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Introduction

Growing up in Valcanale, I have always been fascinated by the linguistic and cultural differences between villages that are a few kilometres apart. Indeed, due to its geographical position, the valley is a meeting point for three language groups: Slavic, Germanic and Romance, which are represented by the official recognition of four languages spoken in the valley, Italian, Friulian, German and Slovene.

This dissertation is the result of a desire to investigate the linguistic and cultural development of the valley and, above all, of a curiosity to understand specifically the development and the use of the Slovene language, which currently is not widespread in the valley.

The valley is characterized by a multitude of unique situations of multilingualism, from people who grow up speaking several languages, to those who learn them over time in school, to people who decide to learn them as adults in order to take more advantage of the opportunities offered by the local context.

The first part of this work describes, from a general point of view, the several types of bilingualism and multilingualism, as well as the differences in languages acquisition according to age and mode of acquisition. Furthermore, I outline the important relationship between language, culture and personal identity within different linguistic and cultural groups.

In the second part of the dissertation, I focus on the unique multilingual and multicultural situation in Valcanale, specifically on the use and teaching of the Slovene language. After a brief geographical overview, I outline the main historical events that characterised the valley, from the first known settlements to Fascism and the Second World War, which marked the beginning of the process of Italianisation of all minorities that lived in the valley.

The fourth chapter outlines the international, national and regional legal frameworks for the protection and promotion of autochthonous linguistic minorities, specifically with regard to education.

Subsequently, the fifth chapter traces the historical phases that influenced the spread of the Slovene language and the development of Slovene language teaching in the valley. The current situation is then described, with reference to the numerous educational

projects implemented mainly in pre-schools and primary schools, as well as the future prospects that include the establishment of a multilingual school for the promotion of all the recognised and spoken languages in Valcanale.

Chapter 1 – Bilingualism and second language acquisition

1.1 Introduction

Nowadays there are an estimated 5,000 to 7,000 languages in the world considering both majority, minority languages, as well as dialects and speech varieties. Indeed, multilingualism is a worldwide phenomenon which arose in a number of ways through centuries: first of all, immigrants, both settlers and invaders due to colonial expansions, brought many languages into contact. Due to imperialism and colonization, some languages become more attractive to colonized groups, sometimes even necessary to survival. Most times, the pragmatic advantage and the cultural prestige of the language spoken by the colonizers outlive the local language (Edwards, 2013).

However, speakers of different languages come into contact for a variety of reasons, including:

- Political and military reasons: colonization, annexation, resettlement, and federations are factors that have immediate effects on languages.
- Natural disaster: natural catastrophes can be the cause for major migratory flows.
- Religion: religious oppression may lead people to move to a new country, thus learning new languages
- Culture: the desire to belong to and identify with a specific ethnic, social, or cultural group means that people may have to learn a new language. Moreover, language is a significant cultural element and people from a minority group may want to maintain their language.
- Economy: due to poverty, many people migrated to find better living conditions, making it necessary to learn new languages
- Education and technology: nowadays learning another language is fundamental to have access to information and knowledge, especially since the development of Internet.

Thus, the opportunities of linguistic contact between people speaking different languages are endless, making bilingualism (and multilingualism) a very common phenomenon; indeed, one in three people of the world's population speaks two or more

language in their daily life, not considering the people who make irregular use of more languages other than their native one (Wei, 2000).

The term bilingual -and also multilingual- is widely used to refer to people who have the ability to use more than one language. However, it is highly complex social, psychological, and linguistic phenomenon which must be analysed from multiple points of view. In the literature regarding this topic, there are several definitions which range from a more specific to a broader perspective.

1.2 Defining bilingualism

Bloomfield (56:1933) stated that bilinguals are individuals who have “native-like control of two languages”, however, such a definition excludes the majority of people who speak more than one language but do not have a native-like proficiency. Later, Haugen defined as bilingual people who are fluent in one language and can produce meaningful utterances in another language, including different degrees of proficiency, but still not considering the fact that the use of languages may vary according to the context. Some researchers use language proficiency as main criteria to describe bilinguals, while other stress the factor of language use. Weinrich (1953) stated that bilingualism is the practice of alternately using two languages; similarly, Mackey (1962) considered the alternate use of two or more languages. In 1994, Valdés and Figueroa defined bilingual “an individual who possesses more than one language competence” (Bhatia and Ritchie, 111:2012). In 2013, Grosjean stated that bilingualism is the use of two or more languages (or dialects) in everyday life. this definition includes both language proficiency and language use, indeed a certain level of knowledge is required to be able to regularly use two or more languages. Moreover, it accounts for people who know more than two languages and it includes dialects, which is a linguistic reality in many countries. Such broader definitions include both people who grow up bilingual (known as bilingual first-language acquisition or BFLA), and people who learn other languages later in life, known as second-language acquisition, or SLA. Luk and Bialystok (2013) added that both language use -or bilingual usage as they call it- and language proficiency are not mutually exclusive, and both are indeed involved in the bilingual experience as the linguistic knowledge and the use of each language do not remain static over a bilingual’s lifetime. In 1953, Weinrich stated that

many bilinguals learn certain topics in a specific language and thus they may have difficulties when discussing such topics in other languages. Later, Mackey (1962) focused on what the bilinguals use their languages for, dividing into external functions, which involves the use of a specific language in various situations, and internal functions when considering non-communicative uses of a language (such as praying, dreaming, counting etc.). Grosjean (1997) introduced the Complementary Principle stating that “Bilinguals usually acquire and use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people. Different aspects of life require different languages.” (in Grosjean 8:2018). Thus, it is essential to examine many factors when considering the language use, as bilinguals may use different languages in different domains (work/studies, family, social sphere, etc.) and any bilingual may create a unique pattern specific for his or her needs. Moreover, the principle has a direct effect on language proficiency: if an individual speaks a language in just a few domains of life, the skills may not be as developed as those of another languages. Indeed, bilinguals’ language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) change during their life and in most cases the proficiency in each skill is different for each language: some people may have high proficiency in skills related to the spoken language (listening and speaking) but may not be able to read or write in a specific language. Indeed, it is almost impossible for bilinguals to develop equal and total proficiency in all their languages (Grosjean, 2018).

1.3 Classification of bilingualism

Given the heterogeneous nature of bilingualism (and consequently, multilingualism), bilinguals can be classified according to different factors, such as age of acquisition, degree of proficiency and other dimensions.

Such dimensions include:

- Relationship between the language proficiencies in two languages: according to Peal and Lambert (1962), bilinguals can be divided into balanced and dominant, depending on whether they can achieve an equal level of proficiency in both languages.
- Age of acquisition: according to Genesee et al. (1978), bilinguals can be classified as early or simultaneous bilinguals when they are exposed to two

languages from birth, sequential bilinguals if they are exposed to a L2 after having come foundation in L1, and late bilinguals when people learn other languages during adulthood.

- Functional ability: according to their abilities, bilinguals are divided can be described as receptive when they are able to understand but not to produce L2 in oral and/or written domains. If they are able to understand and produce L2 are then considered productive bilinguals.
- Organization of linguistic codes and meaning unit(s): according to Weinrich (1953) bilinguals can be divided into compound if two sets of linguistic codes are stored in one meaning unit, coordinate if they are stored separately and lastly, subordinate if L2 is accessed through L1. This division shows a greater complexity and diversity in how the organization of the multilingual memory, which is influenced by differences between languages and proficiency levels.
- Language status and learning environment: Fishman (1977) and later Valdés and Figueroa (1994), classified bilinguals according to the status and value of bilingualism. They use the term elite or elective bilinguals to refer to individuals who choose to learn another language because of its higher status in a specific context. They use folk or circumstantial bilinguals to refer to people who speak a language that is not a majority language in a specific context and due to circumstances need to learn another language to survive.
- Effects of L2 learning on the retention of L1: Lambert (1974) classified bilinguals according to the effects of learning a new language. He refers to additive bilingualism when learning a L2 is an enrichment that does not cause any loss in L1. He then refers to subtractive bilingualism when L1 is replaced by L2.
- Cultural identity: Hamers and Blanc (2000) referred to the cultural identity of bilinguals. They described as bicultural people whose cultural identity has been shaped by two cultures; as L1 monocultural people whose identity refers to only one culture; as L2 acculturate people who lose their L1 culture for another culture and lastly, as deculturated people who do not have feel any identity in neither culture (Butler, 2012 in Bhatia and Ritchie).

Such classifications fail to describe the complex and dynamic nature of bilingualism; indeed, some dimensions are not categorical but continuous constructs, and any bilingual shows a unique situation. Moreover, defining and measuring proficiency is not an easy task as it is usually determined arbitrarily. Also, such categorisations fail to capture the role of context in which languages are used; indeed, the use of languages by bilinguals varies greatly according to content, purpose, interlocutors, psychological conditions (such as formal or informal context), and so on. Thus, context is a factor that influence bilinguals' proficiency levels. Moreover, during their lifetime, any bilingual profile is constantly changing, creating even more complex situations, especially if a other languages are added in case of multilingualism. For instance, according to the age of acquisition individuals may be considered simultaneous bilinguals when they grow up acquiring two languages but also as sequential or late bilinguals if other languages are added later. Indeed, given that any individual shows a unique pattern, fixed classifications are useful but not sufficient to describe the great complexity of bilingualism and multilingualism (Butler, 2012 in Bhatia and Ritchie).

1.4 Bilingual first language acquisition

Bilingual first language acquisition (or BFLA) refers to the simultaneous acquisition of two languages from birth. One of the main questions regarding this topic is whether the linguistic developmental path of bilingual children is the same of monolinguals or whether learning two languages simultaneously may challenge the children's ability to learn languages (Genesee and Nicoladis, 2005).

Rojan (1913) conducted one of the first researches regarding this topic by studying the development of his child Louis. Rojan adopted a "one person-one language" approach where he only spoke French to the child and the mother only spoke German; the child showed remarkable progress in both languages and little sign of confusion, a phenomenon which was attributed to the approach chosen. Later on, Leopold (1949) carried out similar research on his daughter, stating that the parents adopted the same "one person-one language" approach, yet the child went through a stage when she showed confusion by using words from both languages. Due to this language mixing, Leopold assumed that BFL children function as monolinguals and learning two languages simultaneously may lead to delayed and impaired forms of cognitive and

linguistic development. Thus, bilingual education could lead to academic failure or delay, as well as socio-cultural issues, as children would not be able to identify strongly with neither language group. Currently, whether bilingualism is detrimental or not for children, is still subject to discussion (Genesee and Nicoladis, 2005).

1.4.1 One language system or two?

Given the hypothesis that acquiring two languages from birth could be detrimental to children, scholars started to question whether simultaneous bilingual children initially organise their languages in one linguistic system or two in terms of lexicon, syntax, and phonology. (Barreña, 2001 in Chin, Wigglesworth, 2007)

As stated beforehand, Leopold (1954) conducted a study on his daughter and affirmed that children have one linguistic system for both languages, which justifies the fact that bilingual children mix languages.

Similarly, Volterra and Taeschner (1978) conducted a longitudinal study on two bilingual German-Italian children, whose parents used the “one person-one language” approach. The scholars theorized that initially children have one linguistic system containing both languages and that they would separate in two separate systems through a three-stage development. The first stage is characterized by the presence of one lexicon and one syntactic system that have proprieties of both languages, claiming that this is the reason why children are not able to refer to an object with the equivalent word in both languages. In the second stage, children would develop two different lexical systems but still have one syntactic system which comprehends a mix of grammatical rules of both languages, such as the use of possessive constructions, negative adverbials, and the placement of adjectives. Regarding the vocabulary, during this phase children are able to differentiate between two lexicons, however the choice of lexicon would be influenced by the context. During the third stage, children would develop two different systems for both lexicon and syntax, as they are able to create complex expressions in both languages. However, Volterra and Taeschner still did not define children who grow up with two languages as truly bilingual as after the three stage their language choices were still strongly influenced by the context and the addressee of their speech. Moreover, they argued that a child is truly bilingual only when they would have the

same proficiency and competence in both languages as a monolingual child (Foster-Cohen, 2009).

In 1980, Redlinger and Park argued three main limitations regarding previous research. Firstly, in other studies the relationship between language mixing and language development in terms of age has not been appropriately analysed. Secondly, previous arguments were not based on specific distributional data but only on example. Lastly, they affirmed that in most studies, the frequency of substituted words was reported in tokens rather than in types. During their research which involved language mixing in relation to language development through the analysis of thirty to forty-five minutes of simultaneous speech, they noticed that the mixing rates would decrease as the proficiency in both languages improved. Due to those results, they concluded that initially bilingual children have one language system as they are able to differentiate the two languages only later in life with a higher language proficiency (Du, 2010). However, such hypothesis has been later criticised by Genesee (1989) as he claimed that the evidence of decreasing mixing rates was not sufficient to prove that bilingual children have one language system (Wei, 2000).

Genesee (1989) one of the main advocates of the dual linguistic system hypothesis, suggested that previous research do not have sufficient evidence to prove that children initially have one linguistic system. Indeed, the phenomenon of code-mixing might be the result of the absence of a translation of specific words in one of the languages. Children learn new words and expression everyday based on the experiences, meaning that they will eventually learn the lexicon in both languages according to the context in which each language is used (Chin, Wigglesworth, 2007).

Following Genesee's hypothesis, Quay (1995) conducted a study on the linguistic development of a Spanish-English bilingual child, noting that, when she had a higher proficiency in both languages, she would have sufficient lexical resources to speak one language or the other according to the addressee. Thus, Quay argued that it is not possible to determine the first and second stage theorized by Volterra and Taeschner (Du, 2010).

Similarly, Genesee, Boivin and Nicoladis (1996) conducted a study on French-English bilingual children. Their research showed that children would be able to identify the addressees' language (English or French) after minimal exposure and would use that

language as much as possible, even if it was their weaker language. Thus, they stated that that would be evidence to support the dual system hypothesis, as children understood that the languages are different. However, despite the evidence of two linguistic systems, BFLA children tend to show some cross-linguistic influence and code-mixing between the two languages, as the systems are not “hermetically” closed, and the two languages do not develop in an autonomous way (Paradis, Genesee, Crago, 2011).

The hypothesis of two language system supports the idea that acquiring more than one language is not detrimental for children. Indeed, despite less exposure to each language, bilingual children reach the same linguistic milestones within the same timeframe as their monolingual peers in different aspects: the onset of canonical babbling, first words and the overall rate of vocabulary growth. Moreover, the morpho-syntactic development is similar to monolingual children and occurs within the same age span, at least in their dominant language. However, bilinguals may show a difference in vocabulary size in each language, which are usually attributed to the frequency of exposure of each language and the context in which they are used. (Genesee, Nicoladis, 2005) Moreover, from an early age, children are aware of sacrificing a language in order to express their intention and thus, they code-mix the languages. Indeed, “getting the message out may well be more important to the young bilingual child, just as it is to any child desperate to be heard, than the language in which the message is framed.” (Bialystok, Hakuta, 1994).

1.5 Second language acquisition

Second language acquisition (SLA) refers to the acquisition of a language subsequent to learning a L1 as young children, as well as to the process of learning that language. Usually, the new language acquired is referred to as second language (L2), however it may also be referred to as target language (TL), when speaking about any additional language. Second language acquisition take place both as informal learning, involving naturalistic contexts, or formal learning during classes.

The scope of SLA concerns the acquisition of any L2, however scholars make a further distinction according to the function of that language in the life of an individual, as the

context in which a language will be used, will affect the vocabulary, the grammatical rules needed and the development of oral and written skills:

- second language: usually the term is used to refer to an official or socially dominant language, commonly used for education, employment, or basic purposes. It is usually acquired by members of minority groups or immigrants after learning their native language.
- foreign language: it is a language which learners do not widely use in their social context, but which may be useful for future cross-cultural communication, for curricular requirements in schools, but that does not have an immediate or necessary practical application.
- library language: it mainly concerns the field of learning through reading, especially for studies published in a language different from the learners' native tongue.
- auxiliary language: refers to a language which learners need to know for a wider communication, especially regarding official functions in their immediate political setting, different from their first language.
- Language for specific purposes: refers to the lexicon of a specific topic and the learning of such languages usually focuses on a narrow set of occupation-specific functions and uses (Saville-Troike, 2012).

