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**“Between Heritage Language and Native Language: The Albanian  
speaking community in Vittorio Veneto”**

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## **Introduction**

The decision to investigate deeply the discrepancies in Albanian speakers' proficiency stems from my fascination with the vast realm of bilingualism, which has been a constant presence throughout my life. Growing up as the son of Albanian immigrants, I have always experienced the blend of two different cultures and languages: Italian and Albanian.

During my adolescence, I had difficulties identifying myself in or another cultural identity, but now, I understand that even if I were to say, "I am mostly Italian", I am the product of two cultures coming together, which is also reflected in my language use. These two worlds have constantly been in close proximity and have interacted with each other, creating an interconnected entity.

In this thesis then, I aim to investigate the variations in language proficiency between the first generation of Albanian-speaking immigrants, whose mother tongue is Albanian and the second generation, whose first language is Italian, like myself, and to determine the effects, if any, of exposure to the Italian language on the heritage language, Albanian.

The opening chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the historical background of Albanian immigration to Italy, from the earliest waves of immigration in the 15<sup>th</sup> century to modern migration trends, focusing on the main Arberesh communities in the country as well as the key measures taken to promote minority languages, predominantly in Italy but also in Europe.

Following a general overview, the second chapter gives a definition of the concept of heritage language, which helps to understand the importance of this language in the world and its preservation and presents some situations of heritage language preservation around the world and in a specific competition similar to the one studied in this thesis. An overview of the success factors and challenges faced by heritage languages and communities is also provided.

The third chapter deals with the practical investigation of these occurrences on the basis of a survey distributed to Albanian immigrants in Italy. The purpose of the

survey is to collect socio-cultural information of the participants, to verify the existence of the linguistic changes mentioned before, and to examine the relationship between these two elements.

Finally, I will discuss the results of the research conducted and analyse all the data collected with the questionnaire.



# **Chapter 1**

## **Albania and the Albanian immigration in Italy**

### **1.1 Albania: general information**

Located in southeast Europe on the Balkan peninsula is the nation of Albania. The nation is mountainous, with a coast that faces both the Adriatic and Ionian seas. The population is close to 3 million (Albanian National Institute of Statistics, as of January 1, 2022), with the majority ethnic group being Albanian, but that also includes Greeks, Macedonians, and Montenegrins. The official language is Albanian, which is a truly unique language, as it is one of the few Indo-European languages that does not have direct relations with other languages (Fortson, 2010), which is a strong symbol of national identity and cultural pride for the Albanian people, as it is well known that language is vital for the preservation and transmission of the history, tradition, and values of the Albanian nation.

The Albanian identity has been shaped by significant historical occurrences, particularly its occupation by various civilisations throughout the centuries, including the Illyrians, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Ottomans, and Italians. While these events have contributed to the national and cultural identity, the Albanian language has maintained its uniqueness as a distinct signifier for the population.

### **1.1 Albanian language**

Even if there are more or less 2.8 million inhabitants in Albania, almost twice as many people speak Albanian language. In fact, there are almost 6 million speakers of Albanian (Klein, Jared; Brian, Joseph; Fritz, Matthias, 2018) when you include all the major regions where most of the population lives. Albania, of course, is the country where the majority of the people speak the language (98% of the population), followed by Kosovo (94.5%), North Macedonia (25%) and then we also have Montenegro, Italy, Switzerland, Croatia, and Greece, among other few in the rest of the world (WorldData.info).

It is, as previously mentioned, the official language of the country of Albania and a member of the Indo-European language family, first recognized in 1854 by the German linguist Franz Bopp (1791-1867).

It is made up of two main dialects, Tosk and Gheg, distinguished by phonological differences and are mutually intelligible in their standard varieties (Demiraj & Esposito, 2009) (Fortson, 2010), which are respectively spoken in the south and in the north of the country and are part of a larger linguistic group. It is the only language from the Illiryc group (Fortson, Benjamin Wynn IV, 2010) that is said to have survived and was formerly spoken in the southwest of the Balkan peninsula, according to some academics. The definition of the Albanian language provided by the so-called father of albanology, Norbert Jokl (1877-1942) was “*la frase odierna di una parlata illirica tracizzata*”.



Image 1: Albanian dialects

It is the third most common mother tongue among foreign residents in Italy (Statistics of Italy, 2014) In standard Albanian, there are a lot of Italian-derived terms, and some borrowed mostly due to the ancient domain of Venice on the coastal area, and a large number of these words have taken over some pre-existing words in the Albanian language in everyday speech and have now also taken over in media:

1. *Gote* (glass) from the venetian *gotto*

2. *Karrige* (chair) from the venetian *caréga*
3. *Brek* (underwear) from the venetian *braghe*

It uses a standardized Latin alphabet composed of 36 letters, which is an adaptation of the Latin, Greek, Arabic, and Cyrillic alphabets (Elsie, Robert, 2017), including some with diacritics (Ç, ë, sh, th, dh). Albanian is an inflectional language with a somewhat complicated grammatic system. It has a sentence structure of SOV (subject-object-verb) and seven nominal cases, including the nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, ablative, locative, and vocative.

## 1.1 Historical background

*“Il Mediterraneo può essere correttamente concepito come un sentiero che unisce, che esalta la distinzione e il senso della misura meridionale contro la tragica opposizione nordica, come capacità di sintesi [...] di civiltà, di religioni, di pratiche di vita differenti”* (Fernand Braudel, 1986).

One of the most significant indications of life and ongoing activity in the Mediterranean Sea are the Italo-Albanian communities, which have settled in the Italian territory for many years. One of the initial waves of migration occurred between 1416 and 1446 when Skanderbeg dispatched Albanian leader, Demetrio Reres, along with his sons Giovanni and Basilio, and a large group of Albanian mercenaries. Their objective was to quell the uprisings instigated by the Angevin barons and to vanquish Roberto d’Angiò.

Some years later, in 1461, Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg, who is widely recognized as an Albanian national hero for having managed to stop the advance of Muhammad II’s Turkish arms, led a military expedition to aid Ferrante, king of Naples, in succeeding Alfonso d’Aragona (Fine, John V.A., 1994).

The initial areas where soldiers established themselves were Puglia, Calabria, and Sicily because Skanderbeg and other leaders possessed some lands and assets there, granted by the rulers of the Kingdom of Naples in return for their military support.

Skanderbeg's death in 1468 and the Ottoman conquest of Shkodra in the following year signalled the demise of the Albanian stronghold against the Turks. When the Turkish invasion ended in 1479, multiple Albanian migrations towards the Italian coasts were documented, leading to the establishment of numerous Albanian communities.

The arrival of migration streams not only indicated a connection to the Venetian Republic, which had political and commercial ties to Albania, but also saw a majority of migrants moving towards the regions within the Kingdom of Naples. This was not only due to their geographical proximity, but also to the positive relations between Skanderbeg and the King of Naples.

Further reasons for the warm welcome extended to Albanian were their identification as Christian martyrs and their resistance to the Turkish invasion. Additionally, the country has suffered from famine, pestilence, and earthquakes, resulting in depopulation. As a result, landlords have been able to provide attractive offers to refugees.

The migration of Albanians to Italy did not follow a regular pattern, particularly in recent times, when it could be effectively separated into three distinct historical phases:

The first one occurred in 1991, in which there were two distinct phases of Albanian migration to Italy: one in March and the other one in August of the same year. The motivations behind the migration and the Italian authorities differed between these two episodes.

Then we have the migration wave that began in 1997, which differed significantly from the previous one. The primary cause of this was collapse of many national and financial institutions, which left the country in a state of misery, driving Albanian citizens to seek safe havens abroad in an attempt to escape the economic crisis and begin anew.

