally: bilingual parents speaking Venetian to their parents and Italian with their children. Most Venetians possess at least some knowledge of Italian, but it is uncertain how many speak what might be considered proper or correct Italian. Many Venetians whose families speak in vernacular at home learn Italian as a second language through an unplanned immersion program when sent to grade school.

Most of the people that I spoke with were bilingual, or at least capable of expressing themselves so that they were understood (often in a quasi-Italian form of Venetian). Few of my consultants had trouble with Italian. Exceptions were Massimo's mother, who was not very confident in her abilities in Italian, and Anna, who warned me she would be mixing the two languages.

The second major indicator of a language shift is when a disproportionate percentage of older people speak the subordinate language, with fewer younger people using it: While conducting my research, I noticed that the Venetian spoken by older people was more difficult for me to comprehend than that spoken by younger people, and in larger

cities it seemed that many of the young people were speaking mostly in Italian, while the older people used a distinctive form of Venetian. Older people speak Venetian more often, especially those who were unable to attend school, and, in particular, those who never really learned or needed to use Italian daily. Even those older Venetians who speak Italian daily have a tendency to insert Venetian into a conversation meant to be in Italian (like my consultants Anna and Renata), while younger people, educated and accustomed to speaking Italian, would most likely do the opposite, substituting Italian words in a Venetian conversation.

In Veneto, many older people use Venetian in all domains, while younger people use it less often and primarily in their home and family domains. Many younger people have incorporated Italian into their lives, while older people seem to prefer to use Venetian as much as possible. If families in Veneto continue to discourage their children from learning Venetian in favor of Italian, eventually the only ones proficient in Venetian will be members of the older generation, causing a definite generational imbalance, if not the end of the language.

The third precondition for a language shift has also occurred: Venetian is considered to be inferior, and is perceived by many as a lesser form of speech compared with Italian. As we have seen, the Albertins did not teach their children Venetian, and focused instead on teaching them languages that they felt were more up to date and that better expressed the reality of modern Italy. Abandonment of language occurs for many reasons, including the association of a rural culture with it and the lack of a written form.

The fourth requirement for a language shift, an imbalance of borrowing, can currently be seen as words are freely borrowed from Italian but not from Venetian. When I was in Veneto, I noticed that it was relatively easy to understand younger people when they were speaking in Venetian. (I only had to ask for a few words to be translated into Italian!) Borrowings are increasing in one direction (from Italian to Venetian) while decreasing to the point of practically ceasing in the other direction (from Venetian to Italian).

The last requirement, the switching of languages within religious activities, has already occurred: the religion of most Italians is the same as the religion of the Venetians, who became Catholic a long time ago. Religious services in the many Catholic churches in

the region are celebrated in Italian; however, at one time these masses and other ceremonial events were celebrated in Latin, and not long ago they were celebrated in Venetian.

As far as language choice is concerned, people tend to choose what is easier, and flows more naturally, unless the circumstances dictate otherwise. People will also converge and use a language they might not normally use. For example, Chiara's choice of speaking Venetian with friends is not unusual. But she does not speak with me in Venetian, simply because, though I understand most of what is being said, I cannot speak Venetian, so it is easier to use another language. "The basic principle of language choice in encounters between individuals is quite theoretically uninteresting: you select the language in which you both have the best proficiency" (Paulston 1994: 89).

Figure 18: Signs of Language Shift

Signs of Shift		In Veneto?
1	Bilingualism	Yes
2	More older people speak the traditional language	Yes
3	Language being shifted from considered inferior	Yes
4	Imbalance of borrowings from new to old language	Yes
5	Religious activity switches to new language	Yes

6.4 ETHNICITY AND SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

By looking at contemporary Venetian social reality, we can attempt to determine which one of Paulston's (1994) four types of social mobilization (ethnicity, ethnic movement, ethnic nationalism and geographic nationalism) best describes this situation. (Paulston's typology is discussed in Section 3.3 of this thesis.) We can also make an educated guess as to the future of the language and culture of this region.

Ethnicity is a social condition rather than a movement; it is a shared cultural identity and the accepted way of life. While those engaged in an ethnic movement have a

more set course towards their goals and are more aware of their situation, an ethnic movement is not strong enough to stop linguistic shift, but it can succeed in slowing the process (Paulston, 1994: 75). Ethnic nationalists seek independence from the nationstate in which they live. Often, ethnic nationalists use their group's language as a symbol to pull the individual members together, to encourage members' loyalty and to champion the group's linguistic uniqueness. (The category of geographical nationalism—in which citizenship is *not* based on shared ancestry or language—does not apply to this study, because Venetian identity is determined by a common ancestry, culture, and language.) Because of the fluidity of these categories, groups of people change from one type of social mobilization to another depending on the salient factors present in each situation: the ideas of the group and the level of agreement existing among its members when dealing with issues of land, language and culture.

My research in Veneto has led me to conclude that ethnicity best describes the current situation. Venetians have a strong ethnic identity; they have a long and proud history; they have lived in the same region for centuries; and they share a common ancestry, culture, and language. Venetian is still spoken throughout the region. However, there are strong social pressures that are (1) moving Venetians toward greater integration with modern Italy and (2) impeding developments toward ethnic movement and ethnic nationalism. All of the factors are present that promote language shift in the direction of the dominant language: "Voluntary migration, access to public schools and thus to the national language, and economic incentives in the form of available jobs all contribute to assimilation and language shift" (Paulston, 1994: 75).

In contemporary Italy, the dominant group (and the Italian state) is quite happy to allow the Venetians to join mainstream society. (In fact, during the Fascist era, the government did more than merely encourage people to embrace the dominant culture and language and forced the Italianization of vernacular speakers.) There is ample opportunity daily to learn Italian in contemporary Venetian society. Access to the Italian language exists through exposure to: the migration of people from other regions of Italy to Veneto; the educational system; radio, television, magazines, newspapers, and comic books (most written materials are written in Italian); religious services; governmental agencies; and social encounters. The economic pressures to learn Italian are immense; most employers

encourage (if not require) their employees to have good knowledge of Italian. Today, there are more economic opportunities in Veneto than in the past because of fast regional economic growth, which also encourages the use of Italian.

The situation in Veneto can be compared to Occitan in France, an ethnicity that is fast losing its linguistic distinction from the rest of the francophone speakers (Paulston, 1994). As Eckert observes, "The adult population of the community is consciously transitional—they have encouraged their children to leave the region to find work, and in preparation for this they have raised them as monolingual French speakers" (Paulston, 1994: 51). A similar phenomenon occurred in the past in Veneto, with poverty pushing families to emigrate to Belgium, France, Germany, and other countries in order to survive. Today, many Venetians are switching to Italian for economic reasons and teaching their children Italian to help them be successful in life. "Occitan," writes Eckert, "was shamed out of existence" (Paulston, 1994: 51). There is hope that this is not the future awaiting Venetian. However, the fact that the regional government of Veneto will not allow Venetian to be used in its official debates demonstrates that shame in being associated with Venetian is still present. Many Venetians (even overseas) do not feel comfortable speaking to one another in Venetian, even after becoming friends. However, despite the similarities, the situation regarding Venetian differs from that of Occitan in one significant respect: Venetians are still bilingual. Nevertheless, as we have seen, bilingualism is the first step toward language shift, and all the key factors that promote a shift from the subordinate to the dominant language are present in Veneto.

If Venetians choose to switch completely to Italian, and the language is relegated to regional history, along with many aspects of the rural culture, what will happen to the people's ethnic identity as Venetians? Koenig (1980) reminds us that a change in identity and group membership is essential in cases of language shift, and if Venetians were to complete a language shift to Italian, then the collective experience of group membership would also change. However, as Howard (1980) specifies, because ethnicity and culture are not one and the same, when cultural distinctiveness ceases to be, ethnicity does not. Venetians who become linguistically, and even culturally, Italian will still be ethnically Venetian and will be identified by others as such. Their ethnic identity is tied to their land, the past history of the region, and their ancestry, and these elements will remain even without the usage of their language.