1.5.1 Language acquisition

The phenomenon of acquiring a new language has been object of studies in different scientific fields. Research in neurology, neurolinguistics and psychology explain how the two hemispheres of the brain work in different ways in order to elaborate languages. Indeed, the left hemisphere is specialized in tasks of analytical, sequential, and logical nature, while the right hemisphere performs more simultaneous and analogic tasks. The neurolinguistic field theorised that the different messages (visual, audio-visual, verbal etc.) are processed by a sequence of interrelated operations in both hemispheres. Danesi (1998) has studied such notion in relation to language learning and theorised two principles: bimodality and directionality. With bimodality, the scholar explained that both hemispheres are involved in linguistic communication and language acquisition. Indeed, the motivational phase in language learning is

processed in the right side of the brain and it is integrated with the analytic analysis of the language of the left side. With the principle of directionality, he established that the messages follow a fixed direction from the right hemisphere to the left one. Thus, early phases of the acquisition of a language are characterized by the emotional dimension (curiosity, pleasure in communication in a new language etc.), then by a logical linguistic analysis and lastly, the linguistic material is put into context, rich of cultural elements and then the information are formalised again through an analytical analysis, such as reflections on the language, grammatic explanations and exercises (Balboni, 2020).

1.6 Language Acquisition Device

The Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is a principle developed by Noam Chomsky (1986) regarding the linguistic acquisition which theorises that children have an instinctive mental capacity that enables them to acquire and produce language. Thus, individuals are born with an innate, genetically transmitted skill for acquiring language. Indeed, the linguistic development in children follows similar and predictable paths regardless of the socio-cultural context. Moreover, linguistic studies suggest the idea of a “universal grammar”, theorising linguistic mechanisms common to all languages. Consequently, people who learn other languages different from their L1 are considered as an active party with an innate capacity for language acquisition that must supported by the Language Acquisition Support System (LASS). Such principle has been theorized by Bruner, who agreed with Chomsky regarding an instinctive ability to learn languages, but he emphasized the importance of interactions and social input (parental/caregiver input, teachers, friends and peers, media etc.) in order to learn a language more effectively.

Some scholars do not agree with the idea of an innate predisposition to language learning, but support the concept that different language support systems, as well as personal characteristics, affect the linguistic acquisition. Skehan (1994) stated that aptitude in language acquisition is a specific and stable talent, not dependent on other abilities, which cannot be taught, but rather improvable. Indeed, the dominance of the right or left brain is an individual characteristic that influences how the reality and thus, languages, are perceived. For instance, in terms of language learning in a formal

context, there may be students who show a more analytical perception of language and need to learn linguistic mechanisms, other students who are more likely to use the language, despite making grammatical errors. Consequently, in language teaching is important to work with various educational methodologies that do not penalize either type of student.

1.7 Theory of multiple intelligences

The theory of multiple intelligences developed by Gardner in the late 1970s posits that any individual has eight or more relatively autonomous intelligences, combined in a unique way and with different degrees of dominance. They include:

- Linguistic intelligence: involves the ability to analyse linguistic information, capture nuances of meaning and choose the appropriate terms to express mainly emotion and thoughts.
- Logical-mathematical intelligence: it is manifested in the processing of more complex reasoning and abstract problems which mainly involve the left hemisphere. Regarding language acquisition, it includes the control of formal and grammatical aspects.
- Spatial intelligence: refers to the ability of mentally recognize and manipulate objects' arrangements in a space including sensory and motor understanding of a space. Regarding language learning, such intelligence promotes the memorization of lexicon regarding environments (rooms, buildings, streets etc.)
- Musical intelligence: refers to the ability to produce, remember and compose music. Thus, it is useful to help memorize lexicon through songs, rhymes, and music in general.
- Bodily-Kinesthetics intelligence: it includes the ability to control body movements and the ability to manipulate objects. This intelligence involves both hemispheres. This type of intelligence is fundamental to infants and linguistic competence: the skills of pointing at something is essential as infants to establish representational and symbolic skills, fundamental for communication.
- Interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences: refer to the ability to recognize and understand both one's own and other peoples' moods, desires, motivations, and intentions.

- Naturalist intelligence: refers to the ability to make classifications related to the natural world. The concept has been later applied to a categorisation of men's work, from tangible products to symbolic systems which include languages.
- Existential intelligence: refers to the capacity to tackle deep questions about the human existence, such as the meaning of life (Torresan, 2007).

Considering the theory of multiple intelligences and aptitude, scholars have speculated about the fact that each student's approach to learning is influenced by various factors, indeed it is unlikely to find students with the same learning strategies and that activate the same cognitive processes. Moreover, there are also differences regarding the perception of external inputs. On the one hand, using strategies to analyse the input from a global point of view allow people to compare the received information with prior knowledge based on similarities and simplification of the input, thus in this case context is an essential resource for learning. On the other hand, an analytical analysis of information allows people to compare information with prior knowledge on the basis of contrasts and differences (Dalosio, 2009).

From this concept, scholars theorized that students also have different learning styles and strategies. As stated before, students may show a more analytical or global learning style based on the dominance of the left or right hemisphere. Moreover, there are students who prefer to learn theoretical concepts and others who prefer to work with the knowledge they have, even if it leads to mistake. Some students may be discouraged from their mistakes, while others consider mistakes as a stimulus to improve. Lastly, some students tend to be more independent when studying compared to others (Balboni, 2020).

Krashen (1977) formulated the "input hypothesis" or "monitor model" which includes five hypothesis of second-language acquisition. One of the hypothesis concerns what he called "affective filter", an impediment to learning or acquisition caused by negative emotional (or affective) responses to inputs. If a learning environment is stressful for students, the input will not be memorized as certain emotions such as anxiety, self-doubt and even boredom can interfere with the acquisition process, limiting the amount of knowledge input that the student is able to understand. Such negative responses can be reduced with activities that spark interest in the students, creating a low-anxiety environmental and trying to bolster students' self-esteem (Balboni, 2020).

1.8 Motivation to learning

Motivation is essential when learning, especially in language learning. There are three main elements that spark motivation in students:

- Duty: particularly in educational settings, refers to a sense of obligation to study and learn information, which usually activates a negative affective filter that does not allow for an effective acquisition of input.
- Need: with reference to the concept of left-brain dominance, this motivation is rational and mindful, usually it has two limitations: it is necessary to perceive the need in the first place (e.g. work-related need to learn a language), and the motivation decreases when the individual feels that the need is met.
- Pleasure: with reference to the concept of right-brain dominance, is the main motivation for learning. Linking positive emotions to learning leads to a more efficient acquisition of input. Regarding language learning, a good motivation could be feeling pleasure and satisfaction when communicating effectively with others and without any language barrier.

As stated before, it is essential to create a positive formal environment for second-language learning, where languages are proposed as a useful yet enjoyable experience that would allow students to express themselves and communicate with others. Teachers must stimulate students with challenging but not too difficult activities, propose a variety of activities to avoid boredom, try to understand the different learning styles of students to help them overcome difficulties, as well as create a good relationship with their students in order to set a non-stressful environment (Balboni, 2020).

1.9 Types of students according to their age

Second-language acquisition can happen during childhood, after acquiring the first or mother-tongue, as well as later in life during adolescence and even adulthood. Given that Valcanale is a multilingual area that offers a variety of language courses for all age groups, I believe that it is important to illustrate the main differences among children, teenagers and adults.

1.9.1. Children

Language acquisition is a process that starts from birth and during childhood is strictly related to their emotional sphere. In this age range, languages cannot be formally taught, but teachers must guide children in the discovery of languages making sure that they understand that there are many languages which they can acquire without much effort through playful and enjoyable activities.

As stated before, one of the main subjects of discussion regarding bilingualism in children is whether learning two or more languages can be detrimental. However, it has been proved that bilingualism does not have such consequences. According to the “Critical Period Hypothesis”, first formulated by Penfield and Roberts (1959) and then popularized by Lennenberg (1967), childhood is actually the most productive timeframe for language acquisition, an ability which slows down during puberty. Dalosio (2009), differentiate between two critical periods during childhood: until 3 years old, children could potentially acquire a perfect pronunciation and linguistic competences, afterwards, between 4- and 8-years old pronunciation would still be perfect, however would request more cognitive effort. Moreover, he theorized that from 8 years onwards, until the teenage years, children and teenagers still have strong neurological capabilities, however the linguistic performance will not be the same as a native speaker due to stronger morphosyntactic interferences (Balboni, 2020).

When working with children it is essential to follow some guiding principles for a more efficient learning.

- it is important to integrate foreign language teaching with the rest of the curriculum by defining content and objectives in relation to other subjects.
- it is essential to keep in mind that each student has direct cognitive and learning styles and children learn at their own pace, so they may not show the same development and progresses at the same time.
- it is important to include all sensory faculties (sight, hearing, taste, smell etc.), for example by naming and describing things that children touch or use. Indeed, children do not need any abstract concept.
- it is important to create a playful and cheerful environment which activate positive relations between play and acquiring information that allow for a better memorization.

1.9.2 Teenagers and young adults

One of the main changes from children to adolescents regarding learning, is that the affective filter becomes stronger and is based on the approval of peers rather than adults and teachers. Indeed, teenagers tend to not accept errors as they feel like mistakes undermine their reputation and role within their class group. Moreover, most adolescents tend to study the bare minimum, thus teachers must find ways to involve students in participating more during the lessons, avoiding activities and situation in which students may feel embarrassed or negative emotions to avoid the activation of the affective filter.

During the teenage years, the brain's lateralization process stabilizes, allowing students for an abstract analysis and reflection on metalinguistic concepts. Declarative knowledge, such as simple statements of facts and information, becomes complex procedural and practical knowledge, which lead to the creation of mental representations (Balboni, 2020).

1.9.3 Adult students and lifelong learning

When speaking about teaching adults, it is essential to refer to lifelong education. Lifelong learning is the voluntary, ongoing, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for professional or personal reasons. The programs for adults are based on frameworks, such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, which address the different needs of adult learners (Balboni, 2020).

After the compulsory school, the relationship between students and teachers changes as they become socially closer and teachers are seen as experts who know the subject, in this case languages, and students do not feel inferior to them. A positive relation with the teacher is preferable, however in the case of adults it does not affect the learning process and does not activate an affective filter, as opposed to adolescents. Adult students are characterized by an high professional or personal motivation to acquire a new language and are willing to pay for language courses, however they usually apply the "value per money" criteria when choosing the rights course: the course must bring to concrete results such as enrich the personal resume. Moreover, they usually apply also the "time for money" principle, as adults prefer to choose crash

courses in order to achieve good results in the shortest possible time. From a cognitive point of view, adults still have a good learning ability, even if it is not as fast as children; however, adults show a major aptitude for abstraction, meaning that they may need more “rules” to follow, a more schematic explanation and explicit analysis of the content. Moreover, adults tend not to appreciate exercises that involve playful and interactive situations as they may feel that they are putting their reputation at risk and see such exercises as a waste of time. The teacher must be able to create an environment in which correcting mistakes and tests are not seen as a threat to the student reputation. Moreover, teachers must understand that adults are characterized by an explicit willingness to learn and acquire new knowledge as long as the teacher supports their autonomy during the acquisition process (Balboni, 2020).

Regardless of the age of the students, teachers must be able to create a class group in which no one feels excluded, devoting time to each student according to their needs and learning style in order to ensure an effective language acquisition.

Chapter 2 – Language and cultural identity

2.1 Identity

The concept of identity has been the subject of recent studies from the second half of the 20th century. Previously, as stated by Anderson (1991) and Hall (1996), the idea of individuality was considered from an age-old, religious, and fixed point of view which did not allow any flexibility, indeed people were not seen as unique entities. Later on, with the emergence of nationalism, such concept was linked to ethnicity and nationality, which is now considered a simplistic point of view that defines people through pre-existing categories (Owen, 2011).

Postmodern studies affirm that people have a complex and non-static identity based on several factors and elements such as age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, social class, culture, and language. (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Castells, 2010; Edwards, 2009; Joseph, 2004; Lemke, 2008; May, 2008; Weaver, 2001; in Owen, 2011). Indeed, as observed by Lemke (2008), it is possible to speak about identities, as

“we are always ourselves, but who we are, who we portray ourselves as being, who we are constructed as being changes with interactants and settings, with age of life. Identities develop and change, they are at least multi-faceted if not plural. Their consistency and continuity are our constructions, mandated by our cultural notions of the kinds of selves that are normal and abnormal in our community”. (in Owen, 9:2011)

Lemke used the term “construction” to indicate a key aspect regarding culture: it is not inherited at birth, but rather constructed during life. Similarly, Edwards (2009) stated that identity can be considered as a fluctuating and unstable phenomenon, as a complex process rather than a fixed entity (Owen, 2011).

Owen (2011) claimed that we perceive our identity in relation with others and explained the difference between personal identity and collective identity. Personal identity refers to personality intended as the sense of sameness across time and space, as well as the self-consciousness and awareness that “[...] one person is oneself and not someone else.” (Lemke, 19:2009, in Owen, 2011).

Collective identity refers to a sense of group unity, whereby individuals align themselves with other people based on shared characteristics and simultaneously distinguish themselves from individuals that do not share such traits. This concept can be considered as a social construction, as sameness and difference are flexible ideas that can be manipulated to create a sense of group unity. However, regardless the number of similarities and shared characteristics, groups are not completely homogeneous on all fronts (Owen, 2011).

2.2 Language

As stated by Owen (2011), the definition of language can be considered malleable. For instance, the difference between language and dialect is mostly a political issue, generally based on a higher social or economic status, indeed speech varieties do not have the same rights. The boundaries between language and dialect are often unclear, which leads to estimate that the number of languages used worldwide is around six or seven thousand (David, 2009; Lewis, 2009; in Owen, 2011). Moreover, language is an element present in all aspects of life, making it difficult to give a clear and concise definition that would include all the roles played by language in our life. However, two main functions are given to language: an instrumental and a symbolic function. Such functions create an environment, in which “identities are constructed projected and interpreted on many levels, the overall language/identity relationship may appear overwhelmingly complex.” (Owen, 14:2011). The instrumental function refers to the role of languages as a form of communication, a concept that includes the ability to make oneself understandable by other and to understand others as well. The second function refers to the symbolic meaning it carries, especially as representation of culture and identity. Indeed, according to Owen (2011), it may represent cultural or ethnic characteristics or other traits of groups that share the same language.

2.2.1 Mother tongue

The importance of the symbolic role of language related to identity and culture has been subject to many debates. Indeed, not all scholars agree with the notion of language as a significant factor in constructing social identities or whether it shapes and reflects an ethnic or national identity. As stated by Owen (2011), a language associated

with a specific group can be referred to as heritage language, traditional language, ancestral language, or mother tongue. However, the majority of scholars seems to refer to mother tongue as the first language learned and/or used at home. With regard to the definition of mother tongue, Skutnabb-Kangas (2008) identified four possible criteria for theorizing mother tongues considering origin, identification, competence, and function, as summarized in the following table.

CRITERION	DEFINITION
Origin	The language one learned first
Identification	
1. Internal	1. the language one identifies with
2. external	2. the language one is identified as a native speaker of by other
Competence	The language one knows best
Function	The language one uses most

Table 1 – Definitions of mother tongue by Skutnabb-Kangas (2008) (in Owen, 15:2011)

In general, such criteria operate simultaneously for linguistic majorities. However, Skutnabb-Kangas (1995) noted that it is not always the case for linguistic minorities. For instance, minorities may receive a submersion education in the majority language, and in such cases their mother tongue may be defined considering the criteria of origin and internal identification. In other cases, older generations may not teach their language to the new generations, but in virtue of internal identification, they may consider such language as their mother tongue. Indeed, as stated by Skutnabb-Kangas (1995), people can consider a language as their mother tongue, even if they have little to no linguistic competence, or people may have two or more mother tongues. Moreover, she notes, if one considers all criteria except that of origin, a person's mother tongue may change during their lifetime.

Considering those concepts, Skutnabb-Kangas claims that a specific language is intrinsically linked with a group's ethnic identity. Other scholars such as Bunge (1992), Davis (2009) and Fishman (1991, 1997) share similar ideas. Fishman states that a mother tongue, or what he described as beloved language, is an imperative element of ethnocultural identity. Rubio-Marín (2003) affirms that culture is linked to a specific

heritage language and advocates for language rights that “aim at ensuring a person’s capacity to enjoy a secure linguistic environment in her/his mother tongue and a linguistic group’s fair change of cultural self-reproduction” (Rubio-Marin, 56:2003, in Owen 16:2011).