The third wave began following the start of the Kosovo War in 1999, referred to as "l'ondata invisibile" (the invisible wave). Over this period, approximately 100,000 Albanians departed their homeland to seek political asylum as citizens of Kosovo. This circumstance also enabled the migration of Albanian citizens since the Ser-

bian police frequently seized and disposed of the identification documents of the Kosovo population. Consequently, Albanian individuals utilised this opportunity to enter the country covertly as political refugees.

However, a significant number of Albanian immigrants migrated in the intervals between the primary migratory waves, typically with the aid of unlawful trafficking organizations.

For most individuals, political and economic issues were the primary reasons for emigrating. These concerns were largely connected to poor governance and incorrect political and economic choices. In addition, some took advantage of the opportunity to elevate their social status by applying as political refugees. However, the majority of people were forced to leave their homes and, in some instances, their families, due to fear for their own lives and the safety of their loved ones.

The Albanian diaspora is currently concentrated in Italy, Greece (with a population of 422,954 in 2021 and 291,868 in 2022), Romania (with an unofficial estimate of 10,000), Croatia, Turkey, Germany, Switzerland, and the United States. However, Albanians can be found throughout the world, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Belgium, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

## **1.2 Main Albanian communities in Italy**

Among all the places where Albanians reside currently, the most remarkable instances are the Arberesh community, situated in Sicily and Calabria during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century (Nasse, George Nicholas, 1964)

Some years have passed, and things have changed, and the location of the majority of Albanian immigrants in Italy has shifted to the north. Specifically, according to ISTAT data (2022):

1. Lombardia, with 86.399
2. Emilia-Romagna, with 57.876
3. Tuscany, with 57.110
4. Piemonte, with 38.453

5. Veneto, with 32.195
6. Lazio, with 11.892
7. Puglia, with 21.057
8. Liguria, with 20.775
9. Marche, with 13.936
10. Umbria, with 11.634
11. Trentino-Alto Adige, with 11.507
12. Abruzzo, with 10.747
13. Sicilia, with 10.666
14. Friuli Venezia Giulia, with 9.533
15. Campania, with 7.966
16. Calabria, with 2.708
17. Basilicata, with 2.366
18. Sardegna, with 705
19. Valle d'Aosta, with 694
20. Molise, with 606



Image 2: Albanian communities in the south of Italy.

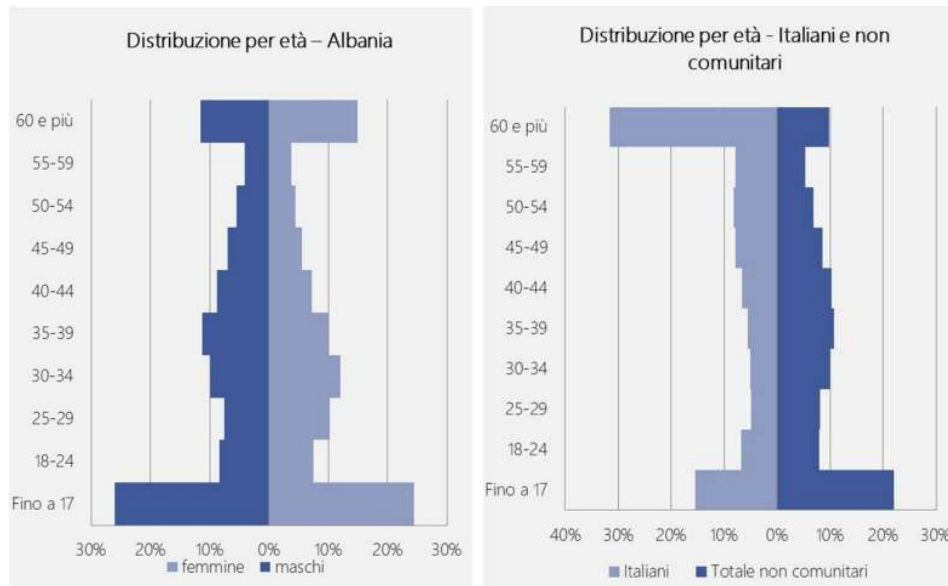
*Arbëresh* derives from the word *arbër/arbëri* and refers to Albania. This name was used to describe the Albanian nation during the time of migration waves from Albania, that is, between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The contemporary ethnonym for the Albanian people is *Shqipëria* instead of *Arbëria*. The *arbërisht* dialect is spoken in southern Albania, where the diaspora originated. It is connected to a linguistic variation in the region.

### **1.2.1 Characteristics of the communities**

There is a nearly perfect gender balance in Albanian communities, with women representing over 49% of the population and men comprising the remaining 51%. This places Albania second only to China for the lowest gender gap at 1.5%. Along with the breakdown by age groups, this data provides significant insight into the community's integration within the country, demonstrating better demographic stability related to family reunification and birth rates. (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali)

The age distribution of the Albanian community in Italy demonstrates balance in comparison to the Italian population. Notably, this implies a beneficial influence of foreign presence in addressing the demographic crisis current in the country. This will progressively lead to an increasingly unbalanced ratio between young and old in favour of the latter with economic and social consequences.



*Chart 1. Source: Anpal Servizi SpINT area elaboration on ISTAT data.*

As we can see, approximately 42% are below 30 years old with significant presence of young women aged between 18 and 35 years old. In the Chart below we can see that the average age of the Albanian citizens is 34 years old, while the Italian one 46 years old.

The presence of minor people is really consistent, reaching more than 25%, more than 96 thousand minors that represent 13% of all non-EU minors allocated in Italy (ISTAT, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021).

Albanian students enrolled in the academic year 2020/2021 total 116.819, making up 17% of the non-EU student population.

Italian was the only language that could be taught in primary and lower secondary schools outside of the regular curriculum and as an elective. This was the case until 1999. Before the so-called Decreti Delegati (1974), which implied parent representation in important school bodies like the School Council, public schools were not modern, democratic instructions of learning, and granted the schools a limited degree of autonomy in creating their curricula. Additionally, opportunity presented by ministerial policy circulars and legislation allowed for the adaptation of curricula to local needs, but only outside of the school curriculum, as previously indicated (Belluscio and Giovanni, 2010).



New secondary curricula subsequently offered precise instructions on the preservation and instruction of minority languages and civilizations (Ministerial Decree No. 09/02/1979). After the passage of the legislation and the new avenues it created, primary schools implemented non-traditional programmes. In 1976, C. Candreva and C. Stamile conducted experiments at primary schools in Calabria, where Mazzei (2002) claims that school, more than using legislative tools, such as laws, made up for the absence of clear guidelines for the protection of languages and cultures over time, as, for example, the article 4 of Legge Regionale Calabria n. 27 (1985) (Regional Law 27/85 on the right to education).

There is also a lot of activities collaborately promoted by the Italian government and the Albanian government and some cultural centres all over Italy. There is the Centro Albanese, which aims to promote development and cultural, social, and economical relationships between Italy and Albania and to help the allocation of the Albanian community. They have some projects that are active, as the “Progetto Diaspora”, helping small businesses located in rural places to obtain new marketing competences, new digital tools, and new national and international collaborations and connections. They organize, since 2013, the participation of Albania in the Salone Internazionale del Libro di Torino, which is one of the most important Italian and European cultural manifestations with thousands of expositions, guests, and journalists from Italy and all over the world. These are just a couple of projects among others, as the original Albanian books you can find inside libraries in Turin, the presentation of some awarded films to the north of Italy during the Cinema In Strada festival and CineMigrante festival, same thing happened at the gLocal Film Festival in Piemonte.

The Italian and the Albanian governments, based on the article 14 of the “Accordo Culturale” signed in 1994 in Tirana, agreed on a cultural collaboration program which aims to develop cultural and education exchanges. This means that they have agreed on many aspects, such as university education, the teaching of Italian and Albanian language, sport field, youth exchanges, the promotion of the other’s music, theatre, dance, art galleries, cinema, festivals and many more.