While my research leads me to conclude that social trends in Veneto are moving toward language shift and ethnicity, there are some counter trends that are providing impetus for the development of an ethnic movement and even some support for ethnic nationalism. The *Veneti* have been an ethnic group for a long period of time, but things are changing. The secessionist movement has gained popularity, not just in Veneto, but in the entire north of Italy. With the greatly improved economy, people have become more confident in what the future might hold. They have put pressure on government agencies to take action on issues that have not been dealt with adequately, such as the role of the Venetian language and history within the regional school system. These protests have taken political form with the creation of the *Leghe* and its surprising gain in power, the struggle within the current political system, and the attempt to establish the politically separate nation of *Padania*. This ethnic movement has been fueled by the traditional tensions between the North and South, the anger of many Northerners at Rome and its perceived corruption, and the growing power of the European Union, whose existence provides some hope for a restructuring of the Italian nation.

Nevertheless, most Venetians are not members of groups that are willing to fight for change, and many of the middle class are not particularly unhappy with the system. Most people feel included in some way in the larger society, and if not happy, they are not unhappy enough to actually fight for independence. The violence that has erupted among secessionists and members of other nationalistic groups has shocked many who are not used to violence being used as a method to gain political and economic power. Violence is not unheard of, but it is usually associated with organized crime.

Secessionist groups use Venetian ethnicity as a means to an end, a method to gain some of the national resources, and, if possible, independence. These people believe they have no choice but to use shocking methods, including violence, to awaken their fellow countrymen to the negative situation in which they feel they have been placed. People who are members of secessionist groups in Veneto are ethnic nationalists, part of a population who believes that they should be granted independence and their right to self-govern. These individuals are certain that their true identity can only be revealed through their Venetian mother tongue, and that the soul of their country exists through that mode of speech. Because of their beliefs, the language becomes larger than itself, overtaking the role of a way of communication and encompassing much more. The language envelopes

the community and becomes a powerful symbol. In this scenario, Venetian represents the goals of the group—group cohesion, independence, and land ownership.

When the people's confidence that their ethnic separateness is protected by government entities is eroded, and they become doubtful that the situation is working in their best interests, then other options such as independence are considered. However, those engaged in an ethnic movement, and even some nationalists, may be willing to accept the current situation as long as they have confidence that their culture and language are protected.

Figure 19: Ethnicity, Ethnic Movement and Ethnic Nationalism

Ethnicity	In Veneto	Who
Shared history is emphasized—focus is on the common culture.	Yes	Most Venetians
Consider themselves non-violent	Yes	Most Venetians
Glorious past is important,	Yes	Most Venetians
Ethnic movement	In Veneto	
Cognitive	Yes, some secessionist groups	
Self-chosen	The letter to the ONU (UN)	
Militant	Some secessionist groups	
Violent	Some secessionist groups	
Charismatic leader	Perhaps Rochetta (at one time)	
Language as rallying point.	Sometimes—secessionists	
Boundary maintenance.	Yes, within Veneto	
Glorious past is important.	Yes	
Ethnic Nationalism	In Veneto	
Language becomes a significant symbol.	Yes, members of secessionist groups	
Disgruntled individuals want independence	Yes, especially secessionists	
People are very loyal to their group.	Yes, e.g., <i>The Veneto Serenissima Repubblica</i>	
Has a middle class	Yes, the region has become wealthier in last decade.	
Goals: group unity and independence; members believe the “other” (dominant group) is a danger to group, its goals, and gaining land.	Yes, independence groups have great unity and want independence; believe the other (Italians) pose a danger; they seek land possession, direct control over Veneto—the Serenissima.	

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is easy to become entrenched in arguments as to whether Venetian is a language or a dialect, if it is still useful, or if it is indeed past its time. Where does this leave the people of Veneto? Language is an integral part of who we are as humans; our ability to communicate among ourselves allows us to connect with others in our communities and our cultures. In this case, the local language has been used as a tool to bring people together, as well as to divide them, and has brought both shame and pride to Veneto. As an important symbol, the language provides part of the identity of its people, along with their collective past. The identity of this group of people is connected to the history of the region and their land. However, identity as a social construct can be temporary; much of it depends on the rest of society and the specific experiences through which each individual lives.

The future of Venetian is driven by the actions of the people who speak it, together with decisions made by those participating in government, both regional and national. Individual speakers affect the outcome of the linguistic situation by altering the future of the language with actions such as not teaching their children the Venetian language. In this way, they increase the chances that the language will ultimately vanish and greatly decrease the possibility of their children teaching their grandchildren the ancestral language. However, even in a situation in which the language would ultimately disappear, the ethnic ties that bind people within the group to one another and to the region would not end, but remain, and the people will be connected. As long as Venetians continue to identify themselves as Venetians, belong to the same cultural lineage, and keep on being identified by others as Venetians, they will still be bound together. As long as their collective memory remains, they remain Venetian.

Venetians are responding to the present situation in various ways. Some are identifying themselves as Venetians (keeping their unique linguistic and cultural heritage) while still seeing themselves as Italians. Others do not see themselves as Italians and use their ethnicity as a label to separate themselves from other Italians—and others identify them as Venetians. Because of this outside identification, each individual decision affects a small portion of those involved with the language. For example, the decision not to teach children vernacular does not alter the ethnic connectiveness of the group, but may impact

the perception of the outside world. At the same time, choices such as this do not seal the fate of the language. Since language is not static, it is conceivable, although unlikely, that the course already begun could be altered and changed leading to the revitalization of the language.

In various instances, as Koenig (1980) has stated, language has been used to increase awareness of ethnic identity, and in some cases both language and ethnic identity are used together for the purpose of gaining independence. The *Liga Veneta* and the *Lega Nord* were in fact seeking independence for the new republic of *Padania*, which would include *Veneto* as well as other northern regions. Some of the people involved wanted the vernacular to become the new national language of a *Padonia*. Through politics, Venetian power in Italy increased in tandem with a strong region economy in Veneto, which allowed the collective Venetian voice (possibly much stronger than in the past, when the region was poorer) to be part of the debates in Rome dealing with the division of available national resources.

As long as there continue to be native speakers, and these young speakers use the language daily, with friends and family, and the language is not completely relegated to the arts (used only for poetry and plays), a chance still exists that the transition—the shift—from Venetian to Italian will slow down considerably, giving revitalization a window of opportunity to succeed. Groups emphasizing ethnic ties and linguistic heritage also encourage young people to keep speaking their language. In this manner, they display the positive aspects of the traditional culture and help the people hold onto their cultural past rather than abandon it for the economic advantages made available to those who speak Italian.

It is not unheard of for people to agree that mother tongues hold tremendous symbolic value, but often minority groups' mother tongues are depicted negatively by majority groups in order to justify the continuation of the status quo, regardless as to whether or not the present system preserves the needs and the rights of the minority speakers. It is possible, that the majority (and their politicians) will "suggest that certain languages, in particular those that have no standard written form, are too 'primitive', not 'civilized' enough, to be used as languages of instruction or as bearers of modern culture, and even to maintain that the use of these languages hinders the intellectual development of children" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1980: 13). Another obstacle is the idea often held "that the

kind of things that can be spoken about in minority languages, things that minority speakers handle more skillfully than majority speakers, are to do with intuition and emotions, and that it is the majorities... who are able to teach rational thinking, theoretically constructed and scientifically verified argument" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1980: 13). These are barriers that will have to be negotiated and removed if Venetian has any prospect for revitalization.

Minority languages in Italy are often stigmatized as "dialects," and the word is understood as a term describing an inferior form of a language. If a vernacular (a "dialect") comes from a language, but the vernacular is not considered a language, then the conclusion is often made that the vernacular is not good enough to be a "language." Those ways of speaking categorized as "languages" are considered better than those that, for whatever reason, do not qualify. However, as we have seen, even linguists do not have an easy way to separate the "real" languages from quasi-languages, because there are no-quasi languages—only ways of speaking that are not labeled "languages" for a number of reasons, including the number of speakers and their economic status within their country (See Section 3.1).