2.2.2 Language’s influence on the perception of the world

Such beliefs are partially based on the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis on linguistic relativity, which theorizes that the language we speak affects our perception of the world. As stated by Dong, the process of constructing thoughts begins with the perception of the outside world, the categorization through language, which later through memory make a deep impression and form a conscious language. Ideas are then conveyed with expressions of logical inferences which form the final thought. Thus, languages may limit the description of objects and concepts, resulting in limiting the thinking as well. Such process can be summarized with the following chart.

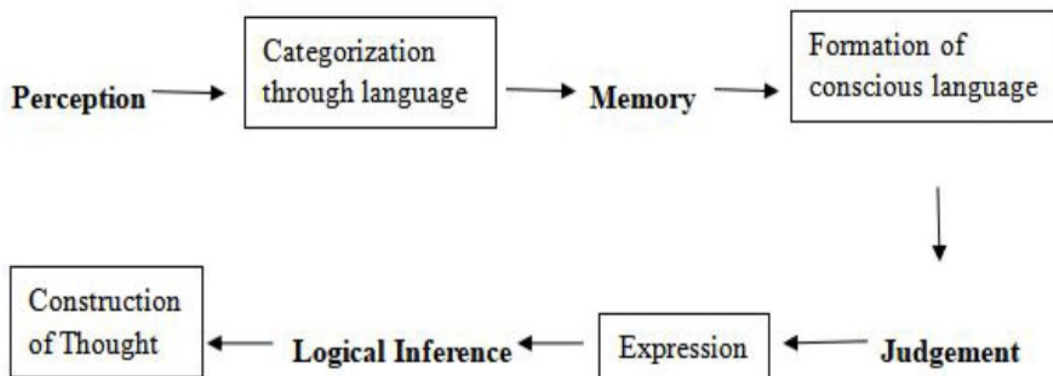


Chart 1 – the process of determination from language to thought (Dong, 2022)

This topic has been subject to many debates, in which some scholars claim that language determines our view of reality, other scholars instead - with a more conservative stance- state that languages influence our perceptions. For instance, Owen (2011) provides the example of the Plains Cree language, an indigenous dialect spoken in Canada, compared to the French language. French grammar differentiates between masculine and feminine nouns, whereas in the Plains Cree language there is not such distinction. They adopt another classification system in which nouns refer to animate or

inanimate objects. The animate category includes objects that we think of as inanimate, such as rocks and trees, reflecting a different perception of the world, as they believe that the natural world has a spirit of life force. With this example, Owen (2011) claims that the way people perceive the environment is different based on how their languages are structured, but at the same time “the perceptions and cultural beliefs or values of a society are encoded in the language itself.” (Owen, 17:2011).

2.2.3 Language and ethnocultural identity

Bunge (1992) claims that a language is “a system of thought and expression peculiar to a nation and is the outward expression and manifestation of that nation’s view of the universe” (in Owen, 17:2011). Thus, this idea expresses that ethnic identity is embedded in the language associated with a specific group.

Another point of view is put forward by scholars who, on the contrary, believe that such ideas are absolutist and non-compatible with the multi-faceted concept of identity. Eastman (1984) and Anderson (1991) claim that language is an essential element of identity, however, it does not matter which language is associated with a specific group. According to Eastman, language use is one superficial manifestation of ethnic behaviour, and thus it has no impact on the fundamental nature of identity. He drew a distinction between “primordial” and “behavioural” aspects of ethnic identity, and explained that “when we stop using the language of our ethnic group, only the language use aspect of our ethnic identity changes; the primordial sense of who we are and what group we think we belong to for the remainder remains intact” (Eastman, 261:1984; in Owen, 18:2011).

Considering the concept of national identity, Anderson (1991) shares a similar point of view and refers to nations as “imagined communities”. He also states that it is not right to treat a specific language as an emblem of nationality such as traditions and customs, rather “print language is what invents nationalism, not a particular language per se” (Anderson, 134:1991; in Owen, 18:2011). From this point of view, language is considered to be merely a surface feature of identity and the notion that a specific language is intrinsically linked to identity is not accepted.

However, other scholars do not share such ideas, as the nature of identity is multi-faceted, dynamic, and more importantly, socially constructed in terms of continuity with

the past, influenced by specific social, political, and historical factors. Considering those concepts, scholars adopt an intermediary approach that acknowledges language as a cultural marker which is experienced differently by different groups. Edward (2009) states that the maintenance of an identity does not necessarily depend on the maintenance of specific or ancestral languages, however he adds that if a language has been sustained, it is indeed a strong pillar of identity. May (2004, 2008) observed that some groups may abandon their traditional language without losing their cultural and ethnic identity and shares a similar point of view, asserting that at times, languages are definitely a significant element for the individual and collective identity. Sometimes, minority languages are seen as obsolete, even as “obstacles” that may lead to a sort of “ghettoization” of their speakers, whereas dominant languages are often considered modern. In this way, switching to a majority language is thus seen as a sensible move towards progress and modernity. However, switching to a majority language is not always a voluntary choice, rather a survival strategy, especially during colonialism.

Some scholars believe that with language loss comes also cultural loss, as stated by Fishman (1991) “language shift generally and basically involves [...] quite devastating and profound culture change” (Fishman, 1991; in Owen, 2011). Indeed, the loss of a language may lead to the loss of a unique perception of the world. As stated in Owen (2011), “the loss of a language is a loss for all humanity, as it means that a part of that collective knowledge and experience has disappeared”. As stated by Edwards (2015), language is a vehicle of tradition and culture, which intertwines with the concept of belonging in a group or community. The scholar reports the example of English-speaking Irish or Welsh people who still feel a deep attachment to their culture and ancestry, even though they do not speak Irish or Welsh. This is linked to the topic explored in this dissertation, as a similar situation is likely to be experienced in Valcanale, where many people feel the attachment to Austrian or Slovene traditions and customs, even though they do not speak those languages in the everyday life.

Some scholars advocate for mother tongue education for children, especially during the early years of school before transitioning to the dominant language used, as it has been demonstrated that it improves mental, social, cognitive and psychological abilities of students (Fox, 2005; Skutnabb-Kangas in press; Skutnabb-Kangas & Dunbar, 2010; in Owen, 2011). Shifting to the dominant language after a few years has proved to bring

about significant results, such as improved literacy levels in both languages, improved math skills and critical thinking. Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar (2010) claim that the maintenance of language diversity can be an economical factor, as using more languages enhances creativity, leading to innovation and eventually to investment. Thus, given multiple arguments, many scholars support the idea that the loss of one's own mother tongue can have disastrous consequences for a specific group that may perceive their heritage language as an essential characteristic of their ethnocultural identity, as well as all humanity (Owen, 2011).

2.3 Culture

The concept of culture cannot be easily defined, however in 1963 Kroeber and Kluckhohn defined it with an analogy: "Culture is to society what memory is to individuals". Thus, as stated by Barth (2002), culture can be explained as the shared system of knowledge that involve learned routines of feeling, thinking, and interacting with others as well as a shared view of the world. According to the National Center for Cultural Competence of the Georgetown University, culture is an "integrated pattern of human behaviour that includes thoughts, communications, languages, practices, beliefs, values, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting and roles, relationships and expected behaviours of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group, and the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations" (Goode et al., 2000 in Peterson and Coltrane, 2003).

2.3.1 Culture in bilinguals

It is difficult to establish one definition of bilingualism, as it includes various elements such as race, ethnicity, or nationality, which are often expressed through social constructions and social institutions (such as advertisement, media, cultural icons). These are used in communication among members of a given cultural group and then transmitted to the next generations. Moreover, culture is constantly evolving, as it adapts to the changes of society, and it is not only transmitted over generations but it can also be learnt. Indeed, when people are immersed in a culture for a significant period of time, they will either acquire the culture through implicit learning, such as

social interactions, or explicit learning, such as attending specific language classes (Hong, Khei, 13:2014).

Culture is, indeed, an essential characteristic in one's identity. Most of the times, simultaneous bilinguals grow up learning both cultures associated with the languages they speak, and such cultures are usually internalized by children. However, people who acquire their second language later in life do not necessarily identify in that culture and can thus be considered to be bilingual but monocultural. This could be the case of students who learn the second language at school.

According to Benet-Martinez and Haritatos (2005), people who have a strong bicultural identity integration are more likely to regularly speak both languages in their daily life, compared to bilinguals who do not identify with both cultures. Frequently, the social status of each language affects the assimilation of a specific culture. Moreover, it has been shown that cultural identity may affect personality and the perception of emotions (Ramirez-Esparza, Garcia-Sierra, 2014). Studies through interviews and questionnaires show evidence that language choice may imply different aspects of personality: bilinguals who took part in such studies would give slightly different pictures of themselves according to the language used (Edwards, 2015).

2.3.2 Teaching culture in second language teaching

As stated by Peterson and Coltrane (2003), not only does language contribute to the definition of culture but also reflects culture, therefore it cannot be learnt with a few lessons about customs, traditions, and celebrations as it is a much broader concept.

It is essential to teach not only the linguistic aspects of a language, but also the culturally acceptable forms and uses of a given language, making the students aware of the possible differences between cultures and teaching them the appropriate ways to address people, express emotions, make requests and so on (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003).

Cultural objectives and activities must be organized and incorporated to enrich the content of the lessons. Using authentic materials and sources from the native speaking communities is an effective way to engage students in authentic cultural experiences. Those materials may include film, television shows, magazines, newspapers, brochures and other printed materials, that the students can use to work both on written language

and spoken language (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). However, as stated by Santipolo (2014) it is important that teachers choose fairly recent materials to offer a real and “updated” picture of the cultural situation of a specific community.

2.3.3 Cultural transmission

Taylor and Thoth (2011) put forward three types of cultural transmission: vertical, oblique, and horizontal. The first typology refers to the transmission of culture from parents or caregivers to children, the second one to the transmission from unrelated individuals of one generation to the next. Lastly, horizontal transmission refers to peer learning, where members of the same generation pass on cultural elements to each other. It is essential to also take into consideration the process involved when assimilating a culture: enculturation and socialization. Through the process of enculturation, the individuals learn a culture based on the elements available to them. Thus, it is not a deliberate, direct, or formal process, as individuals learn only the elements of culture they are exposed to. Through the socialization process individuals are intentionally led to develop cultural elements, such as attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, as it is a more deliberate and conscious process which involves a degree of teaching. Enculturation and socialization are lifelong processes. These may occur in different contexts and simultaneously. Indeed, they share the same goal: prepare individuals to fully function in a given society, teach culturally desirable and appropriate behaviours, as well as guarantee the transmission and maintenance of customs and traditions (Patanella et al., 2011).

The role of culture is to provide a stable environment for ensuring or enhance the survival of a group (Taylor, Thoth in Patanella et al., 2011), thus it is essential to transmit and teach traditions, customs, and all cultural elements to new generations, especially in multilingual areas such as Valcanale.

Chapter 3 – Historical and geographical background of Valcanale

3.1 Geographic area

Valcanale or Val Canale (Valcjanâl in Friulian, Kanaltal in German, Kanalska dolina in Slovenian) can be considered a border area from various points of view: geographical, political, ethnic, and cultural. The valley, situated in the north-eastern part of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, on the border with Austria and Slovenia, covers the municipalities of Pontebba, Malborghetto-Valbruna and Tarvisio, up to the Coccau and Fusine passes. From west to east, it includes the territories of Pontebba and its hamlet San Leopoldo-Laglesie, (*Pontafel – Tablja*), Bagni di Lusnizza (*Lusnitz – Lužnice*), Malborghetto (*Malborghet – Naborjet*), Ugovizza (*Uggowitz – Ukve*), Valbruna (*Wolfsbach - Ovčja vas*), Camporosso (*Saifnitz – Žabnice*).

Until the First World War, the “Pontebbana” stream in Pontebba functioned as the political, linguistic and ethnic border which divided the settlement between the Italian part of Pontebba and the Austrian part of Pontafel. Currently, the Italian territory covers the whole valley up to Tarvisio, where it branches off in two directions, on one side towards Austria near Thörl-Maglern and on the other towards Slovenia near Rateče.

Due to its position, Valcanale has always been a melting pot of various languages and cultures, which made it the subject of research and studies. It is in fact the meeting point of the three main European linguistic groups, Germanic, Slavic and Romance, which currently translates in the coexistence of four languages: Italian, Friulian, German and Slovenian.

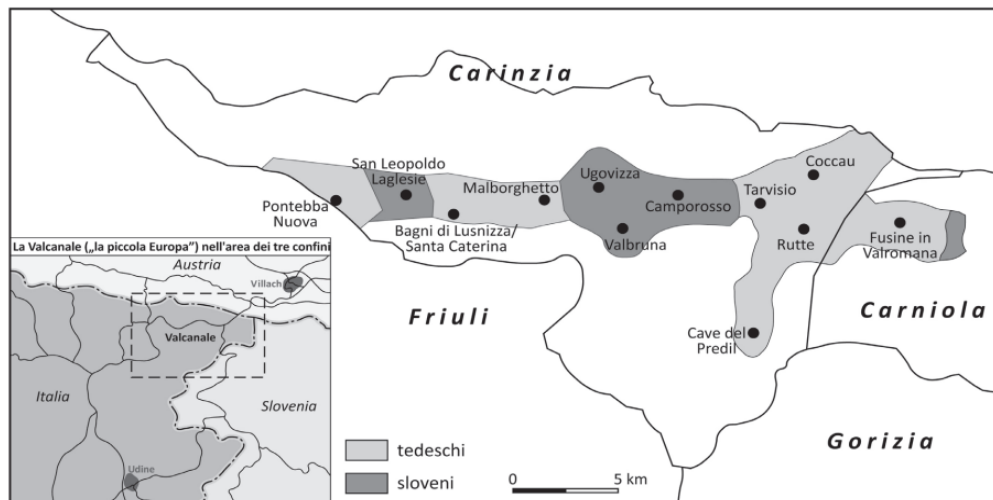


Fig. 1 – The linguistic situation in Valcanale before the First World War (Steinicke, 1984)

3.2 Historical background – From the beginning to fascism

3.2.1 From prehistory to the Duchy of Carinthia

The rare archaeological remains from the prehistorical age that have been found in Valcanale, suggest that the valley has been inhabited since the second millennium before Christ.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, several barbarian tribes, including the Langobard's tribe, passed through the valley. At the beginning of the VII century Slavic tribes (later called Alpine Slavs in secondary literature), arrived in Valcanale and settled in plain areas between Ugovizza and Camporosso, as they were suitable as grazing land. In the second half of the century, a second wave of Slavic reached San Leopoldo - currently a hamlet of the municipality of Pontebba (Domenig 2006).

In 776, Charles the Great won against Langobard, extending the borders of his Empire as far as the river Drava and thus, annexing the Valcanale into the Duchy of Friuli (Gariup, 2014).

From 976, the valley has been dominated by the Duchy of Carinthia and the "Pontebbana" river became the natural border separating the Patriarchate of Aquileia from the Austrian Duchy.

3.2.2 The "Bamberg chapter" and the Austro-Hungarian Empire

In 1007 the Valcanale valley fell under the domination of the Prince-Bishopric of Bamberg, which was founded by the Emperor Henry II, and this determined the passage of the valley under the temporal German control for 752 years.

During this period, which has been defined as the "Bamberg chapter", the Slavic population increased, as well as the presence of German families coming from Carinthia and Franconia, attracted by increased trades and a greater exploitation of iron and lead deposits.

After 1200, the socioeconomic growth enabled the stabilization of the valley's settlements, while the immigration of German, Slavic, Friulian and Venetians to the area due to the development of trades, led to a demographic growth.

In 1759, Empress Maria Theresa acquired the proprietries of Bamberg's Bishop, which included the Valcanale valley.

Due to its strategic position, the valley proved to be of great interest for Napoleon's troops in order to reach the cities of Graz and Wien via Carinthia. As a result, in 1809, Valcanale has been included in the Illyrian Provinces and then in the Kingdom of Italy, both vassal states of the French Empire.

From 1814, the valley was once again under the dominance of Austria, and it resumed its role as crossroads for communications and trades. Both later increased due to the development of transport and the construction of the Ljubljana-Tarvisio railway in 1872, the Villach-Tarvisio railway in 1877, and the complete section Udine-Pontebba-Tarvisio in 1879.

3.2.3 The World Wars

At the outbreak of the First World War, due to its position near the borders, the valley was at the front line of the war. For almost two years, the population was ordered to evacuate towards Carinthia and Styria. In 1919, the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye set off the annexation of the valley to the Kingdom of Italy, after almost nine centuries under the Austrian dominance. The political border situated in Pontebba-Pontafel was then moved near Thörl-Maglern (Austria).