## **1.3 Acts for the maintenance of minority languages**

### **1.3.1 Europe**

The Council of Europe took the most relevant actions for maintaining minority languages through two crucial documents, marking it as the first institution to do so:

- The European Charter for regional and minority languages was established in 1992 and entered into force on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1998. It has currently been ratified by only five member states.

This document is an international agreement with the objective of promoting and protecting the regional and minority languages as an essential component of the European cultural heritage.

The signatory five states pledge to acknowledge the regional and minority languages within their territories and take necessary steps to ensure their preservation and promotion. Moreover, it fosters the recognition of the linguistic and cultural variety, stating that it is a trait which enhances European society.

- The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) came into force in 1998 and was ratified by 39 member states until 2009. This international treaty aims to promote the protection and preservation of the rights of the national minorities, recognising their important role that minorities play in the cultural and ethnic diversity in Europe.

### **1.3.2 Italy**

*“La repubblica tutela con apposite norme le minoranze linguistiche”.*

This is what the article 6 of the Italian Constitution says.

Came into force in 1948, it contains specific laws and norms for teaching minority languages in the twelve recognized linguistic communities, which are: Albanian, Catalan, Germanic, Greek, Slovenian and Croatian and those who are French-speaking, as Franco-Provençale, Friulano, Ladin, Occitan, and Sardinian

Then we have the law 482/1999 which, after the first article, in which it is said that Italian is the national official language and that “*La Repubblica, che valorizza il patrimonio linguistico e culturale della lingua italiana, promuove altresì la valorizzazione delle lingue e delle culture tutelate dalla presente legge.*”, the article 2 affirms: “*In attuazione dell’articolo 6 della Costituzione e in armonia con i principi generali stabiliti dagli organismi europei e internazionali, la repubblica tutela la lingua e la cultura delle popolazioni albanesi, catalane, germaniche, greche, slovene e croate e di quelle parlanti il francese, il franco-provenzale, il friulano, il ladino, l’occitano e il sardo*”. Hence, the language and culture of those recognized as minority communities are guaranteed to be preserved and their language can be used as if it was an official language like the Italian one, as a medium and/or object of education, in official documents, in toponomy, by the media etc., although there are some problems related to the law, as for example the one concerning which linguistic variety should be used in schools: standard Albanian, the local variety of Arberesh, the hybrid varieties of Arberesh. This decision leads to some ambiguities, but it is not the topic of our study.

However, it is challenging to generalise because laws and their application differ greatly between regions due to the various political and administrative environments in which Italo-Albanian communities find themselves living. Regional laws have already been passed by the regions of Basilicata (1998), Campania (2004), Molise (1997), and Sicily (1998) to aid and shield Italo-Albanian communities residing under their authority for language instruction and lesser-used languages. A regional law was also passed by Calabria in 2003, although many different parties and academic institutions expressed their disapproval and reservations at the time. Puglia and Abruzzo have not yet passed any specific legislation. (Belluscio and Giovanni, 2010)

Very little bilingual education is provided. There is not a long-term bilingual education programme in place in schools where Italian is taught. Not only is crucial to note that there is no legislation requiring bilingual education, but there are also issues

stemming from low financial investments in educators and learning resources. When bilingual education is used it is dispersed and lacks coordination, and is entirely determined by the teacher's will.

The Direzione Generale dell'Immigrazione e delle Politiche di Integrazione con i Paesi di origine e la diaspora is working in projects which aim is to improve the connection with non-UE countries, allowing regulated immigration for foreign workers. These projects' aim is to regulate the migratory fluxes through capacity building and promotion of the circular migration.

There are some initiatives from the National Programming of FAMI, through the Avviso Pubblico 2/2019, which gives professional and civic-linguistic projects before-departure. Seven of these projects have Albania as one of their target country:

21. Before you go: formazione professionale e civico linguista come strumenti per una migrazione consapevole e regolare.
22. Demetria Formazione, which operates exclusively in Emilia-Romagna, which focuses on the action for the insert of workers in the agricultural, construction and cultural mediation sectors.
23. Cefal Emilia-Romagna.
24. Quasar formazione.
25. Link – Lavorare Insieme, which provides vocational training courses in the agricultural, tourism, personal care and other sectors.

A total of 1,302 Albanian citizens were taken in by these 7 projects, helping a lot of families. (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, La Comunità Albanese in Italia, 2022).

## Chapter 2

### Comparative analysis of heritage language maintenance

Humanity is a multicoloured fabric of cultures, traditions and languages that intertwine to create a global heritage of inestimable value. The heritage languages, which are essential witnesses to the cultural origins of communities worldwide, are at the core of this remarkable linguistic mosaic. These languages, passed down through generations, embody centuries of history, traditions, knowledge, and identity.

Amidst the rapid changes and the continuous flow of populations, urbanization, and globalization in the modern world, heritage languages frequently encounter increasingly significant challenges.

Nonetheless, their accounts exemplify the unwavering fortitude on the human spirit and the durability of cultural ties throughout the ages.

#### 2.1 Heritage Languages

*Heritage speakers* (HSs) identify as simultaneous or sequential bilinguals to varied degrees of dominance because they are exposed to two or more languages from an early age in their surroundings. The configuration of dominance languages in HSs' repertoire, the amount and quality of input they are exposed to, the effects of contact between ethnic and majority language, and other factors are all important in the acquisition of HL and can vary over the course of a speaker's life. (Montrul, 2008)

Heritage languages represent a fascinating chapter in the history of human linguistic diversity. These languages are a living reflection of the migrations and cultural transmission that have taken place over the centuries.

Heritage language is a term that refers to a language transmitted through generations in immigrant communities or descendants of immigrants, often as a language of family or community origin.

These languages are crucial in maintaining the cultural roots and ethnic identity of communities, serving as a bridge between the past and present and carrying centuries of tradition and history. They serve as a means of intergenerational communication and facilitate younger individuals' interaction with their parents, grandparents, and other elderly relatives in a familiar linguistic context. Heritage languages embody the cultural heritage of their communities and constitute a valuable cultural capital that must be preserved for future generations.

Moreover, each language offers a distinct worldview. The erosion of a heritage language results in the disappearance of a valuable linguistic and cultural legacy. Every language incorporates linguistic nuances, idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and technical vocabulary that enhance global linguistic diversity.

These are some of the reasons why heritage languages are valuable. Being bilingual or multilingual can enhance one's cognitive abilities, and learning and preserving heritage languages can help us appreciate and integrate different cultures. Additionally, these languages can be vital for anthropological, historical, and linguistic research and for conserving testimonies of the past.

Throughout this study, we will delve into the intricate and fascinating realm of heritage languages, examining the process of language conservation and evolution within some of these communities, and specifically in the context of morphology, where heritage speakers (HSs) of Albanian were confronted with adult immigrants (AIs) who moved from an Albanian-speaking country in adulthood.

## **2.2 Introduction to Heritage Language preservation situations**

This sets the stage for exploring the intricate and captivating world of heritage languages. Our in-depth analysis will delve into diverse aspects of these languages, considering the challenges they encounter and the means by which they can be preserved.

In an ever-changing world where dominant languages can drown out the voices of linguistic minorities, the significance of understanding and preserving heritage languages cannot be overstated. Within this text we will examine the intricate balance

between preservation and change, shedding light on the vital role these languages play in establishing identity and transmitting a distinctive cultural heritage.

We will analyse the challenges and opportunities upon communities, scrutinise the strategies involved; from bilingual education to language policies, which may help in the preservation and improvement of these languages.

Despite the widespread presence of Albanian communities throughout Italy, there is a lack of literature and research on Albanians in Italy, particularly regarding the impact of the Albanian heritage language on the majority language, Italian.