By emphasizing the order of a mode of speech, we are reinforcing commonly held misconceptions about what dialects are and why they are not languages, and implying that dialects are somehow defective. The mere placement of language forms in a hierarchical order makes one more important, and better, than another, regardless of whether, in reality, the "lesser" mode allows for better communication. The words "language" and "dialect" are not describing the actual relationship that exists between various ways of speaking. Instead, these words are used to label and judge modes of speech using archaic and inaccurate standards.

A pejorative understanding of the term "dialect" perpetuates misunderstandings that a dialect is an inferior, degenerate vernacular derived from the (superior) national language. This perception supports the continuation of the status quo in which the majority language, supported by the dominant political and economic powers of the nation, increases its dominance, while the speakers of minority languages often feel shame because of their language patterns and face discrimination by the dominant group. This perception can be changed by challenging its underlying cultural assumptions. The way in which words are used does have an impact on social reality.

Language revitalization and renewal are possible with the conscious support and encouragement of both central and local government entities, as well as the school systems within each region. For this to occur, intellectuals, politicians, and other opinion leaders must work toward changing popular attitudes toward regional languages and cultures, so that Venetians and the members of other regional ethnic groups can be proud of their heritages. Revitalization is a difficult path to follow and a hard goal to accomplish. Without the needed support from the leaders of the region and the country, it may be impossible to achieve.

Government, schools, businesses and individuals can change the popular attitudes by working together to alter the present linguistic course – rather than actively discouraging local language use, the policy should be to encourage it. For example, the local bank in Fimon could make an effort to hire local representatives that speak both the local language and the national one. This type of policy would help modify the negative perceptions many have of local languages, such as that they represent the past and lack of success.

The reality is that today—and for the foreseeable future—Italian is the common language in Italy, the *lingua franca*. However, this fact does not justify ignoring peoples' history and lessening the value of their vernaculars. Local languages should be appreciated, and those people who use them respected. Presently, both Italian history and the Italian language are taught in the schools. These courses should continue, but in addition, the school system should establish and implement curricula that emphasize Italian regional history and culture (region by region), as well as much more information on regional languages and their derivation. In addition, the schools should encourage new and innovative uses of the local languages, such as through art, literature and poetry written in the vernacular. If more non-standard literatures were taught and read in the local schools (not just at the universities), the result would be much greater appreciation for the regional vernaculars. If these educational reforms occur, people might be able to see that the expressivity of the regional languages has not vanished, and that these languages still possess artistic value. Of most importance, it will be seen that speaking these languages is not a historical relic, but a reflection of present reality.

Courses that present more positive views of regional languages would allow children to see how the past influences the present, and how the languages spoken in their

region are not just castoffs from a better linguistic system. The local language varieties can be seen as valuable ways of communicating and representing ethnicity and culture. As a result, more vocabulary from local vernaculars would be used, and fewer would feel ashamed of a way of living and speaking that has worked well for those living in their region for a long time. If more emphasis were placed on regarding all regions as "different but equal," and as having made important contributions to what Italy is today (both linguistically and culturally), maybe in time peoples in each region could regain more pride in their own cultures and local linguistic heritages, as well as greater respect for other peoples' heritages. Even though this would not occur immediately, perhaps with time, some of the stereotypes and misconceptions would be worn away, little by little. This type of education, along with increased mobility, might help to lessen the animosity that exists today between the North and South.

Whether the *Veneti* choose to hold onto their past culture and somehow rebuild their language, or choose to let it go, remains to be seen. Most of the examples seen in the world of attempted language revitalizations have not been very successful. I doubt that the Venetian language will have the needed support to be fully revitalized. However, I do think that if people work together, there is no reason why Venetian cannot be maintained and remain a part of Venetian life, rather than dwindle and become a dead language. Perhaps more regional autonomy will help preserve the Venetian language by giving the Venetian people more control over the decision-making processes that will affect their future and that of their children. With community effort, children can continue to be taught local varieties of Venetian. They can be raised to understand the unique phraseology and the worldview that allows Venetians to be and feel unique and not hide their history or feel alienated from mainstream society. In a perfect situation, the nationalistic movements would work alongside government entities to show why it is important and appropriate for Venetian children to learn of their ancestry and of the poets, writers, artists, architects, explorers and other famous people who helped shape the Veneto of the past and can be incorporated to help shape the Veneto of the future.

REFERENCES

- Beebe, James. "Basic Concepts and Techniques of Rapid Appraisal." *Human Organization* 54(1): 44 (1995).
- Berruto, Gaetano. "Code-switching and code-mixing." In *The Dialects of Italy*, edited by Martin Maiden and Mair Perry. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Bonsaver, Guido. "Dialect, Culture, and Politics: The Northern League(s)." In *Italian Dialects and Literature: From the Renaissance to the Present*. Edited by Emmanuela Tandello and Diego Zancani. *Journal of the Institute of Romance Studies*, 1(1996): 97-107. London: University of London.
- Buson, Gilberto. "Gilberto Buson Speaks." *Veneto.org*. 1997
<<http://www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/html>> (October 2000).
- Cortelazzo, Michele A. and Ivano Paccagnella. "Il Veneto." In *L'Italiano nelle regioni: lingua nazionale e identità regionali*, edited by Francesco Bruni. Turin: UTET (Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese), 1992.
- Coltri, Gianluigi. "Il Fascino della Musical Popolare." *Il Basso Vicentino*, April 1991, 27.
- Corbett, Patricia. "Babel all'Italiana." *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 1994, 44-54
- De Mauro, Tullio. *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita*. Rome: Giuseppe Laterza e Figli Spa, 1963.
- DeMauro, Tullio, and Mario Lodi. *Lingua e dialetti*. Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1979.
- Ellis, Rod. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Fasold, Ralph. *The Sociolinguistics of Society*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1984.
- The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, edited by S.B. Flexner, and L.C. Hauck. (2nd ed.). NY: Random House, 1987.

- Gardin, Albert. "Dialecto o Lingua? Contributo al Corso: 'Lingua Veneta: Comunicazione e Società.'" *Veneto.org*. 8-29 May 1999.
<<http://www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/.html>> (12 October 2000).
- , Albert. "Repressione Italiana Carcerazione di Luigi Faccia." *Veneto.org*. 23 March 2000. <<http://www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/html>> (12 October 2000).
- Hardin, Curtis and Mahzarin R. Banaji. "The Influence of Language on Thought." *Social Cognition*, 11(3): 277-308 (1993).
- Header, Harry. "Whose Identity? Italy and the Italians." *History Today*, 44(11): 37-44 (1994).
- Howard, Michael C. "Ethnicity and Economic Integration in Southern Belize." *Ethnicity*, 7(2): 119-136 (1980).
- Isajiw, Wsevolod W. "Definitions of Ethnicity." *Ethnicity*, 1: 111-124 (1974).
- Koenig, Edna L. "Ethnicity: The Key Variable in a Case Study of Language Maintenance and Language Shift." *Ethnicity*, 7(1): 1-14. (1980).
- Lane, Frederic C. *Venice: a Maritime Republic*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.
- Menciassi, Bertrand. "Definitions: Languages or Dialects?" European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages.org, <<http://www.eblul.org>> (5 August 2002).
- Muljačić, Žarko. "The Relationship Between the Dialects and the Standard Language." In *The Dialects of Italy*, edited by Martin Maiden and Mair Perry. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Marcato, Gianna. *Parlar Veneto*. Florence: Edizioni Dal Riccio. 1981
- Pagliarini, Giancarlo. "Il Nord Ha Già Pagato Stop Al Colonialismo." 1996.
<<http://www.leganordsen.it/documenti/pagliar.html>> (13 March 1998).