After the annexation to Italy, a significant flow of Italians moved to Valcanale, thanks to numerous jobs offered by public bodies, railway companies, customs offices, trade and administration, as well as by the military. As a result, the local population was confronted with new political, linguistic and cultural circumstances.

The passage into the Kingdom of Italy brought several changes to the valley, which were mostly frowned upon and not tolerated by locals. Initially, with the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the Italian government promised to safeguard of the rights and the costumes of the population, as well as tolerance towards the minorities. However, those good intentions soon became unfulfilled promises (Gariup, 1993).

From 1923, after his rise to power, Mussolini forced the Italianization process with changes and replacement of the Austrian and Slovenian toponymy. Afterwards in 1924-1925, only Italian could be used and taught in schools and in 1928, the six

municipalities of Valcanale were joint into three: Pontebba, Malborghetto-Valbruna and Tarvisio.

In 1939, after an agreement between Hitler and Mussolini on the fate of the German minorities within Italy's borders, people of German origin were given the option of moving to German territory or remaining on Italian territory and assimilate the Italian identity.

Many citizens of Slovenian origin recognised themselves with the German identity, whose traditions and costumes were more similar to theirs than the Italian ones, and therefore claimed their right to choose as if they were of German origins. However, this idea has not been accepted by the government, causing dissatisfaction and social tensions. Those tensions have been settled by extending the right to opt for all those who declared themselves as German, with the exception of Slovene citizens that came from the Soca region (Italian - Isonzo) and Italian citizens (Magri, 2013).

It is estimated that almost 5,600 people chose to emigrate from Valcanale and move to the nearby German territories and only 2,500 decided to remain in the valley, of whom 1,700 were Slovene-speaking and 800 were German-speaking people. (Domenig, 2006) Moreover, the government set up courses for learning German, in order to enable children and young people to reach an adequate linguistic level of German and be able to integrate into the German society. Those courses ended in May 1945 with the defeat of Hitler (Gariup, 1994).

Between February and March of 1940, almost 500 people left the valley and, by at the end of the “options”, almost 6000 people emigrated. According to the bulletin of “Società Geografica Italiana” (Italian Geography Society), exactly 4,576 people left the Valcanale (81% of the valley’s population), 937 people choose to remain in Italy and 90 people abstained from choosing.

Mostly workers, craftsmen, employees and small landowners, who hoped to find better living conditions in Austria, working in factories and occupying the proprieties of more than 1000 Slovenian from Carinthia that were either send to concentration camps or to fight in the war (Gariup, 1994).

3.2.4 The withdrawal of the “Options” after the Second World War

Hitler’s Reich promised a future of prosperity, work, and land to the people of Valcanale and South Tirol if they chose to move to German territories. However, these promises were soon broken, causing a lot of discontent among the immigrants, and increasing their desire to revoke their German citizenship in order to return to Italy.

After the end of the war in 1945, Valcanale’s people who had opted for Germany but did not move, were considered German citizens living in Italian territories and therefore, they had to obtain a residency permit.

In 1946, the government issued an eviction order for all the citizens that opted for Germany but did not yet have a residency permit or did not register their residence in Italy. Due to the agreement “De Gasperi-Gruber” between Austria and Italy, people who chose Germany but did not expatriate, could request a withdraw of their decision and be Italian citizens.

The request was not allowed for people who were part of the SS or worked for the Gestapo or the Sicherheitdienst (Security service – Servizio di Sicurezza), as well as for members of the National Socialism party, people who were linked with Nazism, and people who had been convicted of war crimes or other major crimes.

The municipality of Malborghetto-Valbruna (which currently includes six villages from Bagni di Lusnizza up to Valbruna) registered 437 requests of withdrawal of their German citizenship. Moreover, after the war and the return of many citizens, the municipality registered a total of 1,545 people, of whom 913 were Italian and 632 were had either Slovenian or Austrian origins. With regard to the language, 254 people spoke German, 378 Slovenian and 913 Italian.

Until 1949, the paperwork for the application for the Italian citizenship was handled in Bolzano, but afterwards the Italian Minister of the Interior dealt with the application, slowing down the process and making the paperwork more complicated. Indeed, after 1949, there were still almost 30 German citizens in the municipality of Malborghetto-Valbruna.

The process regarding the withdrawal of the options lasted almost nine years, and in the meantime, the ethnical and social structure of the valley had radically changed due to the immigration in Valcanale of Italian citizens from the rest of the region, as shown by these data:

- In 1918, the population of Valcanale was about 8,700, about half of them were Slovenes and Austrians, with few Italian families.
- In 1945, Valcanale had 1,650 Slovenes, 1,950 Germans and about 6,250 Italians, making a total of about 9,850 people (Gariup, 1994).

Chapter 4 - Protection laws for linguistic minorities

4.1 International regulations

The national and regional regulations regarding the protection of autochthonous linguistic minorities, which in Italy refer to linguistic communities who settled in the territory through the centuries, find their foundation in the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” of 1948, which acts as point of reference for all legislations regarding the fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of speech and expression. Indeed, the fundamental freedoms are explicitly stated in four articles: Art. 1: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights [...]” ; Art. 2: “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. [...]”; Art. 19: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression [...]”; and Art. 27: “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community [...]” (Villalta, 2001 in Franz, 2014)

On the basis of the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, the European regulations focuses on the protection and enhancement of historical linguistic minorities, recognising their importance as an invaluable cultural heritage. Indeed, as stated by Villalta in 2001 “Anzi, il presupposto del rispetto delle parlate minoritarie è diventato uno dei criteri fondamentali perché venga espresso il parere favorevole all’adesione di ulteriori Paesi all’Unione Europea” (Franz, 35:2014). However, such criteria apply only to the access to the European Union, meaning that the State could choose not to maintain the regulation afterwards (Brezigar, 2011 in Franz, 2014).

In 1981, The European Parliament developed practical policies for the protection of linguistic minorities through the concept of “Integral Multilingualism”. Such principle has been designed to give the same dignity to all languages, as they are the reflection of people’s cultures and diversities. Indeed, it is fundamental to recognise the multilingualism of the European Union by giving concrete policies to protect and enhance the multiculturalism as well. However, the policies proposed by the Parliament do not have legal value, as it does not have legislative power. In 1992, the Council of Europe approved the “European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages”, as the guiding document for all regional laws on the protection of linguistic minorities, in

order to promote and protect all regional and minority languages, both oral and written, in several fields of the social life, such as education, public administration, cultural activities, since languages contribute to the European cultural heritage. Moreover, in the document is stated the immeasurable value of the multiculturalism and multilingualism, as they contribute to a Union based on democracy and cultural diversity.

In Article 1, it is stated that, without including dialects of the official language(s), regional or minority languages are: “traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population; and different from the official language(s) of that State [...]”.

The objectives and principles of the Charter are expressed in Article 7, and they include:

- the recognition of the regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth;
- the respect of the geographical area of each regional or minority language in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of the regional or minority language in question;
- the need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them;
- the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life;
- the maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups using a regional or minority language and other groups in the State employing a language used in identical or similar form, as well as the establishment of cultural relations with other groups in the State using different languages;
- the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional or minority languages at all appropriate stages;
- the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of a regional or minority language living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire;
- the promotion of study and research on regional or minority languages at universities or equivalent institutions;

- the promotion of appropriate types of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for regional or minority languages used in identical or similar form in two or more States.

Article 8 of the Declaration concerns the educational field. It provides that, within the territory in which such languages are used, the State must make available pre-school education in the regional or minority languages, at least for students whose families request such education and whose number is considered sufficient. The same concepts are applied for primary, secondary, technical, and vocational schools as well, making the relevant regional or minority language an integral part of the curriculum, including the teaching of the history and the culture of the minority community. Moreover, it is stated that State should make available courses in the regional or minority language, as well as offering and encouraging courses for adults and continuing education. The subsequent articles concern the use of regional or minority languages in relation to judicial authorities and proceedings, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life and cross-border exchanges.

Indeed, the aim of the Declaration is to protect the national minority present on their respective territories, as such protection is essential for the democratic stability, which must respect all ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic identity, by creating suitable conditions, so that all people are able to express, preserve and develop their identity, which is a source of enrichment for Europe (Franz, 2014).

In 1996, the “Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights”, also known as “Barcelona Declaration”, was signed to support linguistic rights, especially for endangered languages. It holds regards to various policies regarding the linguistic rights, including: “Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities”, “European Convention on Human Rights”, “European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages”, “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights”. The Declaration argues that all languages are equal since those who speak them are human beings, thus are equal and different at the same time. Indeed, one of the main objectives was to define equality in linguistic rights, without distinguishing among official, non-official, regional, local, majority or minority languages. One of the principles included in the document regards the right of each linguistic community to

define their linguistic territory, if a community is historically established in a specific area; however, if other languages are spoken in the same territory, speakers of those languages must be respected, in accordance with their individual rights. (Franz, 2014)

Later, in 1998 the Council of Europe signed the “Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities”, which aims at promoting equality, preserving and developing the identity of national minorities – including religion, language, traditions, cultural heritage -, obstructing discrimination and guaranteeing the access to education in the minority languages. The framework aims at:

- promoting the conditions necessary for minorities to maintain and develop their culture and identity (Article 5)
- encouraging tolerance, mutual respect, and understanding among all persons living on their territory (Article 6)
- protecting the rights to freedom of assembly, association, expression, thought, conscience, and religion (Articles 7, 8, and 9)
- facilitating access to mainstream media and promote the creation and use of minority media (Article 9)
- recognizing the right to use a minority language in private and in public and display information in the minority language (Articles 10 and 11)
- recognizing officially surnames and first names in the minority language (Article 11)
- “Endeavour to ensure” the right to use the minority language before administrative authorities and to display bilingual topographical indications in the minority language in areas inhabited by national minorities “traditionally” or “in substantial numbers” (Articles 10 and 11)
- fostering knowledge of the culture, history, language, and religion of both majority and minorities (Article 12)
- recognizing the rights of minorities to set up and manage their own educational establishments and learn their own language (Articles 13 and 14)
- “Endeavour to ensure” that there are adequate opportunities to be taught in the minority language, in areas traditionally inhabited by national minorities or where they live in “substantial numbers” (Article 14)

- “Create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life, and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them” (Article 15)
- refraining from measures that alter the proportions of the population in areas inhabited by minorities (Article 16)
- not interfering with the rights to maintain contacts across frontiers and participate in the activities of national and international NGOs (Article 17)

It is essential to refer to the “Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union”, signed in 2000, as it brings two significant changes regarding minority languages. Indeed, it affirms the prohibition of discrimination towards minority communities, including their language, and the acknowledgment, for the first time in international law, of the linguistic diversity.

The Council Resolution of 2002 on the promotion of linguistic diversity and language learning recognises equal dignity and cultural rights to all languages. Indeed, it emphasises that:

- the knowledge of languages is one of the basic skills which each citizen needs to acquire in order to take part effectively in the European knowledge society and therefore encourage both integration into society and social cohesion; a thorough knowledge of one’s mother tongue(s) can facilitate the learning of other languages;
- the knowledge of languages plays a significant role in facilitating mobility, both in an educational context as well as for professional purposes and for cultural and personal reasons;
- the knowledge of languages is also beneficial for European cohesion, in the light of EU enlargement;
- all European languages are equal in value and dignity from the cultural point of view and form an integral part of European culture and civilisation.

It also invites the Member States to take appropriate measures concerning the possibility to learn two or more foreign languages, by providing equal access to learning opportunities, which also promote cooperation and mobility across European borders. Moreover, the Member States should ensure study programmes that promote a positive

attitude towards intercultural communication, as well as a positive impact of language knowledge regarding mobility and employability. It also refers to the importance of facilitating the integration of non-native speakers in both the educational system and in society, respecting their culture and applying measures for improving their knowledge of the official languages.

The UNESCO “Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions” of 2005, aims to “strengthen culture as a bridge to sustainable social, economic and human development by encouraging creativity, cultural industries, cultural heritage in all its forms, social cohesion and mutual understanding between peoples and cultures thus creating new opportunities for international cooperation.”

Indeed, it supports policies and measures for the protection and promotion of all cultures, which are considered as bearers of identity and values, indeed including all minorities and autochthonous people.

The Lisbon Treaty of 2007, became effective in 2009, specifies some fundamental principles regarding the minority groups: it is essential to respect human rights, including the rights of minorities groups, as well as their cultural and linguistic diversity, in order to promote the development of the European cultural heritage (Franz, 2014).

4.2 National regulation

In the “Constitution of the Italian Republic” of 1948, the language topic is discussed in Article 3, which states that “All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions”. In Article 6 where it is specified that the Republic must safeguard linguistic minorities and in Article 9, stating that it promotes the development of culture.

Initially, Article 6 of the Constitution recognised as minority communities only the German community in South Tyrol and the French one in Aosta Valley. Later, it included the Slovene community in Trieste and Gorizia, as well as the Ladin language in the Region of Trentino – Alto Adige. However, other linguistic communities such as Friulian and the Slovenes living in the Province of Udine did not have any regulations. The minorities not recognised by the Constitution were protected by international laws,

such as the “European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages” and the “Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities”. Due to those documents and fundings for minority communities, the European States began to take into consideration the protection of linguistic minorities, seeing them as a valuable aspect instead of a threat (Franz, 2014).

The law 482/1999, “Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche” (Regulations on the Protection of Historical Linguistic Minorities) lays the foundation for the protection of historical linguistic minorities In Italy. This law overcame the gap between border-area minorities, which are legally safeguarded by specific statues and international agreements, and other minor regional language and language islands, which previously did not have any legal protection (Vidau, 2013).

As stated by Article 2 and in accordance with Article 6 of the Constitution, given that Italian is the State’s official language, these regulations protect the language and culture of native linguistic minorities that settled in Italy through the centuries, as well as communities that arrived in the Italian territory as a result of immigrations. The recognised minorities are “Albanian, Catalan, German, Greek, Slovene and Croatian population, as well as of the citizens who speak French, Franco-Provencal, Friulian, Ladin, Occitan and Sardinian” and it regulates the use of those languages in different contexts, indeed the law concerns:

- The citizens’ civil right to use their name and surname in one’s first language, granting the possibility of restoring the original form for people whose name has been previously changed by municipal registry offices.
- The adoption of toponomy conforming to local traditions and customs in municipalities where the protected linguistic minorities are established.
- The educational field granting the use of the minority language in schools and universities.
- The public administration offices planning interventions aimed at the introduction of the minority languages in the public administration in order to ensure the presence of personnel who are able to speak the languages protect by the law.
- The mass media with interventions aimed at the publishing industry, radio stations and television channels.

Regarding the education, the Regulations provide that pre-school must use the minority language for educational purposes and that primary and lower secondary schools must provide with the teaching of the minority language, however during the pre-enrolment phase, parents can choose whether they want the teaching of the minority language for their children or not. In Article 4 is stated that each school is allowed to organize the teaching methodologies, the timetable, and the assessment criteria. Moreover, it is also expressed that schools can increase the educational offer for adults. According to Article 7 and 9 is stated that in public administration offices there has to be the possibility to speak the minority languages, as well as during proceedings before the Justice of the Peace.

Beforehand, the FVG Region had already issued the regional law 46/1991 concerning the Slovene minority. However, the State Protection Law for the Slovene national community was issued just in 2001 and such law shares some similarities in structure and content with the Law 482/1999.

The State Protection Law 38/2001 recognises for the first time the Slovene national minority in the province of Udine, already recognised in the province of Gorizia and Trieste in 1982 by the Regional Administrative Court of the Region. With this law, the government has allocated fundings to safeguard the Slovene minority in the Valcanale area, Valli del Torre and Valli del Natisone. The Val Resia valley and its minority language Resian, are not mentioned in this Protection Law, however they are recognized in the regional law 26/2007. It covers several aspects:

- The right to use the name and surname in the native language, granting the possibility of restoring the original form if Italianised during the Fascist period.
- The use of spoken and written Slovene in interactions with public institutions
- The use of Slovene in elected assemblies and collegiate bodies.
- The visual use of bilingual topographical indications and bilingualism, as well as the right to use the bilingual form for signs and emblems of institutions, bodies, associations, and companies.
- The restitution of the proprieties confiscated during the Fascist period to Slovene organizations.
- The protection of historic and artistic heritage also in public planning, land use, economic, social, and urban planning.