To address this gap, I conducted a thorough review of various studies exploring language contact phenomena between different languages, with a focus on the interaction between heritage and majority languages.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the degree of morphological differences between heritage speakers who were raised or born in Italy and adult immigrants who settled in Italy as adults. The investigation seeks to determine whether a gap exists and, if so, the extent of it. While the cases under examination differ, certain parallels can be drawn between my personal experiences and the information gathered from my research and surveys. I believe these similarities are significantly relevant to my current academic pursuit.

As I said before, not many articles related to this specific topic were to be found during my research. However, I found material on heritage language and majority language, which was highly useful for my thesis.

Many articles, with different experiences, have come to my attention that closely align with the topics explored in this thesis. They range from the case of Albanian immigrant children in Greece (Mattheoudakis, Chatzidaki and Maligkoudi. 2017) to the transmission and maintenance of language change in Ukrainian households (Roma Chumak-Horbatsch. 1999), heritage language maintenance and loss in an Iranian community in Canada (Naghme Babae. 2014), the development of Filipino American identity and its relation to heritage language loss (Jennifer Guiang Osalbo. 2011), Czech and Slovak immigrant families in the southeastern United States (McCabe, Marta. 2019), and many more.

There were many similarities observed among the studies, particularly in the research methods applied and data collection procedures. However, variations were noted, notably in the sample population background studied.

## **2.2 Conservation situation of Heritage Languages in a specific context**

A study of heritage language classes and bilingual competence in the case of Albanian immigrant children in Greece is the most similar context among all the articles that I have been studied.

The study's sample comprised 202 immigrant Albanian parents who were living in Greece and had school-aged children. A questionnaire about language practises and attitudes towards their children's bilingualism was given to the parents to fill out. The Albanian and Greek of these parents' children were also evaluated.

The paper outlines the outcomes of the questionnaire survey that compares the techniques applied by two groups of Albanian parents who migrated to Greece, in promoting minority language enhancement. The first category comprises parents who enrol their children in heritage language courses but still contribute to the preservation of the Albanian language in other ways fall in the second category.

As reported by their parents, each child was fluent in Greek.

The participants' bilingual competence was assessed through a series of tests that assessed their proficiency in both Albanian and Greek. In both languages, these tests included measures of vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension.

The main objective of this research was to compare the two groups in terms of the families language usage patterns, the support for the minority and majority languages, and the proficiency in both languages.

The ultimate goal of it is to look into the link between parenting behaviours and their children's ability to express themselves in a minority language and in accordance to the findings, parents who enrol their children in heritage language lessons engage in activities at home that foster literacy in the minority language on a regular basis and the parents indicated that their children have more proficient literacy skills in Albanian than children who do not receive systematic training in this language.



Finally, these findings indicate, as it is said in the text, “that literacy development at home and especially attendance of heritage language instruction are extremely beneficial for its development without disrupting the development of the majority language”.

### **2.3 Success factors and challenges**

According to the linguistic scholar Guadalupe Valdés (2000), “*Heritage speakers* are individuals who were raised in homes where a language other than the dominant community language was spoken, resulting in some degree of bilingualism in the heritage language and the dominant language.”

The native language is typically acquired at home and spoken before the speaker starts school and subsequently switches to the dominant language, L2, due to increased exposure and input. This occurs because the quantity of exposure to the majority language surpasses that of the heritage language (HL), L1 (Marin, 2021).

This is, in my opinion and based on my own experience, the main factor that leads to the loss of HL. It is also one of the key characteristics that recurs in the various papers and articles that deal with the subject of heritage languages.

In fact, age has been shown to be one important factor that influences the loss of fluency in the heritage language. Younger bilingual children are more vulnerable to fluency loss than older children, according to studies (Montrul, 2008). The likelihood that a child will lose proficiency in their first language (their heritage language) decreases with age when the dominant language is introduced (Montrul, 2008). This is due to the fact that as a child gets older, their exposure to and familiarity with their heritage language will increase, and as a result, their primary language will continue to be that language (Polinski and Kagan, 2007). Moreover, when children are early exposed to the heritage language, the likeliness for them to have a more intrinsic motivation to use it and to learn how to use in a correct and fluent way is much higher and stronger.

Another factor could be the cultural belonging, which is an important one for the second-generation people, that could motivate the children to put effort in the maintaining of the mother tongue.

Speaking about motivation, another key factor that could help to maintain a high level of the heritage language is the community and family support, as a large number of studies show that it is incredibly important to have a stimulating environment that supports the learning of the HL and helps to develop an optimal language competence. Regarding the objective of this study and the studies consulted, the minority or immigrant languages, which correspond to an HL, does not typically have much institutional support, so family may play the primary role in HL socialisation (Melo-Pfifer, 2015).

Challenges that may hinder the maintenance of heritage languages include, for example, the limited possibility or even impossibility of using the heritage language in the family, which can certainly lead to a slowing down of development, or living in an assimilation context where second generation children feel the pressure to assimilate into the dominant culture and to re-integrate into their own culture.

Another major problem is linguistic prejudice, which leads to the isolation of one's own language due to constant external 'attacks', ridicule, and a strong sense of shame. This is a problem that affects me personally and that I experienced for many years during my adolescence, which led me to often distance myself from my mother tongue and to feel embarrassed when I had to use it in front of strangers, reference persons such as professors, and even in front of friends.

Fortunately, this period in my personal life did not last long, but I feel that it has at least partly affected my linguistic competence and comprehension in my heritage language. Many other people, however, have not been so fortunate, such as the case of my cousin (and others, but who I do not feel so close to), who was born and raised in Italy and from a very young age has developed a hatred and aversion towards her mother tongue, to the point of being unable to express herself in HL and often not wanting to 'stoop' into having to use such a language she defines as 'ugly' and 'not mine'.

According to earlier research, heritage speakers find inflectional morphology to be one of the more difficult linguistic domains (e.g., Arabic: Benmamoun, Montrul & Polinsky, 2010; Spanish: Montrul, 2011, and more). More precisely, it was discovered that heritage speakers frequently overapply regular morphological rules and are

less accurate with irregular than regular inflection (Montrul and Mason, 2020). This is attributed, as Polinsky and Scontras (2020) said, to one factor specially: insufficient input. I set up my research in this manner because this is the area I wish to focus on for my thesis: loss of competence, particularly morphological competence loss.

Numerous other factors may contribute to a deficit in the heritage language, such as the difficulty of learning another language, which may require time and effort that can be deducted from the apprentice of the HL; the difference between the HL and the dominant language, which may make it difficult for second-generation children to learn both, and many others.

In conclusion, the reason for lower language use can be multiple and complex. It is important to understand these reasons in order to promote the use of heritage language and preserve linguistic diversity.



## Chapter 3

### Designing the study

Data collection involving Albanian Heritage speakers took place in the months of October and November of the current year, 2023. Parents (first generation) and children (second generation) were asked to complete an Italian questionnaire. The questionnaire covered the following topics: (a) demographic information, (b) language ability and use, (c) the usage of the two different languages, (d) feelings towards their mother tongue and culture, and (e) knowledge of other languages. This method resulted in the collection of 20 questionnaires. The families who took part in this survey were chosen based on their city of origin and, as a result, the Albanian dialect they share.

It was carried out using Google Module in the form of an anonymous questionnaire.

#### 3.1 Research tools

The survey consists of 48 multiple-choice and short-answer questions inspired by similar research questionnaires. The first section aims to collect anagraphic and sociolinguistic data from interviewees, such as their attitudes towards the Italian and Albanian languages. The second section, on the other hand, is made of quizzes in which participants are asked to rate how correct the words presented are in a scale from 1 to 5.