- Paulston, Christina. *Linguistic Minorities in Multilingual Settings*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin Co., 1994.
- Pizzati, Carlo. "Veneto's Self-Determination." *Veneto.org*,
<<http://www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/>> (12 October 2000).
- , Carlo. "Interview with John Trumper, Linguist Expert of Venet."
<<http://www.veneto.org/language/trumper.html>> (27 August 1999).
- Raloff, Janet. "Languishing Languages: Cultures at Risk." *Science News* 147(8): 117-118 (1995).
- Sabatini, Francesco. *La lingua e il nostro mondo: L'Italiano come si è formato, come lo usiamo*. Turin: Loescher, 1978.
- Salzmann, Zdenek. *Language, Culture and Society: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*. Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1993.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove. "Language or dialect?" *Terralingua: Partnerships for Linguistic and Biological Diversity*. 01/20/2002.
<<http://www.terralingua.org/Definitions/DLangDialect.html>> (7 May 2002).
- Sobrero, Alberto. "Italianization of the Dialects." In *The Dialects of Italy*, edited by Martin Maiden and Mair Perry. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Swadesh, Morris. "The Origin and Diversification of Language." Edited by Joel Sherzer. Chicago: Aldine Atherton Inc., 1971.
- Torpey, John. "Affluent Secessionists: Italy's Northern League." *Dissent*. 41 (3): 311-315 (1994).
- Tuttle, Edward. "The Veneto." In *The Dialects of Italy*, edited by Martin Maiden and Mair Perry. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Wiel, Alethea. *A History of Venice: From it's Founding to the Unification of Italy*. (1995; reprint, New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1898).

Woods, Dwayne. "The Crisis of Center-Periphery Integration in Italy and the Rise of Regional Populism." *Comparative Politics* 27(2): 187-203 (1995).

"Veglia per San Marco." *Veneto.org*. 8 May 2000. <<http://www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/>>. (12 October 2000).

Vittoria, Maurizio. *Breve storia di Venezia, Dalle origini ai giorni nostri*. Rome: Newton and Compton, 1997

Zanini, Luciano. "Paura del Futuro." *Il Basso Vicentino*, February 1997, 187.

Appendices

Appendix A

From www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/.

VEGLIA PER SAN MARCO – 8 maggio 2000

Lunedì 8 maggio 2000, ore 22, veglia indipendentista in Piazza San Marco per ricordare l'eroica impresa di San Marco del 1997 dei Serenissimi. La veglia si concluderà all'alba del 9 maggio. Discorsi, canti, letture, ecc.

VIGIL FOR SAINT MARK - May 8th 2000.
(Author unknown –Translation by Adelia Falda)

Monday, May 8 at 22 hours, there will be an independentist vigil in Piazza San Marco to remember the heroic endeavor of San Marco in 1997 by the Serenissimi. The vigil will end at dawn, the 9th of May. Lectures, songs, readings, etc.

Appendix B

From www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/.

LA VENETA SERENISSIMA REPUBBLICA VIVE E VUOLE UN POSTO ALL'ONU – 20 gennaio 2000

Il 20 gennaio 2000 la Presidenza del Congresso de la Nazion Veneta ha inviato alla Segreteria Generale dell'ONU una lettera di richiesta di ammissione della Veneta Serenissima Repubblica alle Nazioni Unite. Copia della lettera è stata trasmessa per conoscenza al Presidente del Parlamento Europeo, Nicole Fontaine.

THE *VENETA SERENISSIMA REPUBBLICA* IS ALIVE AND WANTS A PLACE IN THE UNITED NATIONS – January 20th 2000 (author unknown, translation by Adelia Falda)

On January 20th of 2000, the Presidency of the Congress of the Venetian Nation sent the Secretary General of the UN a letter requesting the admission of the Veneta Serenissima Repubblica to the United Nations. A copy of the letter has been sent, for her information, to the President of the European Parliament, Nicole Fontaine.

Appendix C

From www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/.

REPRESSIONE ITALIANA CARCERAZIONE DI LUIGI FACCIA (VSG: VENETO SERENISSIMO GOVERNO) - Venezia 23 marzo 2000 Albert Gardin

Congresso de la Nazion Veneta denuncia le campagne persecutorie attuate dagli apparati dello Stato Italiano contro I patrioti veneti. Oggi protestiamo contro l'incarcerazione – avvenuta ieri sera – di Luigi Faccia, presidente di quel Veneto Serenissimo Governo che occupando il campanile di San Marco intese affermare nel 1997 la volontà dei Veneti a tornare indipendenti e sovrani sui territori della Serenissima. Come andiamo ripetendo spesso, lo Stato italiano sta portando avanti, nel silenzio generale, una forte campagna repressiva che tende ad eliminare le formazioni indipendentiste e la cultura veneta. Ma il dado ormai è tratto e niente riuscirà a fermare il processo di riscatto nazionale dei veneti. Non vogliamo niente di ciò che non sia nostro: rendiamo a Roma ciò che è suo (furti fiscali, repressione, cultura coloniale) e a Venezia ciò che gli appartiene (vitalità, governo, amministrazione veneta e risanamento sociale). Il Congresso de la Nazion Veneta operando per il ritorno all'indipendenza veneta non partecipa in nessun modo alle truffaldine elezioni "regionali" e lancia un appello all'astensione attiva. Domenica prossima il fronte indipendentista si riunirà (luogo riservato) per stabilire nuove forme di autorganizzazione politica dei veneti e le modalità del rifiuto del voto italiano. L'arresto di Faccia fornisce dunque un'ulteriore buona ragione per combattere l'oppressione romana.

Albert Gardin (Presidente CNV)

ITALIAN REPRESSION THE INCARCERATION OF LUIGI FACCIA VSG: VENETO SERENISSIMO GOVERNO – Venice, March 23 2000 By Albert Gardin – Translation by Adelia Falda.

The *Congresso de la Nazion Veneta* denounces the persecutory campaign carried out by the machinery of the Italian State against Venetian patriots. Today we protest against the incarceration – which occurred last night – of Luigi Faccia, the president of the *Veneto Serenissimo Governo* [the group] that by occupying the belltower of San Marco meant to affirm (in 1997) the Venetian people's wishes of becoming independent once again and sovereign over the territory of the Serenissima. The group meant to accomplish As we are going to be repeating often, the Italian State is carrying on, in general silence, a strong repressive campaign whose tendency is to eliminate independent groups and Venetian culture. But by now the die has been cast, and nothing will be able to stop the process of the national blackmail of Venetians. We do not want anything that does not belong to us: we will give to Rome that which is hers (fiscal robberies, repression, and colonial culture) and to Venice that which belongs to her (vitality, government, venetian administration and social healing). The *Congresso de la Nazion Veneta* works for the return to Venetian independence, it does not participate in any way with fraudulent "regional" elections and is launching a call for active abstinence [from voting]. Next Sunday the leaders of secessionist groups will meet (in a undisclosed location) to establish new ways of political organization and the procedures of refusing Italian vote. The arrest of Mr. Faccia provides us with yet another reason to fight Roman oppression.

Appendix D

From www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/.

Dialecto o lingua? Contributo al corso: "LINGUA VENETA: COMUNICAZIONE E SOCIETÀ", Cittadella 8-29 maggio 1999.

Il veneto può essere considerato sia lingua che dialetto. Dialetto veneto. Non esiste un dialetto veneto ma dei dialetti. Ogni comprensorio veneto è caratterizzato da una sua parlata che si distingue da tutte le altre per certe varianti. Al di là di tutte le particolarità locali, ogni veneto capisce il dialetto degli altri e tutti i veneti possono tranquillamente comunicare tra di loro usando ognuno il proprio veneto. Molti poeti contemporanei quando vogliono scrivere in "veneto" ricorrono al loro dialetto. La produzione letteraria dei nostri giorni rivela però la mancanza di unità lessicale e soprattutto ortografica del "veneto". Molti gruppi culturali o politici hanno cercato di mettere ordine nella "lingua" veneta per affermarne l'unitarietà. I loro tentativi sono tutti falliti sul nascere. Quanta scuola ha fatto il manuale ortografico veneto proposto negli anni passati dalla Regione del Veneto? Nessuna!