- The right to have criminal proceedings related to expressions of intolerance and violence against member of this minority.
- the cultural, artistic, sporting, recreational, scientific, editorial, and educational fields.

Concerning the schools of Valcanale and taking into account its multilingual situation, the law states that schools should provide the teaching of Slovene and must include topics regarding the history, traditions, customs, and culture taught in the minority languages during the school time, in order to maintain the minority languages. However, schools and educational institute can organise optional courses outside the school time.

Article 17 regulates the relationship between the Italian government and the Republic of Slovenia in order to promote the development of a cross-border cooperation to support the Slovene minority in Italy. Article 20 concerns the respect towards the areas inhabited by the Slovene community, with reference to the protection of historical and artistic monuments, as well as all forms of cultural expression. This law had been issued in accordance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), which is a treaty adopted in 1992 by the Council of Europe to protect and promote historical regional and minority languages in Europe (Franz, 2014).

The Special Statute of the Autonomous Region of FVG of 1963 guarantees – in the Article 3 - the right to equality to all ethnic and linguistic groups of the region, but it does not explicitly mention the protection of the Slovene, Friulian or German national communities as essential elements of the regional society and administration. In addition, it does not issue any specific legislation for the minorities or exclusive powers for their protection.

After the beginning of the 21st century, with the Amendment of Section 5 of the Constitution (Constitutional Law 3/2001), the FVG Region as Autonomous Region was given more power in the protections of linguistic minorities, allowing the Region to adopt additional forms of intervention.

Based on the Legislative Decree 223/2002 regarding the Rules of Implementation of the Special Statute of the Autonomous Region, the FVG Region developed its own legislation for the linguistic minorities as it was given more functions and powers to safeguard the language and culture of historical linguistic minorities through the

teaching during primary and lower secondary schools and the use of the three recognized minorities Friulian, German and Slovene in offices of public administration. Regional Law 26/2007, which refers to Law 38/2001, aims at the protection of the Slovene minority in the framework of the region's policy strategies and at the safeguard and development of the cultural and linguistic diversity within its territory. Indeed, the FVG Region considers the three minorities as an essential part of its historical, cultural and human heritage, with reference to the most important international documents regarding the minorities' protection (the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the CEI Instrument for the Protection of Minority Rights, the OSCE Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights adopted by Italy, and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages). Such law summarizes the guidelines concerning the bilingual operations of public administrations, such as the public use of Slovene in relations between citizens and the Region and other state institutions. Indeed, it guarantees the public use of the language in oral and written communications (Vidau, 2013).

Article 2 introduces the Resian dialect in the protection law. It is interesting to note that the law refers to the Slovene minority and its linguistic varieties with regard to the Natisone, Torre and Valcanale valleys, while Resian is referred to as a minority or dialect but not as a Slovene linguistic variety.

Article 4 of the 26/2007 regional law concerns the collaboration between regional linguistic identities. Indeed, the Region must promote initiatives aimed at collaboration between the Slovenian, Friulian and German speaking minorities and the Italian-speaking community, with the implementation of shared projects aimed at enhancing the cultural and linguistic diversity, especially involving the school system.

Articles 5 and 6 regard the criteria of recognition of Slovene minority organizations, which include cultural, educational, research, sports, social and trade associations, as well as non-profit associations in the field of health and social assistance, voluntary work, management and enhancement of the territory. Moreover, such article regards the field of media, multimedia materials, editorial publications.

Article 15 concerns the enhancement of the cultural, historical, and artistic heritage of the Slovenian linguistic minority. The Regional administration promotes the initiatives aimed at the protection and restoration of the cultural heritage of Friuli Venezia-Giulia.

Article 16 provides that the administration of the Region aims at increasing and diversifying the education offer in schools and educational institutions in order to promote the learning and knowledge of Slovene. Indeed, it promotes initiatives between the regional universities and the Republic of Slovenia to increase the teaching, training, and specialization in the Slovene language, as well as with the purpose of recognizing university diplomas that qualify for the exercise of professions.

Articles 19 covers the provision of annual fundings for the use of Slovene language in public administration, while article 20 regards initiatives for the social, economic, and environmental development of the territories of Valcanale, Canal del Ferro (in Italian Unioni territoriali del Canal del Ferro-Valcanale), Natisone and Torre valleys (in Italian Unione territoriale intercomunali del Torre and Unione territoriali intercomunali del Natisone).

All those law, regulations and policies are intended towards the promotion of the unique multicultural and multilingual situation of the region, especially considering the areas that border with Austria and Slovenia. Indeed, The FVG region fosters cross-border and international relations to benefit the Austrian and Slovene minorities, as well as recognizes institution and organizations aimed at the preservation and development of the minority communities. The institution that are recognised are allowed to function as intermediaries in communication with the Region, as well as the minorities' representatives. Currently, one of the main topics of discussion is financing in order to preserve and promote the minorities in different fields (Vidau, 2013).

Chapter 5 – The teaching of Slovene in Valcanale

5.1 The multilingual situation in Valcanale

Given its role as a crossroads of cultures and trade, the Valcanale has always been characterized by the coexistence of three major European language groups: Germanic (German/Austrian), Slavic (Slovene) and Romance languages (Italian and Friulian).

Due to the succession of peoples that settled in the area, it is still possible to notice the presence of characteristic Slovenian and Austrian dialects, which are scattered throughout the valley. The dialects show some differences among the villages of the valley, mostly regarding phonetic aspects, especially after the beginning of the bishopric of Bamberg in 1007.

At that time, in Tarvisio, Coccau, Malborghetto, Bagni di Lusnizza and Pontafel the main language was German, however in Camporosso, Valbruna, Ugovizza and San Leopoldo it was Slovene (called “Windisch”, the German form of the Latin term “Vendi”) (Gliha Komac, 2015).

Although Slovene was the first language to settle in the valley, it never had its role as official language, except for a brief period in the territory of Fusine. Its role has been confined to familiar language, spoken in everyday life, but publicly used only during functions, in religious texts, prayers and for traditional songs, if there was a priest able to speak it.

5.2 The school system during the Austro-Hungarian Empire

For several centuries, being able to read and write were skills reserved almost exclusively for the clergy and higher social classes; those skills were later extended to merchants, entrepreneur, and doctors. Until the 17th century, parish priests in Malborghetto and Ugovizza used Latin and Italian as the main language for official communication, however the knowledge of German or Slovene was also necessary in order to be able to communicate ordinances to the local population. The first parish books written in Latin date back to 1692, but later at the end of the 18th century German became the reference language due to the passage of the valley to the diocese of Gurk (Austria).

From the 18th century onwards, the need for more school education began to spread due to the increasingly complicated bureaucracy regarding public administration and various trades in the valley. In 1765, the authorities in Klagenfurt (Austria) ordered that parish priests and sextons could work as teachers as well (Domenig, 2003).

In 1774, Empress Maria Theresa issued a “General School Regulation” (Ordinamento scolastico generale per le scuole normali, medie e triviali - Allgemeine Schulordnung für die deutschen Normal-, Haupt- und Trivialschulen) regarding all the territories of the Empire, in order to set up elementary schools (Trivijalke ali navadne šole – Scuole popolari o elementari”). The ordinance provided for the education of children from six to twelve years old and the set up of three types of schools: normal schools, middle schools, and trivial schools.

Normal schools could be found in the main municipalities of each province as a model for all other school, middle schools with three classes in the most important cities or district and they provided for the teaching of subjects regarding different professions. Trivial schools were to be found throughout the whole empire and they had to guarantee three main subjects: reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Moreover, the regulation required teachers to have a teaching certificate; however, given the limited number of teachers, parish priests were also required to have it if they wanted to teach (Gariup, 2014).

Later on, Emperor Joseph II imposed the compulsory school attendance for children. Regarding the Slovene language, “Nedeljske šole” (Scuole domenicali – Sundays schools) were set up in order to allow the attendance of young people who worked during the week. The principle of “one parish, one school” also became widespread so that children could attend school easily.

In 1782, Emperor Franz Joseph I, handled the situation of the Slavic minority in Carinthia by appointing a school commissioner that spoke the “windisch” language.

Franz Joseph promulgated the “March Constitution” in 1849, which was of particular interest to the multilingual territories. Indeed, the right to have an education in their mother tongue was guaranteed for people of linguistic minorities. After the enactment of the regional statutes, the right to preserve their language and nationality was guaranteed as well (Novak, 1990).

Regarding the school system, earlier there were no regulations concerning the language used in schools within the Empire: where German was not the dominant language, teachers were required to know the most used language, thus education in Valcanale was often taught in Slovene (Novak, 1990).

The issue concerning the language of instruction became subject of interest when in 1855, the Empire stipulated an agreement with the Holy See which decided that the Catholicism was the official religion. This had considerable consequences on the education system as the control of all schools and the choice of teachers were in the hands of the Church. A commission was appointed in order to draw up a plan to coordinate the public teaching, which determined that municipalities could choose the language of teaching, based on which one was the most used in the area.

5.3 The teaching of Slovene after 1848

The term 'Springtime of the People' or "Springtime of Nations" refers to the wave of revolutionary uprisings against absolutist regimes that marked Europe in 1848. These nationalist feelings also spread within the Habsburg Empire and involved the Slovenian population with the foundation of the 'United Slovenia' movement. Among other demands, it asked for the unification of all areas inhabited by Slovenes into a single administrative entity under the rule of the Habsburg Empire and equal rights for Slovenian speakers.

As far as schools were concerned, after 1848, the Minister of Education ordered that in Carinthian folk schools the language of instruction had to be the mother tongue of the local population, but that German would also be taught if the majority of the population requested it (Gariup, 2014).

In 1851, the publishing organisation 'Družba svetega Mohorja' (Society of St. Ermacoras - Gesellschaft des heiligen Hermagoras) was founded in Klagenfurt and its aim was to publish cheap books in Slovene in order to reach the largest number of readers and preserve Slovene language and culture. This association was founded by Andreas Einspieler, Matija Majar, Anton Martin Slomšek, author of books in Slovene for religious education, and Anton Janežič, Slovene teacher and philologist (Gariup, 2014).

From 1850, the Slovene school saw a period of growth thanks to the priest Simon Rudmaš, who devoted particular interest to teaching the Slovene language in Carinthia. In the Carinthian region, there were 174 German, 58 Slovene and 9 mixed-lingual schools. Within two years of Rudmaš's appointment as school councillor, the number of Slovene schools became 68 and the Slovene-German mixed-language school were 50. After the school inspector's death in 1858, the number of Slovene schools decreased dramatically. The next inspector Pavissich asked the teachers to teach more German, as in some schools German was not part of the subjects taught.

One of the schools in Slovene was established in Valcanale, specifically in Camporosso, where the parish priests Škarbina and Ožgan committed themselves to teaching Slovene between 1851 and 1860. In Valbruna, the Slovene language was taught by the parish priest Majhar, and in St Leopold by the teacher Kovač. The parish priests often taught the language regarding the religious context, by teaching sacred songs and catechism in Slovene; a testimony to this is the "Kerščanski Katolški nauk okrajšan - Compendium of Christian Catholic Doctrine".

Until the second half of the 19th century, in the village of Coccau, Slovene was the everyday language and there was an utraqistic school: a type of school in which the official language of the state and the language of the ethnic minority were taught, in this case the school was Slovene-German. From 1878, the situation worsened due to the lack of teachers who could teach Slovene and with the arrival of teacher Lassnig the school became exclusively German.

From 1858, several utraqistic schools were founded which provided for the teaching of German and Slovene: three classes were established in Camporosso, two in Ugovizza, one in Valbruna and later three classes in San Leopoldo in 1860. These schools were abolished after the First World War, before the Gentile reform of 1923 (Gariup, 2014).

In 1860, a regulation was issued concerning the language of instruction for multilingual areas with the following provisions for the Diocese of Gurk:

- It was necessary to adhere to the principle that the language used in church should be the language of instruction in school.
- In communities where both German and Slovene were used in church, both were to be languages of instruction. The language spoken by the majority of pupils

was considered the main language and at the beginning of the second class, the other language was to be introduced as a school subject. In addition, the class could be divided during the teaching of religion, which had to be taught in the children's mother tongue.

- In Slovene municipalities adjacent to German municipalities, German was also to be taught if the parents so wished because it was considered useful for everyday life.
- In the Slovene municipalities far from the German ones, teaching had to be in Slovene but there was the possibility of requesting paid lessons of German.
- In case of uncertainty, the school director had to decide the language of instruction, considering the local and social context in agreement with the district school superintendent.

The choice of language was entrusted to the majority of the municipal council, and this led to dissatisfaction in those localities where religious masses were in Slovene, however the majority of the population did not always speak the language on a daily basis and sometimes that created a situation of discontinuity in teaching.

This is demonstrated by the example of the municipality of Ugovizza, which applied in 1862 to have German as the language of instruction. School councillor Močnik argued that the request should be approved, but that the teaching of both languages should be maintained. The regional authorities adhered to the above-mentioned provisions and, taking into consideration that the language spoken daily and used in the church was Slovene, decided to continue with teaching in Slovene and to leave German as a school subject until the children had reached a proficient level in the language. Afterwards, they would impose the opposite situation with German as the language of instruction and Slovene as a school subject. Religious instruction would always be conducted in Slovene (Kurz, 1990).

In the following years, the large landowners in Carinthia donated large sums of money to the establishment of the schools and increasingly demanded more German lessons. Later, this was also demanded by merchants and civil servants.

In fact, landowners, craftsmen, and merchants were influenced by the German national movement as the German ruling class offered greater prospects of development than the

Slovene one and consequently, the prestige accorded to German led to greater use of the language to the detriment of Slovene. (Novak, 1990)

School district	Total number of students	Slovene students	German students
Camporosso	105	105	-
Ugovizza	90	90	-
Malborghetto	60	-	60
Rajbl	55	3	52
Tarvisio	124	-	124
Total	434	198	236

Table 1- Student situation in some Valcanale villages in 1865 (data from the Vienna Statistical Commission, 1870 - in Gariup, 2014)

From Table 1, it can be seen that, within a radius of a few kilometres, each village in the Valcanale valley represents a different and unique linguistic situation.

From 1869 onwards, the control of educational institutions was nationalised, which led to a greater 'Germanisation' of the school system by the German-liberal-oriented Regional School Board and the Slovene schools rapidly weakened (Novak, 1990).

In 1869, the government promulgated a law concerning the school system in order to increase the literacy rate, which amounted to approximately 20% of the population of Carinthia. Thanks to this law, which remained in force until the outbreak of World War I, the literacy rate doubled due to the obligation to teach in German (Domej, 2006).

The new system provided for compulsory schooling from the ages of six to fourteen, dividing students into classes according to their age, sometimes distinguishing between all-male and all-female classes. Each class was assigned a teacher who operated independently of the other classes. In addition, each pupil was enrolled in a school matriculation, from which students were only removed once they ended their studies. In this way, the Ministry of Worship and Education could check that the children attended school regularly (Dorsi, 1995).

With the nationalisation of the school system, the Church was left with the sole task of supervising the teaching of religion.

Subsequently the government issued a decree concerning ultraquistic schools in Carinthia, classifying them into three categories:

- schools with teaching in the German language, even in territories with a Slovene majority.
- schools in which Slovene was initially taught and then German was introduced during the first school year. When the level was sufficient, German would become the language of instruction.
- schools with teaching in Slovene, with German being introduced from the second year as a school subject.

This decree came into force in 1875 and according to the decisions of the Regional School Council, the school in Campososso was placed in the second group and those in Ugovizza and San Leopoldo in the third group (Kurz, 1990).

Parents often demanded the use of German in schools as they believed that it was more useful for children to know the language most used in commerce and administration, consequently they gave Slovene a secondary importance, a language often relegated to the religious environment, family and village life (Domej, 2006).

With the introduction of the ultraquistic school, the language matter changed drastically: first the low presence of German in schools was criticised, then began the discussion for a stronger presence of Slovene. In fact, this school model was soon criticised by the Slovene national movement as the two languages were not taught equally and Slovene became an auxiliary language.

The new system provided for compulsory attendance of the 'Bürgerschule' (city school) for eight years for the petit-bourgeois class and the possibility of attending teacher training colleges or technical schools afterwards, for which there was no need to have attended middle school (Novak, 1990).