The questions in the first section are designed to compare the attitudes towards the two languages with the actual self-assessment of language proficiency and to show how various factors, including study title, age, and gender, affect the results that are obtained. The test combines several test models in an attempt to create a test that would have been appropriate for my particular goal in the morphology. Some of the general questions I used are taken from the research on Albanian immigrants in Greece (Matheoudakis, Chatzidaki and Maligkoudi. 2017) and the research on Nonword Pluralization (Melloni, Vender and Delfitto. 2019). It is expected that self-assessment of

one's Albanian proficiency will increase with tendency to maintain Albanian and vice versa.

On the other hand, the second part of the questionnaire is designed to look like a test, asking respondents to use a Lickerts scale to rank how correct they believe the words to be. Responses can range from 1 (correct) to 5 (incorrect). The terms were chosen based on the categories that, in my opinion, second-generation Albanians were having difficulty with. It includes the shift in gender, the use of real words with true and ungrammatical rules, nonwords with correct grammar, word pluralization, some word-category derivations, and some real words (fillers) that are meant to "distract" their attention from the focus on the other questions. Some cues have been taken from the pluralization task designed by Vender (2017), from the Nonword Pluralization research by Melloni and Vender (2019) and from the research on morphosyntactic structure of number in Italian and in Albanian by Manzini (2020).

The purpose of this study is to test both heritage speakers and adult immigrants and compare the results to determine if there are differences in the competence, especially in the morphology. Furthermore, demonstrating how duration and calibre of exposure in a family setting or outside the home can affect heritage speakers' lexical competency is one of the work's goals. we anticipate a greater ability to identify the accurate and erroneous terms that I provided to respondents who possess a higher self-assessment of the Albanian language. Individuals with greater exposure to their native language are expected to perform better in the group. however, in terms of detecting nonwords, we anticipate them to be more confident with their responses (perhaps giving a score of 4 to some words indicating that they could be words), while others' responses may be more diverse.

Usually, tests with nonwords (in that case Nonword Repetition, NWR) are widely used especially to test phonological processing and short-term memory. The test is sensitive across different language disorders, including DLD (Baddeley, 2003; Montgomery, 2003). In Italian poor performance on NWR has been shown to be a reliable early marker for monolingual children at risk for DLD (Bortolini, 2006). However, it is also used as an indicator of the level of proficiency in grammaticality judgment tasks of bilingual over monolingual people, where the formers outperformed the latter (Slabakova, Corbet, Dominguez, Dudley, and Wallington. 2019).

Numerous limitations and obstacles were encountered during the composition of this paper, resulting in some ambiguities in the response received from both questionnaire participants and the 14 members of the control group. This was mainly due to the fact that the Albanian community that was interviewed originates from Macedonia rather than Albania. They primarily hail from Debar, a city in western North Macedonia that lies adjacent to the Albanian border. Thus, ethnic Albanians are the dominant group in the municipality. Debar boasts an ethnic Albanian majority of nearly 55%, with Macedonians comprising 7.5%, Turks accounting for 17.75%, and Romas constituting 7.4% of the population (Macedonian Census, Language and Religion. 2021). In this region, the Gheg dialect is spoken which differs from the standard Albanian spoken predominantly in Albania and Tosk (demonstrated in ‘Image 1’), the other dialect that is spoken primarily in the south of North Macedonia and Albania. This task posed a significant challenge as there were no available resources regarding the language, grammar, or word frequency. Consequently, a combination of standard Albanian and personal knowledge, despite some gaps in proficiency, was utilised.



*Image 3: Albanian dialects*

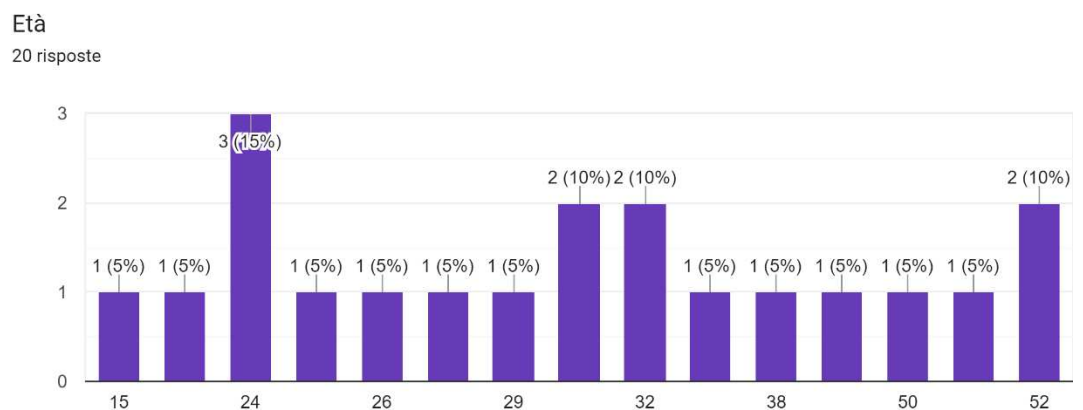
Moreover, it was crucial that some residents of the respondents' hometowns complete the questionnaire as well, particularly the test section in the second half of

the survey form, in order to keep L2, who represents the control group, “uncontaminated”. To preserve the most accurate portrayal of the phenomenon, their test, however, will not be considered.

It is really important to remember that self-assessment of the level of the Albanian and Italian languages is an indicator based on one’s own assessment. This would occur in the second section as well, because, even if I asked the respondents not to think too much about the questions and to try to be more spontaneous, it is extremely difficult for them to be so, as would be the case with spoken language, but are the result of reasoning.

### 3.2 Results

The sample examined includes 20 Albanian immigrants in Italy, almost equally divided between males and females (45% males, 55% females), who have been in Italy for periods ranging from 7 to 35 years, as well as 8 second-generation immigrants, i.e. children of immigrants who were thus born in Italy, where they received their education. The respondents’ ages ranged from 15 to 52 with an average age of 33, as shown in the graph below.

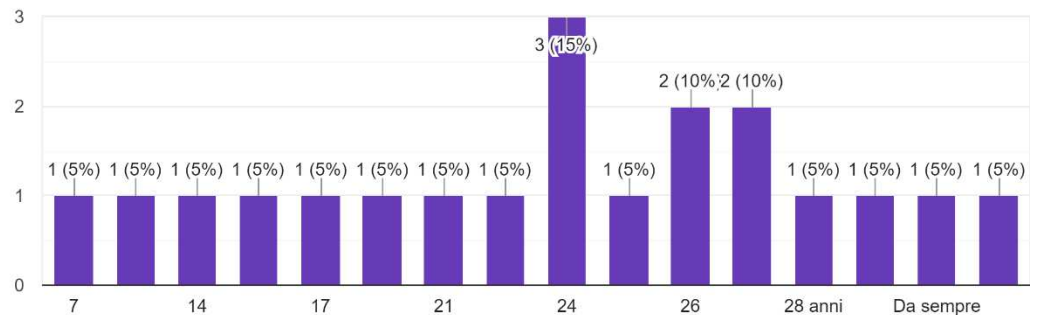


*Chart 2: age of the respondents*



According to the chart below, 30% of those surveyed were born in Italy, whereas 70% were born in Macedonia. The respondents have been residing in Italy for an average of 22.2 years. 20% of the people has attended an Italian language course.

Da quanti anni vivi in Italia?  
20 risposte

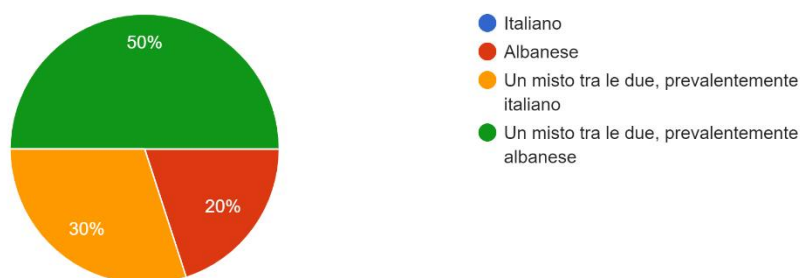


*Chart 3: years spent living in Italy.*

In terms of qualifications, 65% of individuals possess a high school degree, whilst 25% hold a middle school diploma. Finally, 10% have graduated from university. It is crucial to note that some respondents are still undertaking their studies, as many are young students.