Il fallimento è dovuto anche al fatto che chi si occupa della questione linguistica veneta sono i dialettologi. La dialettologia non si preoccupa del problema politico, culturale e letterario della lingua veneta ma di aspetti socio-archivistico-linguistici delle parlate attuali, senza alcuna differenza tra di loro (giustamente dal loro punto di vista!) Il problema della "lingua" è un problema eminentemente politico. Quando una nazione si pone il problema di adottare una lingua ufficiale, sceglie un modello preciso. Anche noi se vogliamo definire il problema della lingua ufficiale veneta dobbiamo compiere una scelta che deriva appunto da una necessità politica senza la quale il problema "lingua" non esisterebbe. Per noi veneti in stato di occupazione il problema incomincia a porsi concretamente perché la lingua è uno dei segni della nostra differenza, oltre ovviamente alla storia, alla cultura, agli usi e costumi propri della civiltà veneta, segni che giustificano in buona parte la nostra esigenza di autonomia e di indipendenza. Per dare una risposta politica al problema linguistico dobbiamo guardare alla storia. La Repubblica Veneta non ha mai avuto un problema linguistico ed è ricorsa prevalentemente al toscano per le sue comunicazioni interne o esterne. Anche il veneziano e il latino venivano usate nelle comunicazioni pubbliche, a seconda delle circostanze ma in modo minore. Non vi era comunque un confine linguistico preciso e rigido. Nelle loro comunicazioni orali, nei dibattiti "parlamentari" o diplomatici i veneziani utilizzavano invece la lingua veneta, o meglio il veneziano (famosa la raccomandazione del doge al suo emissario a Costantinopoli: "...e ricordate, davanti al sultan, de parlarghe in venexian". Tra veneziano e altre parlate venete vi sono le stesse differenze che esistono tra tutte le altre parlate venete. Comunque tutti i veneti capiscono il veneziano, così come tutti i veneziani capiscono pienamente i vari dialetti veneti. Vi è però una grande differenza politica – e non solo – tra il veneziano e le altre parlate venete. Il veneziano di fatto era il veneto ufficiale dello Stato Veneto, la lingua delle Autorità della dominante e delle ville patrizie disseminate nelle campagne venete. Ma la differenza più forte tra veneziano e le restanti parlate venete sta sul piano letterario. Il veneziano conta una lunga e ricca letteratura alla quale hanno concorso scrittori e poeti sia veneziani che veneti.

Questa produzione è così articolata che potrebbe (e dovrebbe) essere oggetto di un corso specifico di studi; proposta peraltro già avanzata dal prof. Gilberto Pizzamiglio (Università di Venezia) su *Il Gazzettino*. E, così riconsiderato, il veneziano può apparire a tutti gli effetti lingua nazionale dei veneti (per l'uso politico-diplomatico che ne è stato fatto, perché sostenuto da una ricca letteratura, per il suo consolidamento linguistico omogeneo nel tempo) e come la lingua veneta per eccellenza. Dunque senza bisogno di tentare nuove prospettive o avventure linguistiche i veneti trovano una soluzione naturale e storica nell'adozione del veneziano come lingua ufficiale del popolo veneto. Parliamo ovviamente sul piano culturale e identitario nazionale veneto perché sul piano pratico credo che continueremo a ricorrere ad altre lingue oggi che hanno il pregio di essere più diffuse e che facilitano perciò i nostri rapporti internazionali (toscano, inglese, francese, spagnolo, ecc.). Il

riconoscimento del veneziano come lingua ufficiale dei veneti comporta inoltre molti vantaggi sul piano idiomatrico, sul piano lessicale e su quello ortografico; non vi è bisogno di inventare niente di nuovo o di imporre modelli idiomatrics ed ortografici artificiali perché il patrimonio letterario veneto fornisce tutte le risposte necessarie. Nei testi di autori come Giorgio Baffo, Carlo Goldoni, Giacomo Casanova, Francesco Boaretti, Giacinto Gallina, Giacomo Noventa (per citare solo alcuni nomi famosi di una lunga lista) troviamo una miniera di modelli linguistici che ci permetteranno di impostare una scuola linguistica seria, forte e credibile sotto tutti i punti di vista. Certo che la perdita di indipendenza dello Stato Veneto, la cancellazione o mano missione della nostra memoria storica hanno causato una interruzione della nostra tradizione letteraria determinando dunque uno stato di grande confusione che rende difficile rimettere le cose in ordine. Le nostre scelte devono però essere logiche e rapportate alla nostra storia, quella più forte e più solida. Solo così potremo trovare le risposte giuste per la nostra liberazione, per un ritorno ad uno stato di indipendenza che ci spetta come popolo plurimillenario, faro glorioso per le civiltà mediterranee ed europee. È ora che dalle parole si passi ai fatti e che si costituisca l'Accademia Veneta, un istituto specifico e permanente che sovrintenda finalmente alla tutela, alla cura, alla conservazione di tutto il nostro patrimonio linguistico veneto (dialetti veneti compresi).

Cittadella 29 maggio 1999

Albert Gardin

Congresso de la Nazon Veneta

Venezia

Appendix E

From www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/.

Veneto's Self-Determination By Carlo Pizzati. (English translation by the editor of www.veneto.org)

Since the day eight men of the Most Serene Army of Venice climbed the stairs of St. Marks squares towerbell in Venice last spring, things haven't been the same in Veneto. The soldiers in reality were simply showing their frustration at the indifference of the Italian government to the constant calls for more regional autonomy in all of Italy. Their symbolic gesture of hoisting the flag sporting St. Marks Lion holding the bible in one paw and brandishing a menacing dagger in the other served to voice a complaint many Venets share: the inefficiency and corruption of the representatives of the central government and the cultural, historical and often linguistic differences that make cohabitation within an Italian state quite different.

But the Lions of the Most Serene Army, or the eight of the towerbell as they've been nicknamed, although brandishing a war-era machine gun and riding in a sort of home-made tank into the square, basically acted in a non-violent demonstration, and are still paying for it behind bars. Their gesture has awakened a deep fear in some Italian politicians, the real possibility of a secession. The Northern League, Italy's fourth largest political party with more than 10 percent of the consensus (in Italy), has made the secession of Northern Italy the leading request of its political platform. In Veneto the League has reached as much as 60 percent of the vote in some provinces, with an over all majority surpassing 40 percent, something that never happened in this region which used to be until the beginning of the decade the stronghold of the Christian Democratic party.

Answering to this call of autonomy or independence the mayor of Venice has announced a movement of mayors in favor of federalism, to satisfy the need in Veneto for more decentralization and detachment from Rome, the capital of Italy. So far, electoral results have not confirmed or denied the success of this initiative.

The fear of Rome for the autonomist movements in Veneto has gone so far that Verona's District Attorney is trying to bring to trial some leaders of the Green Shirts, an organization associated but not directly with the Northern League. Verona's D.A. asserts these are subversives, that they are armed and that they could destabilize the union of Italy, something protected by the Constitution, one of the longest and less flexible constitutions of world history. The Northern League, and the Green Shirts, declare that they believe in Gandhian non-violence, that, yes, they are in favor of a secession, but that they are not willing to be dragged in an armed conflict similar to that which has been causing massacres and killings in Ulster in the last 20 years. And so far no real evidence has emerged to prove the Green Shirts are lying.

Appendix F

From www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/.

AI VENETI

Il 1997 è ormai passato, e con esso anche quelle manifestazioni in apparenza volte a ricordare i duecento anni della caduta del Governo della Serenissima ma, in vero, indegnamente improntate a liquidare quel capitolo storico archiviandolo definitivamente. Mai citati come celebrazione di vitalità e coraggio in omaggio alla mai morta Serenissima, i fatti di Piazza San Marco del 9 Maggio 1997 venivano in dette occasioni, al contrario, descritti come assurdi, non proponibili né affiancabili alla storia di Venezia.

Il nostro gesto è stato preso, da certi storici poco sinceri, quale pretesto per poter affermare che la Repubblica di San Marco avrebbe lasciato dietro di sé nei propri antichi territori soltanto odio e brutti ricordi, affermazioni che non si conciliano però né con le nostre autentiche espressioni d'amore per la Veneta Repubblica né con la verità storica.