The situation worsened significantly when, in 1877, the regional school council, imposed teaching exclusively in German and ensured a five-year salary increase for teachers who taught only in that language. Subsequently, catechists and parish priests in the Slovene areas tried to protect the language, demanding that catechism should be

taught in Slovene up to the fifth year, so that even children who did not speak German could follow the lessons effectively. This request was rejected by the council but, in the following years, the parish priests continued to teach catechism in Slovene in the villages of Camporosso, Ugovizza, Valbruna and San Leopoldo.

The 'battle' for the preservation of the Slovene language continued for several years: the municipalities that requested Slovene schools had to face a government that was against the teaching of Slovene and were often silenced by threats or false promises. In order to counter the problem, German-speaking teachers were often hired in the Slovene territories so that there was no possibility of speaking Slovene.

In 1882, the representatives of the Slovene minority tried to obtain more recognition for their language by turning to the parliament and the Ministry of Education, criticising the existing organisation regarding the language of instruction and pointing out that the organisation of popular schools only required the teaching of German at the expense of Slovene. This problem arose from the fact that many teachers did not have a good level of Slovene and as a result, at the end of the popular school, the children were not able to read and write in their mother tongue. The Ministry tried to justify itself by explaining that it was easier for the children to learn German as the Slovene dialect in Carinthia had been 'contaminated' by the German language, arguing that in any case German was a necessary language and saying that such concerns and complaints were not widespread within the population (Feinig, 2008).

Since the 1860s, the liberal Constitution has led to the establishment of various political associations. On the one hand, Slovene citizens founded the 'Trdnjava' (Fortress) association and the 'Tabor' (Camp) movement, while on the other hand, German citizens created the 'Nationale Schutzverein' (National Protection Association), with the aim of protecting the German people in the multilingual territories. Moreover, many German national school associations have been founded, such as 'Schulverein' in 1880 with headquarters in Tarvisio and Fusine, and 'Südmark' founded in Graz in 1889. The purpose of these associations was to create a pro-German national educational activity in small towns and villages, to finance the construction of school buildings and thus influence the choice of the language of instruction. As a matter of fact, the 'Schulverein' built a school on the Ugovizza alpine pasture in 1892, as families moved to the pastures

in the summer and so the children could continue to go to school. They also allocated funds for the construction of buildings in Malborghetto, Cave del Predil and Fusine.

On the Slovene side, the association 'Katoliško politično in gospodarsko društvo za Slovence na Koroškem' (Catholic political and economic association for Slovenes in Carinthia) was founded in 1890 and the association 'Družba svetega Cirila in Metoda' (Society of St Cyril and Methodius) in 1885, the latter concerning schooling. (Domej, 2006).

Some evidence is reported in the Slovene newspaper *Mir*, founded by Einspieler in 1882, which show that Slovene-speaking citizens wished to maintain their identity by teaching their children the language as well as their traditions.

An extract concerning the municipality of Camporosso and dated 1892 reads:

“Slovenci smo, in hočemo ostati – Siamo sloveni e vogliamo restare tali”. [...] Noi non odiamo la lingua tedesca, e non ci asteniamo di impararla, ma che impariamo il tedesco a discapito della nostra lingua materna, questo non ci entra in testa. Nel nostro petto batte il cuore sloveno, per questo vogliamo per la nostra scuola lo sloveno come lingua di insegnamento, e quando avranno imparato bene la lingua materna, imparino pure il tedesco, ma non a discapito dello sloveno. [...] Che non odiamo il tedesco lo dimostra il fatto che noi sappiamo tanto tedesco quanto ci basta per parlare con i vicini Tarvisiani. Siamo convinti del detto: “Quante lingue sai, tante persone vali. Ognuno di noi, quindi, vale due persone, i Tedeschi una sola [...]”

Inoltre “Il buon senso dice che i bambini devono prima imparare la lingua che parlano con i genitori e in paese. Questa lingua a Camporosso è lo sloveno. Il bambino deve imparare prima la lingua materna, poi quella estera. Altrimenti succede che il dotato scolare non saprà né lo sloveno, né il tedesco. Allora Camporossani, mandate i figli alla scuola slovena, lì impareranno ciò che serve alla loro vita” (Gariup, 237:2014)¹

¹ “Slovenci smo, in hočemo ostati – we are Slovene, and we want to remain so [...] We do not hate the german language, not do we refrain from learning it, however we do not accept to learn German at the expenses of our mother tongue. Our hearts are Slovene and that is why we want Slovene as language of instruction for our school, and when they have learned their mother tongue well, they will also learn German, but not at the expenses of Slovene. [...] We know enough German to speak without neighbours of

Similar concerns can also be found in testimonies relating to the municipality of Ugovizza and also reported by 'Mir', in which citizens express their views on the little benefit of a German school in the village. Furthermore, there are testimonies explaining that children were forbidden to speak Slovene with threats, beatings, and punishments. In order to continue this process of 'Germanisation', children were forced to attend 'Hochschule' in the mountains and pastures, forcing them to go to school despite the bad weather during winter months.

Given the complaints and discontent of the Slovene population, the Ministry proposed to the Carinthian Regional School Board to create a new programme in which the Slovene language would be included in all classes. The so-called 'Special Plan for Slovene as a Second Regional Language' came into effect in 1891 at the ultraquistic schools and established the use of the following textbooks 'Slovensko-nemški Abecednik za obče ljudske šole' (Slovene-German Abecedary for Folk Schools), written by the school inspector Karl Preschern, 'Drugo berilo in slovnica' and 'Tretjo berilo in slovnica' (Readings and Grammar, vols. 2 and 3) by Peter Končnik. According to the provisions of the plan, Slovene was considered as the language of instruction for the first few years, it then became a subject of instruction for three hours a week, in which reading, writing and repetition of the content in Slovene were foreseen. These hours were scheduled at the end of the morning lessons as, at the parents' request, it was possible not to follow the Slovenian hours (Novak, 1990).

In fact, Slovene lessons were not compulsory and were often not attended by many as the children had to go to work. Consequently, the Slovene population demanded to

Tarvisio, and that proves that we do not hate German. We are convinced of the expression "As many languages you know, as many people you are worth" Therefore, each of us worths as two people. The Germans just one [...]. Furthermore, common sense says that children must learn the language spoken by their parents and in the village first. The children must learn their mother tongue first, and then the foreign one otherwise the student will know neither Slovene nor German. So people of Camporosso, send your children to the Slovenian school, there they will learn what they will need for their life". (Gariup, 237:2014)

include the three hours per week in the morning school schedule and to make the Slovene language a compulsory school subject for all classes (Feinig, 2008).

The municipality of Camporosso and other Carinthian municipalities appealed to the Ministry of Education for the three hours of Slovene to be made compulsory, emphasising the importance of the language since most of the children attending came from Slovene families. The request was supported by the Slovene political-economic association, through several petitions from local school boards, municipal representatives and private individuals. The decision was given to the regional school council, which investigated the matter further by checking the origins of these petitions to verify that it was a demand of the entire population and not of a small group. The regional board decided to reject all petitions that were not approved by the local school board and municipal representatives. Specifically, the petition of the municipality of Camporosso was accepted and as a result, the school was divided in 1892 into a Slovene-German and a Slovene-only sections (Novak, 1990).

Since the other petitions did not have the desired result, the Slovenian representatives from Carinthia turned to Parliament. Member of Parliament Klun referred to the principle of prohibition of language violence and demanded the establishment of Slovene schools in which Slovene is taught and in which teachers and school inspectors know both languages at the same level. Later, the member of Parliament Žitnik argued that in Carinthia, the distinctions between Slovene and utraquistic schools were a source of conflict and disagreement between teachers, parents, and students, as teachers often tried to move students to the utraquistic classes in order to get extra subsidies (Feinig, 2008).

It can be seen that, at the beginning of the 1900s, the German national group had much more influence on the everyday life in Carinthia than the Slovenian group, also due to the German monopoly on infrastructure and trade.

Over the years, these changes on the school level also brought about changes on the social and linguistic level: more and more Slovenian people became Germanophiles, due to the prestige given to the German language over the Slovene one (Gariup, 2014).

A large part of the population began to speak German, and over time, more and more Slovenes came closer to the political vision of the German national movement (Domej, 2006).

	1880			1910		
	German	Slovene	Others	German	Slovene	Others
San Leopoldo	21	366	0	48	308	11
Malborghetto	537	54	0	477	27	35
Pontebba	642	0	0	807	17	93
Camporosso	33	866	6	345	492	7
Tarvisio	1345	120	2	1439	6	236
Ugovizza	20	654	0	157	412	4
Valbruna	1	340	0	90	179	2
Total	2599	2400	8	3363	1441	388

Table 2 - Changes in language use of the population in 1880 and 1910 (Domej, 2006)

5.4 The teaching of Slovene after the First World War

In 1912, 'Slovensko šolstvo na Koroškem v preteklem stoletju' (The Slovenian school in Carinthia in the previous century) was published by Ante Beg, a Slovenian teacher, intellectual and publicist. He noted that the school in Carinthia - of which Valcanale was also a part until the end of the First World War - was almost entirely run by Germans who did not allow for effective teaching of Slovene. In fact, he explained that up until 50 years earlier, it was allowed to write in Slovene and Cyrillic, while at the time of publication of the work, it was almost forbidden to speak the Slavic language.

With the passage of Valcanale under the Kingdom of Italy, the schools (eight with teaching in German and three with bilingual Slovene-German teaching) were reorganised on the basis of the Italian school. The local school councils were dissolved, and control was entrusted to the various municipalities.

The language of instruction changed from German to Italian, replacing one third of the teachers with native Italian speakers, while the remaining two thirds had to take a special Italian examination. In Pontebba and Tarvisio, two Italian schools were founded in addition to the German ones, but due to a shortage of pupils, they were later merged to create a single primary school in both municipalities. Report cards and documents became bilingual Italian-German for the German sections and monolingual Italian for

the Italian one. Subsequently, two Italian classes were established in the utraqistic schools in Ugovizza and San Leopoldo, but for these villages, as well as for Camporosso and Valbruna, a provision was issued whereby the language of instruction remained Slovene and the teaching of Italian replaced German in the last two classes.

An evening school was established in Ugovizza to enable young people and adults to learn the Italian language.

The report of Interim Commissioner Mistruzzi, who orchestrated these reforms in 1921, states that his proposal was to change the Slovene-German utraqistic school system to Slovene-Italian in the villages where Slovene was spoken and to German-Italian in the other municipalities of the valley.

A report published in the 'Goriški letnik' in 1981 explains how Commissioner Mistruzzi succeeded in Italianising the Slovene-German school in the Valcanale. Up until 1821, there were eight popular schools in the area organised according to the Austrian school system: Tarvisio, Fusine, Raibl, Coccau, Thörl (now an Austrian village), Malborghetto, San Leopoldo, Pontebba; while in Camporosso, Ugovizza and Valbruna there were schools in which the language of instruction in the first two years was Slovenian.

Commissioner Mistruzzi, who was linked to Fascist ideals, began to reform the schools in Valcanale by dismissing the local school councils in order to transfer the management of the schools to the mayors. A district school board was established, chaired by Mistruzzi himself, which had great decision-making and financial autonomy. In 1921, the Commissioner decided to disband the Schulverein, with the aim of a cultural renewal of the German-speaking islands, but in reality, the real purpose was to Italianise the German and Slovenian inhabitants of the area (Gariup, 2014).

The Commissioner also decided that only Italian should be used as the language for correspondence in school offices and that only teachers who did not know the language were excused from this decision, even though many teachers often pretended not to speak Italian in order to use German.

Within a few months many teachers were dismissed, so that in 1922 one third of them were Italian, often from the rest of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

Mistruzzi paid particular attention to the few Italian classes in the area: in Tarvisio he provided better materials and classrooms and increased the number of classes; in Pontebba Nova (Italianised name of Pontafel) an Italian primary school was established.

These school changes caused discontent in Valcanale, especially in Pontebba where some families decided not to send their children to the Italian school.

With regard to utraquistic schools, Mistruzzi decided to impose the teaching of Italian instead of German, arguing that for Slovene students, German was a foreign language just like Italian. The decree drafted by Mistruzzi in 1922 stipulated that teaching in utraquistic schools should be in Slovene for the first two years and then in Italian, but this decree never came into force as the Commissioner was called into service at the Ministry of the Interior in Rome (Gariup, 2014).

The Gentile reform of 1923 Italian was imposed as the language of instruction in all schools, so both German and Slovene disappeared from public schools. As a result, citizens and parish priests of German origin began to emigrate to Austria or Germany. Within two years, the schools in Valcanale were totally Italianised.

The Slovene citizens, on the other hand, tried to maintain their language in the family and ecclesiastical spheres; in fact, sacred texts written in Slovene were of great help in maintaining and teaching Slovene (Gariup, 2014).

Moreover, of great importance for the preservation of the language were the Slovenian Franciscan School Sisters, whose order began in Graz in 1842 with the bishop of Maribor, Anton Maria Slomšek. After the bishop's death, the sisters founded their own independent congregation, breaking away from the sisters in Graz. Later, around 1927, the sisters were called to Camporosso, where they taught Christian doctrine, home economics, sewing and embroidery courses, and visited the sick in the municipality. Their courses in cooking, sewing and embroidery were attended by many girls from Camporosso and neighbouring villages, and in this way, they taught Christian education while maintaining the Slovenian language. Their contribution to the education of children in Camporosso lasted until 1953 due to the establishment of the kindergarten in the village of Fusine, and from then on, the sisters dedicated themselves to welcoming tourists and Slovenian refugee priests, until 1975 when they left the village of Fusine (Gariup, 2014).

In 1930, the ONAIRC (Opera Nazionale di Assistenza all'Infanzia delle Regioni di Confine) founded new schools. Their purpose was to provide moral and material assistance during early childhood, as well as to Italianise children in the new border areas from their earliest years. Seven nursery schools were established in Valcanale:

Ugovizza, Valbruna, Camporosso, Pontebba, San Leopoldo, Malborghetto, Tarvisio, and later also in Fusine in 1953.

It is important to remember that from 1940, as a result of the 'Options', many families decided to emigrate from Valcanale and therefore the number of children enrolled in the Italian nursery school fell rapidly, as in the case of Valbruna where only four children were enrolled, causing the school to close until 1946.

5.5 Attempts to revive the Slovene language after 1950

In the school year 1955-1956, the German language was taught in Ugovizza funded by the Udine Education Board and the Municipality of Malborghetto-Valbruna with a three-hour afternoon course three times a week. At this point there was still no mention of a possible teaching of the Slovenian language.

Almost ten years later, in 1963, the parish priest of Camporosso, Mario Cernet, asked for a classroom in the primary school in order to teach Christian doctrine, which he was allowed to do provided that he taught exclusively in Italian. The parish priest then decided to set up a classroom in the village rectory in order to be able to teach doctrine in Slovene throughout the year and to hold Slovene language courses during the summer.

In 1974, in Cave del Predil, the parish priest Tomasino made an agreement with the school inspector of Gemona del Friuli to set up a full-time school with two hours of Slovene and German teaching, but the Udine Provincial Administration accepted the teaching of German but not of Slovene. Consequently, the parish priest decided not to open the school full-time.

In 1976, priest Gariup from Ugovizza also asked for a classroom in the primary school to teach Slovene. This permission was granted by the Tarvisio Education Directorate and the Municipality of Malborghetto-Valbruna, with lessons scheduled to begin in the afternoon of 16th February 1976. Shortly after the beginning of the course, the lessons were stopped by the teacher Broccaioli, who, in the name of the Udine Education Superintendent, threatened to call the police claiming that it was not allowed to teach Slovene in schools.

This event caused a regional, national, and international stir as it did not allow the minority in Valcanale to safeguard their language. Furthermore, a similar incident had happened in Lusevera (UD) two years earlier.

The incident also caused protests from students from other Slovene minority municipalities, e.g. from Gorizia and Slovene municipalities, such as Koper who were outraged by the ban on teaching the language in Valcanale and wanted to show solidarity with the Slovene-speaking population of the valley. Similarly, representatives of various parties, including the "Party of the Trentino and Tyrolean People", the "Sardinian Action Party", the "Occitan Movement", the "Friuli Movement", the "Südtiroler Volkspartei" and the "Slovenska skupnost", condemned the event and expressed their solidarity with the parish priest, children, and parents of Ugovizza.

Subsequently, the lessons of the course continued at the parish church in Ugovizza with 27 children (Gariup, 2014).