Nearly all respondents expressed a favourable attitude towards their native language, which is reflected in the responses to the question regarding the language spoken at home. The majority stated they typically communicate in both languages but mostly in Albanian. Then, the figures show that the frequency of those who speak predominantly Italian is slightly higher to that of those who solely speak Albanian in their homes, with rates of 30% and 20% respectively.

Quale lingua parli a casa?  
20 risposte

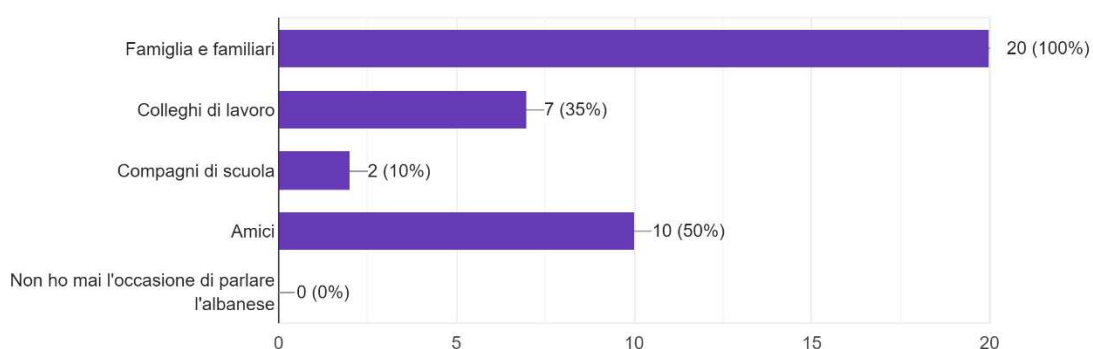


*Chart 4: language spoken at home.*

Most of the people speak more than just Italian and Albanian. Mostly, this is due to the fact that, being born in Macedonia, in a city where Albanian is the main language, they were able to learn Macedonian, which is a precursor to many Cyrillic languages spoken in the Balkans. Consequently, a lot of the respondents are not only bilinguals, but multilinguals. Out of the respondents, 85% said that speaking other languages helped them learn new ones, while only 5% disagreed.

All participants have the opportunity to converse in Albanian with their relatives, with 50% of them speaking Albanian with their friends and co-workers. In addition, 10% of them communicate in Albanian with their classmates.

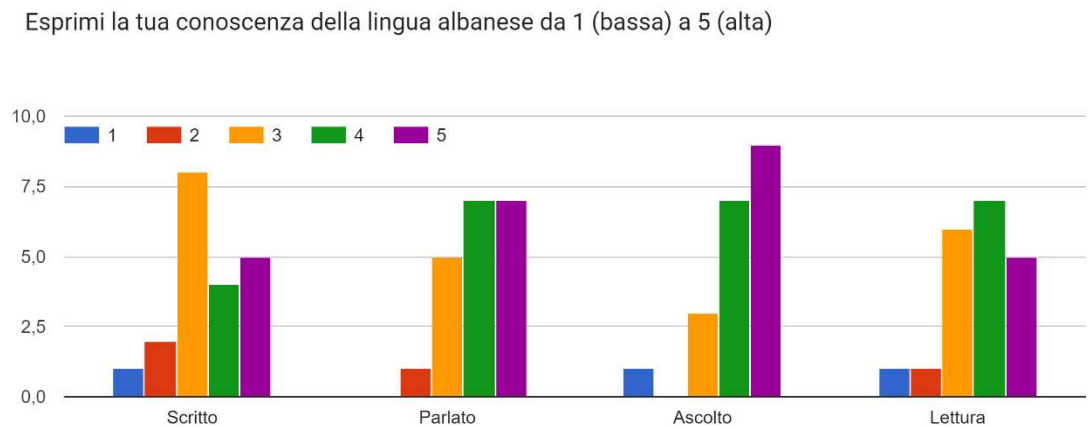
Durante la quotidianità, con chi hai l'occasione di parlare l'albanese?  
20 risposte



*Chart 5: the environment in which Albanian is spoken.*

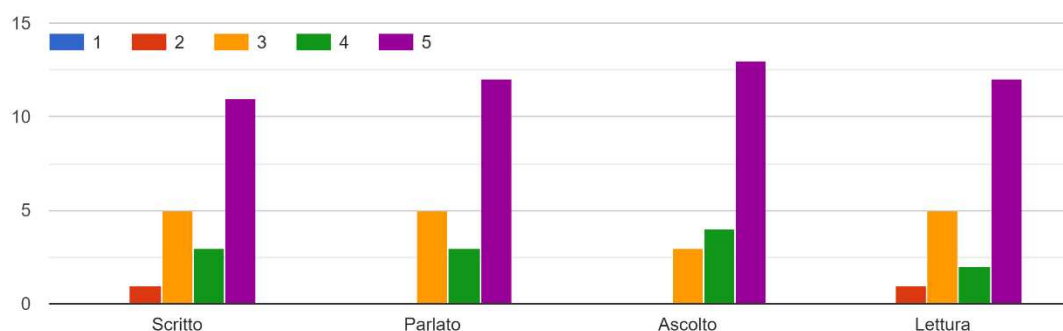
Most people came to Italy to follow their family. It is important to note that this statement may also apply to adults who have had to accompany their partners in search for a better life. the second most common reason for moving to Italy is related to work, showing a desire to settle here with their family, as no one opted for a short-term stay to earn sufficient funds and return to their home country. Only one person (5%) has come here for study purposes.

When asking the respondents to evaluate their own language proficiency in Albanian and in Italian, it is noted that the average score for Albanian is 3.8, whereas for Italian it is 4.3. These results suggest that people feel more proficient in the majority language. In terms of specific language skills, the highest score for Albanian is given to listening, while for Italian it is speaking. Reading is rated third for both languages, with writing being the last proficient skill for both.



*Chart 6: outcomes of the self-evaluation of Albanian language competency.*

Esprimi la tua conoscenza della lingua italiana da 1 (bassa) a 5 (alta)



*Chart 7: outcomes of the self-evaluation of Italian language competency.*

As expected, participants who predominantly speak Albanian and are exposed to a linguistically stimulating environment exhibit greater proficiency in the language. Similarly, a correlation exists between education levels and Albanian competence, with a significant proportion of the population receiving education in their hometown.

Overall, it is evident that first-generation respondents have generally distinguished between the correct and incorrect words. However, the younger generation, especially those born in Italy, who are less inclined toward speaking Albanian due to environmental factors, self-evaluated themselves more proficient in Italian than Albanian, performed the weakest in the test, as we expected. Additionally, individuals who stated a preference for speaking Albanian when conversing with someone who speaks both languages have demonstrated greater proficiency in both self-assessment and testing.

Furthermore, it can be observed that, in general, among the cohort of individuals who completed their education in Albania and are of advanced age, those who acquired a high school diploma exhibited greater proficiency in distinguishing between accurate and inaccurate vocabulary compared to those who earned a secondary school diploma.

Among those who self-assessed themselves with a high level of their native language, not all have shown it in the test.

I was curious to observe the respondents' reactions to the invented words I intentionally fabricated to confuse and deceive them, for example:

26. *Shprehefjale* → *shpreh* (express) + *fjalë* (word).

27. *Fjaloreshkollar* → *fjalor* (dictionary) + *shkollar* (academic)

Although these words do not exist, they sound like words that do.

These are composed words, which I built simply connecting nouns to verbs and adjectives to nouns. The aim of these words is to test how deceivable the second-generation speakers are, while also demonstrating that they can understand the reasonability of those.