Il rispetto che lo Stato Veneto aveva, per l'umana dignità e la libertà, emerge incontestabile dagli stessi fatti che informarono la Sua esistenza. La convivenza pacifica, la giustizia sociale, il dialogo interculturale, il buongoverno, la responsabilizzazione dei magistrati e dei governanti, e traguardi civili quali le garanzie bancarie e monetarie, l'economia, l'ecologia, le autonomie territoriali 'naturali' e il federalismo, lungi dall'essere conquiste recenti, altro non sono in realtà che ondate di ritorno di quella Veneta civiltà, che Napoleone, gli Asburgo, i Savoia e i loro eredi, hanno più volte oscurata ma mai cancellata. Quando il Maggior Consiglio della Serenissima venne costretto – il 12 maggio 1797 – a rinunciare ai propri poteri, segnando così la fine del Governo Veneto allora in carica, la Repubblica continuò a vivere nello spirito e nei fatti delle Sue genti, e i Suoi meccanismi, vecchi ma collaudati ed efficienti, continuarono a scandire pressoché indisturbati i ritmi del quotidiano, conservando e accrescendo nel popolo la nostalgia di un passato perduto ma mai dimenticato. Se si fosse, allora, data al popolo la possibilità di votare, si sarebbe sicuramente scoperto che la quasi totalità delle genti della Repubblica avrebbero continuato a sostenere il legittimo Governo. Invece, purtroppo, la prepotenza e l'ignoranza di un uomo chiamato Napoleone (precursore francese dei più recenti Hitler e Stalin), appoggiate dal contributo di pochi sprovveduti veneti, imposero al Nostro Governo (governo di uno stato pacifico e neutrale!) una capitolazione dagli effetti devastanti. Non vogliamo certo negare gli errori e le imperfezioni nella vita della Veneta Repubblica, ma non possiamo nemmeno assecondare la malafede l'ignoranza o la presunzione di quegli storici.

D'accordo, quelle antiche strutture amministrative, dovevano essere aggiornate alle nuove subentranti esigenze, ma ciò non avrebbe comportato, per forza, la morte di Venezia e del Suo Stato. Tutto poteva succedere, ma ciò che sarebbe dovuto accadere era che lo Stato Veneto continuasse ad esistere e non perdesse la Sua plurisecolare sovranità e indipendenza. Ciò che invece accadde fu che da quel momento non solo venne sconvolto l'equilibrio e la pace interna alla Nostra Patria – con razzie nelle campagne e città, con la distruzione dell'arsenale, con furti di centinaia e centinaia d'opere d'arte – ma iniziò pure un programmatico e scellerato piano di cancellazione della Nostra Gloriosa Storia e della Nostra Identità di Popolo, piano che continua ancora oggi. Una Nazione Storica d'Europa quale è il Veneto, che fu per millenni padrona del proprio destino, che riuscì a pilotare con la Sua saggezza la politica di nazioni ad essa ben superiori e che seppe sostenere proficui rapporti con genti di tutto il mondo, si trova ora ridimensionata al rango di semplice regione di uno stato che non solo non ne riconosce il valore storico ma che non ne ascolta e comprende nemmeno le più basilari, legittime e democratiche istanze.

Ma perché non siamo ascoltati? Perché non ricordiamo più che siamo figli di una Storia tra le più particolari e straordinarie, che siamo uno dei più Antichi e Nobili Popoli d'Europa. Soltanto riappropriandoci della Nostra Storia, della Nostra Identità e del Nostro Spirito potremo riguadagnarci l'antico prestigio e assistere al ricomparire in mezzo a noi di politici e amministratori ispirati, impegnati e coerenti, di uomini di pensiero, d'ingegno, d'arte e poesia

capaci di riaccendere il passato splendore. Quello conosciuto oggi come 'Modello Sociale ed Economico Veneto', altro non è che l'eredità dei Nostri Avi concretizzata in un tessuto sociale, economico, culturale ed umano elaborato da infinite generazioni di Veneti – Veneti per nascita o per libera scelta- un'eredità sedimentata e rafforzata nei lunghi periodi di armonioso vivere permessi dalla singolare politica di neutralità che la Serenissima seppe pensare e abilmente condurre. Il Veneto Governo proteggeva gelosamente la propria comunità per la quale era un potente alleato che ne sosteneva la libera iniziativa; aveva un'alta considerazione per il ceto agrario produttivo e le varie imprenditorie nascenti, e tutto questo fece sì che una dinamica concezione del sociale entrasse via via a far parte della mentalità del Popolo Veneto, modellandone la cultura e influenzandone profondamente il divenire. La cura che Venezia seppe dare, tra le altre, all'industria della seta di Bergamo ne è una dimostrazione esemplare.

Lo Stato Veneto ora non c'è più, ma quella tenacia, quel bagaglio di esperienze, abilità e sensibilità nelle arti e nei mestieri ereditato dai Nostri Padri Veneti, ancora adesso persiste e si manifesta nell'irrefrenabile dinamicità, fantasia e intraprendenza della Nostra Gente. Tali qualità, però, vengono espresse oggi in modo sempre più disordinato, sortendo effetti sempre più compromettenti l'integrità delle persone, della società e dell'ambiente. Il fatto è che da quel 12 Maggio 1797, il Popolo Veneto avverte il bisogno di una Guida (intesa non come una presenza personale e carismatica – alla stregua dell'uomo forte" oggi tanto auspicato – né come organismo totalitario, ma come traguardo di un processo di generale 'risveglio' di quello Spirito Veneto maestro di vita da sempre proprio della Nostra gente ed ora assopito) che lo incoraggi, lo orienti e lo sostegni nell'espressione delle Sue potenzialità; una Guida che sappia prevedere, comprendere, conciliare e incanalare positivamente le varie forze sociali ed economiche e che riesca a mettere sempre tutti d'accordo con umanità e giustizia come lo era la Nostra Repubblica.

Va ricordato, al riguardo, che il Governo della Serenissima, per la Sua riconosciuta autorità, equità, democraticità e, soprattutto, per il profondo e reciproco rapporto di fiducia che lo univa al popolo, fu l'unico governo del tempo a potersi permettere di avere I Suoi sudditi armati...! E, in quanto a libertà, in Terra Veneta l'ampia apertura di pensiero e le filosofie più varie si sostenevano – nell'Università di Padova e nei 'ridotti' dei palazzi sul Canal Grande – anche in anni in cui l'inquisizione romana era severissima: fu l'unico posto in cui Galileo Galilei trovò lo spazio per enunciare le sue tesi; qui fu consentito alla nutrita letteratura francese di espandersi – in Venezia e in tutto il territorio – e di diffondere le sue idee rivoluzionarie... anche quando sulla Repubblica già gravava l'ombra minacciosa della fine! La concessione di una tale fiducia alle masse, appare agli attuali governanti talmente invero e da considerarla una favola... Ma questa favola è stata per la Nostra Gente una realtà durata più di mille anni, una realtà talmente concreta da riuscire ancora oggi, dopo due secoli dalla sua cessazione statuale, a riversare in Noi Veneti la sua benefica influenza; una realtà che non potremo però ritrovare finché la verità sul Nostro Passato e sui diritti etnico-storici della Nostra Terra non sarà riconosciuta e accettata. Ora, personaggi privi di una Coscienza Veneta, figli della retorica nazionale e delle logiche di partito, non si rendono conto che con lo Spirito della Nostra Terra, la Terra di San Marco, non possono, né mai potranno, avere nulla a che fare. Così, ci ritroviamo abbandonati da tutti, dalle istituzioni, dalle strutture e dagli organismi che dovrebbero sostenerci e indirizzarci.