In 1978, a private Slovene language course was also organised in Camporosso by the village parish. This course caused a negative reaction from pro-fascists, who organised a collection of signatures for a referendum aimed at "[...] rigettare l'insegnamento della lingua ufficiale e letteraria slovena che snaturerebbe l'antico dialetto [...]" (Gariup, 2014).²

In the same year, the use of classrooms intended for teaching Slovene doctrine and language in the municipality of Malborghetto was again denied. This event made it even more evident that the protection of the minorities in Valcanale was only a formal act, but that in reality, the protection of the rights of the Slovene minority was not put into practice. After these events, in 1977, enrolments in the Slovene language course in Ugovizza increased to 34 and then to 45 in 1979, while in Camporosso 14 children were enrolled; this increase in enrolments reflects the awareness of citizens of Slovene origin to maintain their identity. Moreover, the Slovenian language, traditions, customs of Valcanale are preserved through the years thanks to associations (listed below) that organise cultural events.

2 ([... reject the teaching of the Slovene official and literary language which would distort the ancient dialect [...])

Following the earthquake that struck Friuli in 1976, the primary school in Ugovizza had to be rebuilt and this construction was financed by the Autonomous Province of South Tyrol. During the inauguration of the new school, the Italian anthem, the Austrian anthem, two sacred hymns in the two languages were sung, and only the German minority of Ugovizza was mentioned, demonstrating once again the lack of consideration for the Slovenian minority (Gariup, 2014).

5.6 Slovenian cultural organisations and associations in Valcanale

After the two world wars, several associations and organisations were founded, mainly in Ugovizza and Camporosso, to keep the Slovene identity alive and to enhance the customs and traditions of this minority. The main associations are:

- Mixed parish choir of Ugovizza: probably founded before 1900, but there are no written records due to a flood that hit Valcanale in 1903. It mainly dealt with religious songs in Slovene.
- Camporosso parish mixed choir: founded in 1890, still active today but became a purely male choir after the closure of the Camporosso girls' youth choir in 1986.
- "Planika" Choir: founded in 1971 and based in Ugovizza, it is involved in carol singing and various cultural activities.
- "Lepi vrh" Cultural Centre: founded in 1977 by the parish priest Gariup from Ugovizza, it was mainly addressed to the young people of the village and of the valley, in order to promote cultural activities - not only related to Slovene -, conferences, exhibitions, sports and recreational events. It ceased to exist in 1982.
- "Ojsternik" Choir: founded in 1982 in Ugovizza, it was created from the desire of some young people to break away from the "Planika" choir, as they felt more connected to Austrian culture than to the Slovenian one. The choral activity dealt with songs in all four languages present in the area, representing the different cultural influences of Valcanale.
- "Slovenski Klub Kanalske Doline": founded in Camporosso in 1983 with the intention of creating an association to bring together all the Slovenes of the Valcanale valley.

- “Don Mario Cernet” association: founded in 1997 in Valbruna. It aims at the promotion, preservation and development of the Slovene culture in all its forms: history, toponymy, language, songs and music, customs and traditions, which are still present in the valley. Another purpose of this association is to bring children closer to the Slovene language, both literary language and dialect spoken in the valley. Concerning this topic, in 2019, the organization launched the project “Govorim – torej sem / Parlo – dunque esisto” (“I speak therefore I exist”), in order to promote the teaching and the preservation of all Slovene dialects in the Province of Udine.
- Slovene Cultural Centre "Planika": founded in 1993 after the end of the "Slovenski klub Kanalske doline". The association is still active today under the name 'Slovensko Kulturno Središče Planika Kanalska Dolina' (Slovenian Cultural Centre Edelweiss Val Canale) and operates in the fields of culture, music, education and training. It organises private language courses ensuring the presence of a Slovene teacher in the municipality of Ugovizza and it organises several activities, developed with research activities concerning the traditions, customs, religious practices and language of the Slovene community in Valcanale. In 1998, the Cultural Centre has opened a library dedicated to Salvatore Venosi, who promoted the preservation of the Slovene language and culture in the valley. The library collection has been expanded with the books and documents donated by Professor Janez Dolenc and currently, with 10,000 book units, it represents the biggest private Slovene library in the Province of Udine. The language courses are attended on average by 15 students, divided in groups according to their language level. The courses’ content is adapted according to the language proficiency of the students, considering their personal interests as well. It is interesting to note that parents and relatives are allowed to actively participate to the activities. Moreover, it organises language courses on specific topics, such as courses of commercial Slovene in collaboration with the Institute “Ingeborg Bachmann” of Tarvisio, then base and intermediate courses for adults and courses for municipal employees in accordance with the law 492/1999. Until 2010, the Centre organised summer camps on the Slovene coast in order to allow students of the courses to experience living in a fully Slovene-

speaking area. Afterwards, with the support of the Slovene Ministry of Culture, the Centre organised in 2013 a week-long cultural exchange between the Italian students of Ugovizza and Slovene student from the elementary school in Kranjska Gora.

5.7 The development of the Slovene language teaching in the 21st century

Since 1997, the currently known “Centro Culturale Sloveno Stella Alpina Val Canale” or “Slovensko Kulturno Središče Planika Kanalska Dolina” (Slovenian Cultural Centre Stella Alpina Val Canale), is promoting the introduction of the Slovene language as mandatory subject to promote a multilingual education in every school of the valley, from kindergarten to secondary-upper schools, taking into consideration all linguistic minorities and communities of the valley. Indeed, the Centre Stella Alpina offered to take charge of the organisation of the lessons and courses, as well as to cover part of the expenses. In 1999, the teaching of Slovene has been introduced in all kindergartens and primary school through language and singing courses, however until the school year 2003/2004, there were no rating or evaluation forms (Vidau, 2013).

In 1997, the project “Progetto Multicultura” (Multicultural Project) was launched in the primary schools of Campososso, Fusine and Ugovizza, assigning the teaching of Slovene to mother tongue teachers. The teaching of multiple languages in Valcanale has been later extended to pre-schools and primary schools following the entry into force of the law 59/1997. Such law gave more autonomy to educational institutions by allowing them to adapt the curriculum according to the needs of the territory.

From the school year 1998-1999, the pre-school of Tarvisio activated the project “Progetto Multicultura, Intercultura e Plurilinguismo”, which lasted 5 years and provided for the teaching of Slovene, German and Friulian with mother tongue teachers. Following the 482/1999 law on the protection of historical linguistic minorities, the teaching of Slovene, Friulian and German has been added as “second language”, in order to ensure the acquisition of language and communication skills, as well as the preservation of cultural, social, and personal identity. Indeed, the State Protection Law 38/2001 regarding the protection of the Slovene minority language community in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, sets out the provisions for pre-schools in the province of Udine, stating that the curriculum must include topics regarding the traditions, costumes, language and

culture of the linguistic minority during the regular school hours. Schools are given more freedom and autonomy to organize teachers, activities, methodology and evaluation criteria.

The Slovene courses in Tarvisio, Ugovizza, Malborghetto and Camporosso were attended on average by 220 children, with external collaborators of the Centre as teachers and for the first time the teaching of Slovene became a school subject under the name of “Lingua Slovena”. Indeed, from 2005 the language proficiency of Slovene became part of the final evaluation sheet, as the grade was included in the school report cards.

5.7.1 The “Pollicino” project

From 2001 to 2004 the project “Progetto Pollicino” has been activated in the first grade of primary school and the last two years of pre-school in Tarvisio to maintain the multicultural and multilinguistic environment. Such project aimed at the teaching of the four languages spoken in Valcanale (Italian, German, Slovene and Friulian) relating to the daily social and didactic context. The four languages have been spoken during activities to teach both the languages and the cultures, as well as to acquire new competences.

5.7.2 The “Rete Sentieri” project

The Bachmann Institute has been one of the leading organizers of the project “Rete scolastica Sentieri”, which involves schools and eight linguistic varieties from Friuli-Venezia Giulia. The project focused on the protection of minority languages and the safeguarding and enhancement of linguistic heritages through the school system. It involved the minority languages of Friulian, Resian, Slovene, German, Ladin, Plodarisch, Saurano and Timavese. The last three are local dialects from the municipalities of Sappada, Sauris and Timau.

The project was financially supported by the State and these funds were invested in:

- teacher upskilling
- employment of mother tongue teachers
- employment of external experts
- documentation of the activities

- meetings, exchanges of experiences among teachers and the classrooms.
- production of materials
- creation of the website “www.retesentieri.org”, in which it is possible to share the experiences
- purchase of materials

The “Quaderni delle Direzione Generale per gli Ordinamenti Scolastici e per l’Autonomia Scolastica” (Journals of the Directorate General for the education system and the school autonomy) reported that initially the projects focused more on cultural aspects than on languages and that they were not clearly defined, neither were the connections among schools. However, from the school year 2004-2005 the quality has improved with a greater focus on the linguistic aspects, the network of connections, as well as the role and tasks of each school have been defined more clearly. From the documentation regarding the “Rete Sentieri”, the project had a positive outcome, even its contributions on the school network. Indeed, one central office manages the projects, thus reducing the administrative work and spending more time for didactic planning. Moreover, it helped strengthening the connection among school for working together (Balboni, 2012).

The project required the participation of teachers in elaborating an educational plan relevant for language teaching. Indeed, it originated by the shared idea that schools should endorse the teaching of multiple languages in order to make children aware of the relevance of the minority language in a multicultural territory (Franz, 2014).

From 2002, following the 223/2002 law regarding the role of the Region Friuli Venezia-Giulia in the protection of language minorities, schools are given more autonomy for the drafting of their curricula, by personalising and adapting their syllabus according to local needs, identities, culture, and traditions. Indeed, schools must follow national objectives, but can also adapt them to meet the needs of the local society.

The analysis regarding the quality of the project and its results has been assigned by the MIUR to the Invalsi Institute and the University of Milano-Bicocca, which highlighted the importance of the project considering that there is not a central coordination for the schools and the teaching of minority languages in the Region. The project has led to a greater enhancement of the territories of the schools involved, which worked together to

create more awareness regarding the protection of minorities cultures and to create more consistent educational programmes and decision-making process. (Franz, 2013)

Currently, the project involves ten institutes, nine in Friuli-Venezia Giulia and one in Veneto. The schools involved are the comprehensive institutes of Paluzza, San Pietro al Natisone, Val Tagliamento, Cividale, Manzano, Tarcento, Tricesimo, Santo Stefano di Cadore, Tarvisio (as leading school) and the bilingual institute of San Pietro al Natisone.

Currently the objectives of the projects are:

- to promote and support the development of personal, linguistic, and cultural identity
- to implement the curriculum of the involved schools
- to promote awareness and respect of languages and cultures, in terms of vertical and horizontal continuity
- to promote the feeling of belonging in a community both locally and at a European level
- to promote the active use of languages in the local context, as well as the knowledge regarding historical and cultural aspects, including the traditions of local communities
- to promote a multilingual education
- to create multimedia didactic and pedagogic materials, which can be used by students and teachers from the involved schools, as well as by the communities.
- to develop and use assessment and evaluation tools.
- to acquire integrated learning strategies for an interdisciplinary learning
- to develop multilingual schools with the involvement of local associations, institutions, communities and families

Another important aim of the project is to develop transnational connections with other European communities in order to create a school network based on knowledge, promotion, and safeguard of linguistic minorities. It involved the collaboration with associations and local institutions, as well as universities, which dealt with cultural, linguistic, scientific, and environmental aspects. Moreover, since the technological development, the project aims at the use of minority languages in the context of online

communication through multimedia materials. Concerning the assessment and evaluation criteria, teachers have created tools, which include evaluation grids, project journals and videos, to assess the development of each phase of the project and its results. The assessment consists in an initial, an intermediate and a final evaluation, including the analysis of the educational impact of the proposed activities on each school involved, the aspects that can be further developed and improved, the competences acquired by pupils considering the content of all activities offered by the schools.

The project includes teachers from the pre-school, primary school, and lower secondary school of the involved Institutes, which must have adequate linguistic skills, then mother tongue teachers from Austrian and Slovene schools, external experts, and the creation of online work groups with teachers and experts.

The project consists in educational and didactic activities through the CLIL method and language workshops, in order to activate and improve linguistic competences and communicative skills, always according to the national and international regulations concerning the teaching of foreign languages.

The project is carried out during the school hours, as it is an effective part of the curriculum, and it consists of two hours per week in pre-school and two to five hours per week for primary and lower secondary schools.

5.7.3 The “Tre mani – Drei Hände – Tri Roke” project

From 2006 to 2011 the three of the four languages of the valley are taught in pre-school and primary school thanks to the international project “Tre mani – Drei Hände – Tri Roke” in collaboration with the schools of Nötsch im Gailtal (Austria) and Kranjska Gora (Slovenia). The project involved the exchange of kindergarten teachers, who would teach in the neighbouring country once a week: two teachers from Italy go to Slovenia and one expert, who is not a teacher but an external mother tongue speaker, goes to Austria, then an Austrian teacher and one expert go to Italy, as well as a Slovene teacher and an expert.

The project aims at the enhancement of the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic heritage, considered the great value of the multiculturalism of Valcanale. Moreover, it aims at preserving the historic identity of the area by building children’s cultural identity and

personality since pre-school. Indeed, it is fundamental to acquire communicative, expressive, operative, and logical competences, as well as to develop cognitive, emotional, moral and social skills from a young age (Balboni, 2012).

The children involved in the project showed interest in the activities proposed, which involved the repetition and dramatization of easy stories, songs, poems, and nursery rhymes which helped with gaining a good pronunciation. Moreover, the activities were repeated during the week by the Italian teachers to obtain more results. Since each school had a different organization, each activity was customised to meet the needs, indeed each song or nursery rhyme was adapted or chosen in accordance with the syllabus of each school, trying also not to repeat any activity already proposed by the other teachers. As stated by Bruner (1968), is fundamental that children pass through sensorial perceptions involving movements through action and linguistic tasks fully carried out in one language with the help of rhythm, mimicry, and intonation. To stabilize the language acquisition, the activities had been repeated during the school year, together with audio-visual media and objects belonging to each culture, used as linguistic vehicles (Balboni, 2012).

The project aimed at the building of children's identity within their socio-linguistic and environmental context, also involving teachers and all the school staff, parents, experts, and associations, as well as administrations and institutions from all three countries involved.

Each year the school choose one main concept that will guide the whole school year, on the basis of which teacher develop certain field of experience, the corresponding aims, and competences to acquire, which include cognitive, linguistic, (phonetics, lexical, morphosyntax), relational and personal aspects (for example, ability of observation, orientation, classification, and recognition of objects etc.). Indeed, when working with young children, it is essential to include activities that involve all senses. In particular, involving sight and handling objects in game-like activities is fundamental to create an environment for natural and non-forced learning.

It is possible to achieve all objectives by building an educational path around each theme or topic (Balboni, 2012).

5.7.4 The “Cristallo” project

The following project aims at building a continuity between pre-school and primary school, maintaining the multilingual didactic approach based on the daily-life experiences of children. Indeed, considering the multicultural context of the Valcanale, the realisation of a didactic continuity is essential for the creation of a multilingual curriculum. The aims of the “Cristallo” project are:

- identifying of common curricular and organizational strategies
- implementing multilingual units
- having common evaluation criteria, curricula, materials, research paths and a common planning
- promoting teacher exchanges

The teaching is divided into modules, making the organization more flexible and adaptable to the children needs. Both the content and cognitive aspects are taught in different languages. Every day activities allow children to constantly repeat lexicon (for example, lexicon regarding the weekdays, weather, seasons, numbers), also through music, songs, or play. Moreover, children take part in workshops which focus on the different fields of experience chosen by the teachers, and they are usually divided into small groups to allow them to have an active role in the learning process. Mother tongue teachers and class teacher work together in order to motivate the children who tend to follow the class teacher, without translating what the mother tongue teacher says. Indeed, having a stable relationship with children is fundamental to put them at ease, in order to clearly explain all activities and let them be participative.

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities related to local linguistic minorities, from sport activities to outside trips proposed throughout the year, which are possible thanks to the parents' collaboration. Moreover, a lot of consideration is given to traditions and festivities celebrated with both the Austrian and Slovene schools, as they are essential to allow a continuous linguistic exchange and the sharing of common traditions (Balboni, 2012).

5.7.5 Main linguistic projects offered by the Bachmann Institute

The Bachmann Institute offers many projects regarding the preservation of intercultural and multiculturalism, the promotion of cultural exchanges and the use of local languages, and they involve different grades from pre-school to secondary schools both for German and Slovene.