Most of the first-generation participants expressed confidence in their answers, with few responses falling in the mid-range (from 2 to 4). However, the second-generation respondents, who yielded diverse outcomes, likely influenced by factors like exposure to Albanian-speaking communities, the ability to speak other languages other than Albanian and Italian, and frequency travel to their hometowns, among others, have shown a lot of uncertainty about the words presented, marking the correctness of the word incorrectly or staying neutral. On the contrary, individuals who are typically more linguistically stimulated showed a greater ability to rate the words correctly. The pluralization and feminization of some words underwent similar changes. Specific cases of Italianization also have been used:

- *Te stampujsh* → *Stampare* → To print
- *Akuilon* → *Aquilone* → Kite

Only a portion of second-generation respondents have fallen into this issue. These problematic words have also been used in Albanian-speaking countries, particularly in communities situated in Italy. This is the primary reason why first-generation individuals can detect the issue, while second-generation individuals who are used to certain language regularities cannot.

A significant number of words consisted of derivational and inflectional morphology, which in this research basically consisted of changing some suffixes with

others, such as suffixes that create feminine nouns, a negative meaning (e.g. -inë, -uc, -an), to form nouns and adjectives with a worsening meaning (e.g. -s, -anik, -ak), to form common names (e.g. -ar, -or, -tor), foreign suffixes to form nouns and adjectives (e.g. -men, -ier, -ik, -ist), to form the names of the objects (e.g. -ik, -atore, -ak), and others. I took the root out of some commonly used words and replaced or added the suffix with those most used in the last thirty months (Aida Bado. 2012)

Here are some examples:

28. *Seksualist*, which has “*seks*” (sex) as the root, and it’s a derivation of “*seksual*”, an adjective. I added the suffix -ist to form a noun.
29. *Makinar*, which has “*makinë*” (machine) as the root (a noun), to which I added the suffix -ar, also transforming it in a noun.
30. *Bukatore*, which has “*bukë*” (bread) as the root, to which I added the suffix -atore, transforming the name into an object. A place or a machinery that makes bread. The same thing I did with “*akulltore*”, with “*akull*” (ice) as the root.
31. *Ambientar*, which has “*ambient*” (environment) as the root, to which I added the suffix -ar (as in “*makinar*”), deriving it into a profession, someone whose job is connected to the environment.

These words are comprehensible and appear in the test results, where many participants were unsure about them and uncertain on what score to give. Me too, as I was composing these words, I was uncertain about their nonexistence, thanks to how convincingly they sounded and appeared.

While every member of the first-generation group was confident in the accuracy of certain words like “*parukier*” (meaning hairdresser in Italian, *parrucchiere*) and “*arkitekture*” (meaning architecture in Italian, *architettura*), the other group presented an intriguing occurrence. Some individuals in this group experienced difficulties in recognizing these words. Even though these words are commonly used in various Albanian dialects, they may have felt like invented words, intended to deceive them.

Second-generation participants exhibit greater spontaneity in their use of Albanian, due to the lack of the grammatical competence to evaluate properly. Therefore,

they base their choices on sound and recollection, rather than grammar. The test will contradict even those who rated their L1 proficiency high and claimed that it remained unaffected by contact with L2 (55%).





## Conclusions

This research examined the level of Albanian language maintenance in the Albanian community of Vittorio Veneto across socio-linguistic aspects. The data analysis demonstrated a wide range of linguistic dynamics and experiences, identifying distinctions between first and second-generation heritage language speakers.

The study provided valuable insights on the challenges faced by Albanian as a heritage language over time, particularly in an environment dominated, in this case, by Italian. It is noteworthy that both young and adult heritage language speakers struggle with derivational and inflectional morphology (such as gender and case), though the former group experiences greater difficulties.

I encountered numerous challenges and difficulties in this research, due to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of my interviewees. This made finding relevant material and articles very arduous, necessitating me to scour published research, questionnaires, and other related articles on heritage language among different language groups to adapt them to my case.

With additional time and research, this topic has the potential to be significantly enhanced, the survey could be completed by a larger number of individuals with a similar background. Research on this specific variety of the Albanian language could additionally enhance the information on the linguistic area. Interviews could be conducted to allow respondents to express themselves more spontaneously. Effective tests, used more in recent years, such as providing participants with written texts in the majority language and requesting translations. All these improvements could enable a better detection of linguistic issues and capture linguistic tendencies more accurately.



## Summary in Italian

Questa tesi ha come obiettivo quello di analizzare il cambiamento della competenza della Heritage Language nei parlanti di prima generazione (ossia coloro che sono arrivati ad una età adulta) e nei parlanti di seconda generazione nella comunità albanese di Vittorio Veneto, quindi come la lingua madre si comporta sia al contatto prolungato, sia, per alcuni soggetti, all'acquisizione in un contesto in cui la lingua principale, l'Italiano, è prevalente.

I parlanti Heritage si possono definire come bilingui simultanei o sequenziali su vari livelli di competenza perché esposti a due o più lingue. La quantità e la qualità degli stimoli a cui sono esposti, gli effetti dovuti al contatto con la lingua maggioritaria e altri fattori sono molto importanti per l'acquisizione della lingua Heritage e possono variare durante il passare della vita del parlante. (Montrul, 2008)

Nel primo capitolo viene trattata l'Albania, con qualche generale informazione, e in particolare la lingua albanese e l'immigrazione. Nonostante l'Albania conti circa 2.8 milioni di abitanti, i parlanti raggiungono quasi i 6 milioni includendo tutte le regioni in cui la maggior parte della popolazione vive. Albania, ovviamente, ha la maggior percentuale di parlanti dell'albanese (98%), seguiti dal Kosovo (94.5%), Macedonia del Nord (25%). Poi abbiamo anche Montenegro, Italia, Svizzera, Croazia e Grecia tra tante altre nel resto del mondo. Lingua ufficiale dell'Albania e ramo della famiglia delle lingue indoeuropee. Si divide principalmente in Tosco e Ghego, distinti da differenze fonologiche, che si parlano rispettivamente nel sud e nel nord del paese.

La comunità albanese in Italia è molto ampia e uno dei motivi principali è la vicinanza dei due territori, che ha permesso a una parte della popolazione albanese di emigrare in Italia. L'immigrazione albanese in Italia ha una lunga storia che parte dal XV quando Scanderbeg inviò Demetrio Reres, generale albanese, e i suoi due figli seguiti da un vasto esercito di mercenari per sconfiggere Roberto d'Angiò, e arriva fino ai giorni nostri, all'ultima ondata migratoria avvenuta nel 1999, chiamata "l'ondata invisibile". I motivi principali che hanno causato ondate migratorie tanto ampie e frequenti sono stati i problemi politici ed economici dovuti all'incapacità del

governo e delle scelte economiche e politiche sbagliate, che hanno portato all'instaurazione di una delle prime e più importanti comunità albanesi, situate in Sicilia e in Calabria durante il XV e il XVI secolo. Adesso invece la maggior parte dei migranti albanesi risiede nel Nord del paese, che vedono Lombardia in testa con 86.499, subito dopo Emilia-Romagna (57.876), Toscana (57.876) e a seguire tutte le altre regioni. Il numero così ampio di albanesi e la vicinanza storica e culturale che si è creata negli anni hanno portato a delle leggi che tutelano, con apposite norme, le minoranze linguistiche. Oltre all'articolo 6, che ha come obiettivo la tutela di queste minoranze linguistiche, abbiamo la legge 482/1999, che dice che l'italiano è la lingua nazionale ufficiale e che *“La Repubblica, che valorizza il patrimonio linguistico e culturale della lingua italiana, promuove altresì la valorizzazione delle lingue e delle culture tutelate dalla presente legge.”*, l'articolo 2 afferma: *“In attuazione dell'articolo 6 della Costituzione e in armonia con i principi generali stabiliti dagli organismi europei e internazionali, la repubblica tutela la lingua e la cultura delle popolazioni albanesi, catalane, germaniche, greche, slovene e croate e di quelle parlanti il francese, il franco-provenzale, il friulano, il ladino, l'occitano e il sardo”*. Si può notare però che, nonostante la grande presenza delle comunità albanesi non ci siano molte leggi specifiche all'interno delle regioni che prevedano l'introduzione di un insegnamento bilingue. Tuttavia, ci sono molte iniziative che provengono dalla Programmazione Nazionale del FAMI attraverso l'Avviso Pubblico 2/2019, come per esempio Before you go, Demetria Formazione, Cefal Emilia-Romagna e tante altre, che offrono formazione professionale e civico linguista prima della partenza dal proprio paese di origine.