Il contadino, il piccolo e medio imprenditore e l'operaio, ossature dell'economia veneta, non trovano chi li ascolti, li aiuti o anche soltanto consigli loro quale strada intraprendere, mentre i sindacati e le varie associazioni di categoria si rivelano essere sempre più un intralcio piuttosto che un sostegno. Tutto è oggi lasciato al sacrificio personale, alle sole energie del privato, al quale sia le scuole che le università, non sono qualificate nel fornirgli né un'adeguata formazione né una competente consulenza... e dall'alto"arrivano solo ruberie e inganni! Tanti altri sarebbero i problemi su cui riflettere, come quelli relativi alle norme che regolano l'assurdo e ormai insostenibile prelievo fiscale senza che se ne abbia un adeguato riscontro, o quelli riguardanti lo stato di abbandono in cui è costretta la gioventù, o, ancora, quelli relativi all'immigrazione senza regole e limiti che ci sta travolgendo. Ma noi riteniamo che i problemi che interessano attualmente la Nostra Terra, non potranno essere risolti in modo conveniente e definitivo sino a quando non si riprenderà quel cammino che iniziò millenni or sono, quando Venetiche Genti' 'immigrarono

nelle isole lagunari per sfuggire alle invasioni barbariche, portandovi le loro antiche istituzioni di stampo repubblicano, le loro filosofie di vita, le loro arti e mestieri.

Con la nascita e la continua crescita di Venezia quelle genti conobbero la più naturale e positiva delle evoluzioni... fino a due secoli or sono, quando l'arroganza e la stupidità di un solo uomo ne sospesero il corso. Da allora ci siamo trovati spaesati e confusi, incapaci di dare un senso a quanto ci stava – e ancora ci sta – accadendo. Ecco, dunque, perché Noi auspichiamo che possa quanto prima aver luogo nella Nostra Terra, una nuova, grande ed entusiasmante iniziativa che veda il convergere, in un unico intento, di tante persone di ogni estrazione sociale e politica, unite dal sincero desiderio di conoscere la verità sul passato della Nostra Storia e mosse da un'onestà volontà di costruirne il futuro. Perché soltanto in un'intesa collettiva sta la Nostra unica possibilità di salvezza, quella saggezza che, sola, può permettere di gettare un ponte che si levi da quel 12 Maggio 1797 e ci proietti alla soglia del terzo millennio, fieri e sicuri nel fermo proposito di ritornare a decidere da Noi I Nostro Avvenire, per il bene comune, come sempre fece la Nostra Veneta Serenissima Repubblica.

Giugno 1998 Fausto Faccia
Viva San Marco!

Appendix G

From www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/.

PARKE' NIALTRI £A SON SENTHA NA STORIA E NA £ENGOA

Puoi togliere di mezzo un Popolo lo con le armi oppure lo puoi domare e renderlo docile togliendogli l'identità etnica che è fatta di:

1. Memoria storica (il ricordo scritto ed orale di appartenere ad una etnia)?
2. Norme ed istituzioni collettive, morale, religione.
3. Lingua.
4. La sensazione di appartenere ad una entità etnica ancestrale.
5. Territorio.

Con l'unità d'Italia (1866), le cose sono anche peggiorate e fu adoperata questa tecnica di colonizzazione con molta determinazione, fino ai nostri giorni. Ricordo I numerosi castighi e violenze psicologiche che io subii alla scuola elementare, perché sbagliavo a pronunciare o a scrivere qualche parola italiana. Della gloriosa Veneta Serenissima Repubblica, che durò per undici secoli (697-1797) e dei Veneti che sprofondano nella preistoria, gli insegnanti italiani, ci informavano solo dei viaggi di Marco Polo, dei commerci con l'Oriente e della battaglia contro Pisa, come se Venezia, fosse tutta qua. In mezza pagina si esauriva tutto ciò che, secondo il potere, I Veneti potevano sapere, essi dovevano assolutamente dimenticare le proprie origini per assumere, come figli adottivi, la nuova identità romana, solo così potevano essere domati. La generazione precedente alla mia, per esprimere il suo malcontento usava ancora dire: "Dime kan ma no stà dirme taljan", questa generazione, invece, ha trovato lo stimolo per riscoprire, con lo studio, la propria identità e per rivendicare il diritto universale e naturale all'autodeterminazione. Questo è un legittimo diritto che ogni Popolo ha e che qualcuno gode già. In sintesi la realtà è questa e, tornando alla lingua, è comprensibile che alla luce di quanto detto sopra, noi Veneti non sappiamo ne leggere ne scrivere.

Il nostro grosso, enorme problema, è che s'insediano amministratori opportunisti, servi del potere, menefreghisti e sleali, che vede nella scalata al potere un modo per ingrassarsi anche rubando, e questo ci renderà difficile soddisfare le nostre aspirazioni di Popolo libero, ma non impossibile. Il 9 Maggio 1997 armati di un pericolosissimo gonfalone Veneto, otto arditi Patrioti liberarono per sei ore Piazza San Marco, la prossima volta speriamo che tutto il Veneto ritorni Nazione libera per sempre.

Paufo de £a Rina £anera par el "VENETO SERENISSIMO GOVERNO"

EVIVA SAN MARCO!

Appendix H

From www.veneto.org/congresso-nazion-veneta/.

GILBERTO BUSON SPEAKS

By Gilberto Buson. (English translation by the editor of www.veneto.org)

Modena, December 12, 1997

These thoughts of mine came about after my wife Alessandra asked me to explain to the public the reasons that pushed me to accomplish the actions of May 8-9, 1997. These reflections of mine are dated December 1997, in the High Security Prison of Modena, Italy. The sensations and feelings are completely PERSONAL. The message that we transmitted is the response to everything, therefore motives also made legitimate by history, and we just made these motives known to the Venet People and consequently to the rest of the world. Everyone one of us contributed with courage each in our own way.

MY REASONS

The sky's darkness was indicating night time. Inside the bell tower there was no light whatsoever, the place was unknown to us, we were moving in the darkness reaching our hands out to avoid falling down, and you could almost hear our heart beat. At dawn our eyes saw the GLORIOUS AND INVINCIBLE FLAG OF ST. MARK catching the wind and waving in the highest point of our VENETO, as a symbol of VICTORY, as a sign of peace, strength and soul were all in one, indescribable sensations, joy, fear, pride and love of belonging to a unique land.

The heart was beating like a lion, it was 5:30 am of May 9th, 1997. How much recklessness were those moments filled with, still young, for the last time. The rugged heart, strained, still did not understand that this was its last beat of FREEDOM. Now I find myself judging myself, but not condemning, and I ask myself if that was a dream or reality. It's all reality, and I am the proof, finding myself enclosed inside a foreign penitentiary. How to respond to our act of love of May 8-9, 1997, if not by watching the mother's hand that holds its own mother's hand, and so on until getting lost in memory's darkness?

I am saying this, because the words to describe the soul that gave us strength are not needed, unless you experience our substance, the substance of being VENETS. It was, and it is still now our intention to affirm what was given us from our "Fathers", that is how the Venet Heroes that made the VENET PEOPLE known, for their HIGH CIVILIZATION giving us THE IMMORTAL MOST SERENE VENET REPUBLIC...only an act of courage! Like a bird that it's let free inside a room with the light on and the window open, and outside dark. The bird flies, it has freedom in its wings. It flies around the light, it gets farther away from it, hits the white wall, goes back to where there's light. It keeps flying, around and around the light, hits the ceiling and falls. It's body is on the ground with wings open as if in sign of prayer. Its head moves at the beat of its breath, it turns the head, looks around, regains it's strength and flies in the air at the first sign of fear, searching for freedom. Its eyes show the way. It sees the light, the white walls, the ceiling, it felt with its own body the floor, it sees the blackness toward the window. The bird is not thinking that from the blackness of the window, it can find its liberty "it's only a bird". After thousand of attempts, by chance, it finds the blackness of the window, and find itself FREE!

All this I am saying because I feel that all this time, like that bird, I lived in an environment not conventional to my nature. In this metaphor I see the analogies of a system anti-freedom, like the Italian government is, still as of now occupying VENETO, actually, occupying the minds of the VENET people. Freedom is made trivial, because it is not let close to the soul of its ancient values. For now, because of our pacific nature, there's only the "weapon" of courage, like our HEROES were able to demonstrate, kept hostage to the history of the "foreigner."

Our group always worked keeping these ideals as example, and the pride of belonging to something was growing on us. In this way you can explain the differences, that today are found

unexplainable, of the results of the Venet "wellbeing." For us there was a settle consciousness of all this. But how could we bring this TRUTH of ours to everybody's knowledge? Sure, today's information media are lethal for the public opinion, but it is even more the teaching of history, that from the very first years of school keeps hidden the glorious history of our beloved Venet Motherland. This, only the Venet soul could takeback. And ask WHY...

Like when I was young, my first words, the first sounds that surrounded me were already familiar, like the sweet motherly calling that was saying "caro el me putin" (my dear boy). Those words were speaking the language of the forefathers. But what is absolutely the most discusting is continuing to do everything possible to hide a truth. How? Like if it was my motherland, the one made by wars casualties caused by the foreigner (referring to Italy, ndr). Our Motherland is founded on the family, on living people. That's our Motherland, and that of our neighbors is their motherland, and the reciprocal respect constitutes the set of free motherlands, tied by a unique soul. The VENET SOUL is identified in the territory of VENETS... Yes, like a family were there is a family, a guide, a respect for who merits it, and rewards who works, assuring their future. The sagacity of the old and the strength of the young, always lead the VENET PEOPLE.

Like that day, I was old enough to understand when in our home entered the priest (but it could have been any authority), and he was surprised that that the house was a mess. My mother had ten kids, no washing machine, no refrigerator, did not shop at the supermarket, did not have diapers for the younger ones, no heating, and between each kid, she was in the fields, helping her husband. Then she had to get food for the farm animals, had to take care of the vegetable garden, had to take care of every domestic errand, how many things she had to do! But she thanked the Lord for giving her health and strength. ...And the priest scolded her, because she did not make the house presentable to his authority. My eyes as a child saw, and my ears heard. Now my mother is not with us now, but she lives in me. Her craving for reprisal, now, I can have it explode in my pride as a son. Like this in small things, like this in big things I live because I am dead already. I return to live only when my soul is FREE. Courage! Courage when facing death. This is the secret weapon that the foreigner lacks. This is the response that I can give now for sure, since we were graced by the Creator. Our strength. Of this, everyone of us was convinced aside of our projects. We lived these things. The challenge was directed toward recognizing the right of existing. To the people, the right of self determination of the VENET PEOPLE, ANCIENT PEOPLE, Region of Europe, to our ancient spirit of family, of life values, faithfulness, work, creativity, to our spiritual wellbeing, in the environment we live in and in our Christian faith. Our HISTORY, made by people, not by virtual power schemes. The authority that today oppresses us, does not deserve us. Who deserves us is the authority and ordinance that can concede the rights. This oppressive power, keeps being deaf, keeps taking a way the fruit of our work, tricking us, making fun of us, making us larvae in front of our children, and in doing so, we do not even obtain the respect of our fathers, but only the pleasure of those who exploit such power. It's only a matter of courage. Besides the courage line, it's only madness, for the foreigner. In fact, this power qualified us as crazy, people not to imitate, weird. Only in ourselves, our souls leave us a future, that future that time makes come alive in the truth. Even our conviction is affecting the form of the soul, since now it is free to call the venet people to the reprisal – the fruit of this state. In the last act of love, reserved, of my life, I see with my left eye, the downhill of my recklessness, and with my right eye the uphill of my conscience. I see that even if I endured the oppressor, I formed my family, my work, I respected, I received respect, I played the game of the foreigner with the imposed and unwanted laws. And anyhow, today I am in a cage.

Now I say yes, I am the fruit of this government, the state self-convicted itself. Our being patient "as a mule" would still endure for this authority to respect, if it only said openly, that we are qualified as "slaves." So at least we would now that we have to pay our dues whether if imprisoned physically or incarcerated out of jail, but in our soul. If somebody dares to say that the fruit is no good, then it is demonstrated that even the plant is no good.. therefore, if this legality is fake, then it is not a good thing. Our good fruit is our good plant and has to be saved for the wellbeing of VENETO.

If what we did was a mistake, then it means that it was a mistake to be born VENET. If to improve we have to go through prison, then I “dare to think” of being in a system that is different from what they made us believe with these laws. Us Venets have always existed. We are people that came from the land, and we keep in our hearts what time has given us: Always land, always sky, always matter and soul, always strength and sagacity, always courage and a great faith. Everything else does not count. This is feeling VENET, not a fable, but a history made by simple men.

Honor to Saint Mark

VENET MOST SERENE REPUBLIC

Gilberto Buson

Appendix I

From www.veneto.org/language/trumper.html

Interview with John Trumper, linguist expert of Venet Interview by Carlo Pizzati

Professor Trumper, expert and respected linguist of Welsh origins, teaches at University of Calabria in Cosenza (Italy), but he has also taught for several years in Padua (Veneto). Trumper is one of the most knowledgeable linguists of Venet, and authored several books on what used to be the language of the most Serene Republic of Venice. When people of the 'Veneto Serenissimo Governo' were interrupting Veneto's TV news, authorities relied on Trumper to know where to find the author of such media incursions, in order to understand where 'Herty' Barison's (the Serenissimi's technician) accent was from. "We has 35 minutes of tape, and the right equipment. With a little more time we could have even identified not just the province, but even the fraction of the province where he lived- tells professor Trumper, with no Welsh accent, but just a settle [subtle? their error] Paduan accent – I even drew a rectangle inside which the proclamation's author could have lived." Attached to Veneto's history, Trumper is a little bit disappointed by Umberto Bossi's Celtic rhetoric. When asked to speak in from of Northern league's city council members of Chioggia, Trumper preached directly in Celtic, creating some discomfort among the crowd that could not understand a word. "Bossi's Celticism drives me crazy, especially since I have one thousand years of Celtic history in me – Trumper admits – to Bossi I would simply tell him 'Tosse Scravd', that in Celtic means, more or less 'go and scratch yourself', but it's not a very nice thing to say."

Q: Professor Trumper, you frown on searching for Celtic roots, how about those of the Venets?

A: Those are more legitimate. There exist a territory, a common history, the one of the 'Serenissima', and a language, Venet. But if Veneto is where the Venet tongue was spoken, then it's boundaries must be expanded inside Emilia-Romagna, and all the way to the Adda river, where a lot of dialects in Brescia's and Mantua's provinces are influenced by the Venet tongue, while, on the other hand, Verona's dialect has some Lombardy's roots and then it has been venetized. Then, to the East, Venet was spoken in Istria (now Croatia) and in Dalmania (now Croatia), where the Dalmatian has direct origins from the Venet tongue.

Q: But is the Venet tongue a language or a dialect?

A: There is absolutely no difference between a language and a dialect, because either one can become the other. from the eighth century after Christ up to Napoleon's invasion of 1797, the Venet tongue was a language. Since the 'Serenissima' started writing official and legal documents in Venet, it was implicitly recognized that the Venet tongue was a language. In that period there were 3 languages or dialects present in Veneto's territory: the Aulic Venet-Venetian dialect, Tuscan dialect with a strong Venet influence, and Latin, that however survived only up to the 1600. [A]fter that there was only Tuscan and Venet spoken in Veneto, which has nothing to do with the Venetic, an Italic dialect with Indo-European roots spoken by the Venetics.

Q: But when did it stop being a language?

A: When Napoleon took Venice and gave it to Austria. At that point the Venet tongue was not a language anymore, but it had become a dialect. The official language in Veneto becomes German-Austrian, and the Venet becomes a dialect of the German-Austrian language spoken in the southern region of the empire.

Q: So it's the government that decides whether a tongue is a dialect or a language, it's not you linguists who decide.

A: Correct. It's a political force that chooses a tool, that is a dialect to express its laws, and therefore it transforms it in language.

Q: So, not only is history chosen by the victor, but also the language.

A: We can say that. But Venice had done the same in Veneto. There used to be two branches. First, the Venet spoken in the Treviso area, and the one spoken in what is today the provinces of Padua, Rovigo, and Vicenza. Then Venice created, and we can use that word, an official language. [M]any consider this official Venetian Venet as a toscanization of the Venet tongue, but it is not really like that. Instead, it was a mixture of a lot of elements of various dialects. This is what then became the Venet tongue, that now is a dialect.