Nel secondo capitolo si è analizzato il mantenimento della lingua Heritage in diverse comunità di diverse popolazioni in tutto il mondo e un caso particolare simile al nostro, cos'è una lingua Heritage e i vari fattori di successo e le sfide che queste lingue affrontano.

Dopo una breve definizione di lingua Heritage, evidenziamo come queste lingue siano fondamentali per mantenere le radici culturali e le identità etniche delle comunità, creando un ponte tra il passato e il presente e trasportando secoli di tradizione e storia. Sono fondamentali per mantenere una comunicazione viva con i

propri genitori, nonni e altri parenti più lontani nell'albero genealogico. Ognuna di queste lingue offre una visione del mondo diverso, il cui decadimento porta alla perdita di un importante patrimonio linguistico e culturale, perché ogni lingua contiene espressioni idiomatiche, proverbi e sfumature linguistiche che fanno risaltare la diversità linguistica globale. Abbiamo visto come sia stato difficile trovare scritti di letteratura e ricerche sulle popolazioni albanesi in Italia, in particolare sull'impatto che entrambe le lingue hanno avuto o potrebbero avere a vicenda, portando alla ricerca di vari studi sul contatto tra differenti lingue, in particolare sull'interazione tra la Heritage Language (HL) e la lingua principale. Durante la ricerca ho incontrato molti articoli che analizzavano temi molto simili, ma che raccontavano di esperienze diverse. Abbiamo il caso dei bambini albanesi migranti in Grecia, la trasmissione e il mantenimento della lingua in Ucraina, il mantenimento e la perdita della HL in una comunità iraniana in Canada, lo sviluppo della identità filippino-americana e il sentimento verso la perdita della lingua e molte altri. Sono state osservate molte somiglianze nei vari articoli, in particolare quello riguardante i bambini migranti albanesi in Grecia, che ha servito un questionario sulla pratica e l'attitudine verso il bilinguismo dei propri figli a 202 genitori albanesi immigrati che vivevano in Grecia e i cui figli frequentavano la scuola. Lo studio è stato fatto dividendo i genitori in due gruppi: coloro che hanno iscritto i propri figli ad un corso di lingua albanese e coloro che non li hanno iscritti a nessun corso, ma che comunque contribuiscono alla preservazione della lingua in altri modi. La competenza dei partecipanti è avvenuta attraverso una serie di test che ha valutato la capacità linguistica sia in albanese che in greco, con test che includevano grammatica, vocabolario e comprensione del testo. Questi test hanno evidenziato come i figli dei genitori che li hanno iscritti a dei corsi di lingua e che promuovono la letteratura del proprio paese regolarmente hanno molta più competenza nelle abilità letterarie in albanese di coloro che non hanno ricevuto nessuno stimolo costante.

La lingua madre viene acquisita a casa e lascia poi spazio alla lingua dominante, L2, dovuto alla maggiore esposizione e ai maggiori stimoli. Uno dei fattori che determinano la perdita della fluidità della HL è l'età. I bambini bilingui, infatti, sono molto più vulnerabili dei ragazzi o degli adulti secondo alcuni studi, dovuto al fatto che più il bambino cresce e più la sua familiarità e l'esposizione alla lingua madre

crebbe. Un altro importante fattore che potrebbe aiutare a mantenere un'alta competenza della HL è l'aiuto e il supporto della famiglia e della comunità, essendoci molti studi che dimostrano come sia incredibilmente importante essere in un ambiente stimolante che aiuta al suo mantenimento. Oltre ai fattori che potrebbero aiutare a mantenere la propria competenza linguistica, i parlanti delle HL affrontano molte sfide, come per esempio il problema nell'imparare un'altra lingua, la differenza tra le due lingue, il pregiudizio linguistico e la difficoltà che hanno quando devono affacciarsi con la morfologia. In particolare, è stato evidenziato come i parlanti delle HL applichino troppe regole morfologiche frequentemente e che non siano molto precisi con la flessione regolare e irregolare.

Il terzo capitolo riguarda la ricerca svolta tramite l'utilizzo di un questionario. I partecipanti sono 20 immigrati albanesi di prima e di seconda generazione, a cui è stato sottoposto un questionario tramite Google Moduli e che contiene in totale 48 domande a scelta multipla e a risposta aperta corta, ispirate da simili questionari di altre ricerche. Mentre nella prima parte sono state raccolte informazioni anagrafiche e informazioni sociolinguistiche, come età, sesso, informazioni sulla permanenza in Italia, il sentimento verso la propria madre, la seconda consiste in un test nel quale i partecipanti avrebbero dovuto valutare la correttezza, secondo una scala Lickert (da 1 a 5) di, principalmente, pseudoparole. Queste pseudoparole sono state inventate tenendo conto delle categorie, che secondo la mia opinione, mettono in difficoltà principalmente i partecipanti che fanno parte della prima generazione, che includono il cambio di genere, la pluralizzazione, l'utilizzo di parole vere con vere regole e agrammaticali, pseudoparole grammaticalmente corrette, derivazioni e qualche distrattore (parole esistenti utilizzate per distrarre l'attenzione dalle altre domande).

I risultati del test hanno dimostrato come i partecipanti che parlano principalmente albanese e sono stimolati linguisticamente dall'ambiente hanno una maggiore competenza.

È evidente che i partecipanti del gruppo della prima generazione siano generalmente quelli con una abilità maggiore nel distinguere le parole corrette da quelle incorrette, mentre i partecipanti più giovani, specialmente quelli nati in Italia,

che non sono stimolati linguisticamente e si sono autovalutati come maggiormente competenti nella lingua italiana hanno avuto i risultati peggiori, come ci si aspettava.

La maggior parte dei partecipanti di prima generazione è stata molto decisa nelle risposte, utilizzando poche volte i valori intermedi della scala Lickert (da 2 a 4), mentre la seconda generazione ha portato a molti risultati diversi, dimostrando molta incertezza, segnando erroneamente la correttezza di una parola o stando spesso neutrali. Questa perplessità riguardo a queste parole conferma il fatto che le parole erano grammaticalmente corrette, portando a un sentimento di ambiguità.

Sono stati utilizzati anche alcuni italianismi, che sono riusciti a ingannare alcuni partecipanti della prima generazione, mentre non ha avuto nessun dubbio l'altro gruppo. Questo probabilmente dovuto all'abitudine nell'ascoltare certi italianismi quasi regolarmente, fin da quando eravamo bambini.

La maggior parte delle parole utilizzate consistevano in derivazioni e flessioni morfologiche, che comportava il cambio dei suffissi, come quelli del genere, i dispregiativi, quelli usati per formare nomi, aggettivi e molti altri. Anche in questo caso il primo gruppo è quello che ha avuto più difficoltà, il quale presenta maggiore spontaneità nell'utilizzo dell'albanese, dovuta alla mancanza di competenza grammaticale necessaria per valutare correttamente, e quindi basano principalmente le loro scelte sui suoni familiari e sui ricordi e la memoria.





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