- Pre-school: in addition to the “Tre mani – Drei Hände – Tri Roke” project and the “Cristallo” project, the institute organizes workshops with the support of available experts from the local language associations and exchanges with the school of Arnoldstein, for the German language (Austria). In 1998/1999 the pre-school of Tarvisio Centrale proposed the five-year-long project “Progetto di Multicultura, Intercultura e Plurilinguismo” for the German, Slovene and Friulian languages.
- Primary school: as for the pre-school, it organizes exchanges and workshops in addition to the “Tre mani – Drei Hände – Tri Roke” project.
- Lower secondary school: the Institute proposes the “Alpeadria” project, which involves activities and exchanges between Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Austria, and Slovenia, as well as exchanges and workshops. Given the lower flexibility of the curricula, the teaching of foreign languages involves the CLIL method for German and the participation to the Comenius project for Slovene.
- Upper secondary school: the ESCO project financed by the European territorial cooperation Interreg IV Italy-Austria (2007-2013), aims at the creation of an international educational offer that involves Italy, Austria and Slovenia. One of the main focuses is to organize a cross-border experimental teaching curriculum, with the aim of creating a “Alpe-Adria” class in the future. In this way students will attend some classes in the three states to improve their linguistic, cultural, cognitive, and personal competences, as well as having an international diploma at the end of their education. The project, not only include the schools’ involvement, rather the whole social and economic contexts to build a European cooperation. It includes training activities for teachers for promoting common modules that involve languages, science, mathematics, technology, sports, arts,

and human sciences. Moreover, the institute organizes other exchanges and workshops as well.

5.8 The development of the Slovene language teaching in 2010s

In 2011, the municipal council of Malborghetto-Valbruna and Tarvisio deliberated in favour of a trilingual school (Italian-Slovene-German) in the valley by introducing the teaching of Slovene in all school levels managed by the “Istituto Omnicomprensivo Ingeborg Bachmann” and thus granting the teaching from kindergarten to upper secondary schools. Thanks to the support of the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the National Education Institute Slovenia, Slovene has been introduced as school subject also in the lower secondary schools as well as in the first two years of the upper secondary schools (Gliha-Komac, 2015).

Until 2011, the Bachmann Institute has participated in the “Progetto Comenius Regio”, focused on multicultural, intercultural, multilingualism and cross-border actions, between Italy, Slovenia, and Austria in order to create a cross-border curriculum. Moreover, it has introduced the CLIL method (Content and Language Integrated Learning) which provides the teaching of regular school subjects (such as history or mathematics) through a foreign or second language.

The CLIL method has been introduced with the project “Local Lingue Infanzia” which involved the pre-schools of Tarvisio, for the definition of new pedagogical proposals in order to create an environment where minority languages are not taught with one method, rather considering new didactic methodologies that allow children to build a cultural identity. Such project has been carried out in collaboration with the Ca’ Foscari University of Venice (Franz, 2013).

The project “Essere plurilingue in Valcanale: scuola e territorio in condivisione” has been launched in school year 2012/2013 in the pre-school, primary and lower secondary school of Tarvisio, in the pre-school and primary school of Ugovizza and in the pre-school of Camporosso. The aim of the project is to create learning processes regarding the teaching of the valley’s minority languages. Through this project students were confronted with both the valley’s and cross-border realities, in order to encourage the development of a personal identity, as well as of an awareness regarding the traditions, culture and language of each minority community and to acquire communicative

competences. Various didactic methodologies, such as workshops, educational outings, research activities, choral and theatre activities, working in groups, lessons using the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) method and activities in collaboration with schools involved in the “Rete Sentieri” project (Franz, 2013).

During the school year 2013/2014, the teaching of Slovene has been funded by three public institutions: the “Comunità montana del Gemonese, Canal del Ferro e Valcanale”, the “Centro Culturale Sloveno Stella Alpina Val Canale” and “Istituto Omnicomprensivo Bachmann” and regional subsidies, as required by the regional law 26/2007. During that school year, an educational exchange project named “Io e te: noi – ich und du: wir – jaz in ti: mi” has been proposed to the primary school of Tarvisio Città, Bled (Slovenia), Landskron and Villach Lind (Austria). The main aim was to promote a mutual exchange and enrichment through shared educational processes and methodologies that involved the exchange of mother tongue teachers. They were expected to visit the partner schools once a month outside the school hours in order to teach in their mother tongue during workshops organized with the collaboration of each school. At the end of the project, all schools and classes involved met and presented the results of the activities regarding their culture.

Moreover, the project “Lingue minoritarie – Tedesco – Sloveno – Friulano” has been activated in the pre-school of Camporosso.

In 2014, “Tre mani – Drei Hände – Tri Roke”, later named “Drei Hände, Tri Roke, Tre mani...cuatri lenghis”, which now also includes Friulian, has been re-activated in collaboration with the primary schools of Tarvisio Centrale, Nötsch (Austria) and Kranjska Gora (Slovenia). This project showed once again the necessity of an educational model that involved the teaching of the three minority languages of Valcanale in the lower and upper secondary schools. This necessity led to the activation of the three-year long Interreg project “E.S.CO”.

4.8.1 The “E.S.CO” project

The “E.S.CO” project has been organized by the Interreg between Italy, Austria, and Slovenia through the educational network “Alpe Adria”. This project allowed the collaboration between five effective partners, which include the Bachmann Institute of Tarvisio, and seven associated partners coming from the three participating countries.

The aim of the project is to create an easy and pragmatic cross-border educational system to promote the multicultural reality of the Alpe Adria's area.

In order to create an international system, it is essential to clarify the meeting point between disciplinary skills and linguistic competences by planning the school programmes according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and thus creating and adopting a consistent and unique model. The model includes the level of competence in the disciplinary skills as well as the level of proficiency needed for the linguistic competences. The educational planning is designed by a group of teachers during the preparation of the educational activities using the CLIL method. This project aimed at the creation of cross-border classes to promote the intercultural context between the participant countries by an active collaboration among teachers, as well as an active experience of the daily life for children (Franz, 2013).

5.9 Regulations regarding the projects' implementation

The implementation of the analysed projects must follow the guidelines set out by the regulations regarding the promotion and safeguard of minority languages. Indeed, the school system must plan educational programmes considering the concept of "continuity": "horizontal continuity" considering the social context and the territory, "vertical continuity" throughout all school levels and "temporal continuity" regarding the duration of the projects.

Before the 482/99 law, school institutions based the language lessons on the linguistic acquisition, however afterwards the Ministry of Education, University and Research (Miur) – now divided into Ministry of Public Education and Ministry of University and Research – set out the guidelines, in order to create and promote both national and local projects regarding the teaching of foreign languages, as well as the culture of recognised linguistic minorities. Indeed, after the 482/99 law, the project "Progetto di Multicultura, Intercultura e Plurilinguismo" proposed in the pre-school of Tarvisio Centrale, as well as the "Progetto Sentieri", have been recognised at national level, whereas before they were considered as independent school projects. After the 482/99 law, all educational activities regarding the culture of an area are included in a school's educational offer (Franz, 2013).

Each year the Direzione Generale per gli Ordinamenti Scolastici (General Directorate for the educational system) handles the fundings for the protection and enhancement of minority languages and gives the general criteria for the realization of the school projects regarding the languages, cultures, and traditions. From the regulation 89/2001 to 2004, the criteria remain unchanged; a group of experts evaluates the projects, giving more importance to the projects carried out during the schooltime, the creation of school networks and the attention given to the territory from a social and economic point of view, the consideration of the European criteria for minority languages, the duration of each project, its aims and the planned activities, as well as the activities for the training of the teachers involved.

After the Ministry circular 50/2004, the criteria have slightly changed considering the needs of students as one of the main criteria. Moreover, they gave more priority to projects that involved the creation of school networks and the collaboration with universities for the teacher training, also considering the cost of the project, which usually include teacher training courses, recruitment of mother tongue teachers, school supplies, documents regarding the activities, intercultural school exchanges, online publishing of the project's results (for instance, the results of the "Progetto Sentieri") etc.

The "Tre Mani – Drei Hände – Tri Roke" project is part of both the national regulation concerning the protection of minority languages and the "Piano dell'Offerta Formativa" of the Bachmann Institute, a document which delineates the school's cultural identity, expressing its educational, didactic and management objectives. The project involved the collaboration of school principals, teachers and experts of the three schools involved, as well as the association "Associazione delle scuole dell'Infanzia dell'Alpe Adria", with the aim of creating a trilingual pre-school in collaboration with the schools of Tarvisio, Nötsch and Kranjska Gora (Franz, 2013).

5.10 The Bachmann Institute "Piano dell'offerta formativa"

The "Piano dell'offerta formativa" or "Piano triennale dell'offerta formativa" (POF or PTOF) is a three-year-long educational policy plan required by the law 107/2015 – known as Bassanini Law – for schools of all levels. It presents the school's didactic and pedagogical principles and organizational choices, based on the social,

cultural, educational, and demographic characteristics of the school, as well as the social context and the territory in which it belongs, by indicating its connections with local authorities and institutional, cultural, social and economic realities within the area. According to the national school system and national education standards, the POF indicates the educational and didactic purposes, curricular and extracurricular activities and the resources allocated for the realization and implementation of the educational offer for students. Schools must also have a didactic and organizational flexibility, in order to adapt their activities to the needs of students, as well as improve the teachers' educational choices and didactic methodologies.

Through the POF, each school also indicates:

- Didactic disciplines and activities, both mandatory and elective
- Activities regarding support, educational guidance, remedial education according to the students' needs
- Total number of hours needed for each mandatory and elective activity, as well as for extracurricular activities
- Evaluation and assessment criteria
- School organization for achieving the educational objectives.
- Research projects

Concerning the teaching of minority languages, the Bachmann Institute, highlights the uncommon characteristics of the Valcanale, which given its position near Austria and Slovenia, creates a unique meeting point of cultures. Thus, the school aims at maintaining and promoting the cultural diversity and multilingualism of its students, promoting the teaching of German, Slovene and Friulian. Currently, the Institute includes the schools of Chiusaforte, Pontebba, Malborghetto-Valbruna and Tarvisio, from pre-school to upper secondary schools.

In the school's POF 2016-2019 is stated that, given the closeness to the borders with Austria and Slovenia, the Bachmann Institute aims at establishing a cross-border school in collaboration with the Carinthia Region (Austria) and Slovenia, creating a "Scuola senza confine – Schule ohne Grenzen – Šola brez meja" (school without borders), taking into consideration the promotion of multilingualism as an expression of multicultural territorial identity.

The Institute offers a vertical multilingual curriculum with English, German, Slovene and Friulian for the first school cycle (primary and lower secondary schools) and English, German, Slovene and Spanish for the second cycle (upper secondary school). It aims at:

- improving previous linguistic competences
- developing comprehension and production skills in all languages taught
- collaborating with local cultural, linguistic, touristic institutions, as well as including the linguistic communities and collaborating with Austrian and Slovene school institutions
- adopting a flexible organization of the school time, dividing classes into work groups with similar proficiency and adopting the CLIL method to teach the languages, according to the proficiency standards set by Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
- making students aware of the unique multicultural context of the Valcanale
- training students able to use the taught languages in social and work environments, as well as to interact in a cross-border interactions.

Another aim of the Institute is to strengthen to early-learning of languages during pre-school and first and second grade of primary school, also promoting natural learning processes through activities that involve workshops, music, reading, art.

To supervise the results of the teaching process regarding languages the Bachmann Institute decided to:

- use the same tests for all parallel classes or groups with the same language level
- use the same evaluation criteria to assess competences and proficiency
- use innovative educational tools (e.g. audio-visual materials) and create open classes and students groups based on their proficiency levels, as well as any possible learning difficulties (e.g. special education needs or disabilities)
- avoid major learning differences in classes, in order to promote a consistent learning environment
- certify the language competences by collaborating with certification institutions and creating a language portfolio for students
- promote cross-border exchanges and training courses.

- try to involve families and territories in the activities provided for all grades, sharing the organization of content, strategies, methodologies, and activities, keeping in mind the idea of “continuity” between school orders
- create new learning materials related to personal and social life, as well as everyday experiences, public life, and students’ interests
- use different methodologies and didactic strategies according to the students’ age and linguistic levels (e.g. method of Total Physical Response, CLIL method, parallel classes, flipped classroom strategy, cooperative learning)
- aim at reaching medium-high linguistic proficiency (B1-B2-C1 with reference to the CEFR)
- plan activities that involve collaborations with teachers from Austrian and Slovene schools, in order to create a transnational multilingual curriculum

During the school year 2017/2018, considering that most students come from multicultural families, decided to introduce the project “Cresco in più lingue” in the pre-school and primary school of Ugovizza, which provides for the teaching of learning units in German, Slovene and Friulian by mother tongue teacher. During the 2019/2020 school, the project has been extended to all primary schools of the Bachmann Institute.

In the PTOF 2019-2022, concerning the pre-school multilingual curriculum, the Institute adopted different approaches and methodologies:

- early immersion to multilingualism: the language lessons are held by mother tongue teachers, who work with the “one person – one language” and “one situation – one language” model.
- CLIL method: language activities regarding the “knowledge of the world” (space, time, nature ...) and “speech and words” (communication, language, and culture)

The curriculum provides for three to five hours of Slovene lessons per week.

Concerning the primary section, the school adopts similar methodologies, maintaining the teaching by mother tongue teachers following the model of “one person – one language” and working together with other subject teachers. Moreover, the Institute adopts the CLIL method that involve both individual and group activities held by Italian teachers in collaboration with mother tongue teachers. In order to guarantee the learning

of specific terminology and linguistic structures in all languages involved, a bimonthly subject rotation is planned as follows: during the first period the subject of music, geography and arts will be taught in Slovene, whereas during the second period the subject will be mathematics, history, and science.

The teaching of Slovene, as well as German and Friulian, involves recreational and educational activities that include the use of languages in real contexts and situations that allow more exposure to the languages, as well as to an active use to the spoken language.

Even though the schools are managed by the Bachmann Institute, the Slovene language is not taught in the pre-school and primary schools of Pontebba and Chiusaforte, as those municipalities currently do not have a Slovene minority.

There are only two lower secondary schools in the valley, one in Pontebba and one in Tarvisio. Both schools take part in international language project, such as Interreg, and exchanges with Austrian and Slovene schools, while the methodology adopted for language teaching is the CLIL method.

There is one upper secondary school in Valcanale, and it is located in Tarvisio. Currently the school does not offer a curriculum of Slovene during the school hours, teaching English, German, and Spanish as foreign languages.

5.11 Collaborations with local institutions and associations

The teaching of Slovene has always been organized by local association with the institution of language courses and in collaboration with the Bachmann Institute; one of the most important associations for the Slovene language is the “Don Mario Cernet” association of Valbruna.

In the latest school year, the teaching of Slovene in pre- and primary schools has been organised by the “Comunità di Montagna – Canal del Ferro e Val Canale”, a local institution located in Pontebba with regional fundings, as required by the 482/1999 law, the regional laws 38/2001 and 26/2007 concerning the protection of the Slovene minority in Friuli-Venezia Giulia and in collaboration with the aforementioned “Don Mario Cernet” Association. The association is responsible for the selection of Slovene mother tongue teachers, while the Bachmann Institute must coordinate and supervise the actual effective implementation of the planned activities.

In the school year 2020/2021 the multilingual project provides a total of 5 hours per week of Slovene teaching in the pre-schools of Tarvisio, Camporosso and Ugovizza, and 7 hours per week for the primary schools of Tarvisio and Ugovizza.

The multilingual project named “Crescere in più lingue/ Io cresco in più lingue”, during the school year 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 aimed improving the communicative skills in Slovene, as well as the knowledge regarding the culture, the developing of soft skills and the strengthening of linguistic competences, taking into consideration the communicative and social context of the Valcanale.

Due to the Coronavirus emergency, the lessons were held through distance learning platforms and, following a significant decrease in the funds available for the multilingual project, the total amount of hours has been changed in 2 hours of teaching per week for the pre-schools and 4 hours per week for the primary schools, however such change has not influenced the positive results of the project.

6. Future perspectives: a trilingual school

Currently, the language of instruction is Italian, while German, Slovene and Friulian are part of the school subjects, and their use is limited to the lessons. With the institution of a trilingual school, the three languages will become languages of instruction as Italian. Indeed, it is not sufficient to teach those languages in the school context, it is essential to expand their use in extracurricular environments, where students can improve their linguistic proficiency. As stated by Fishman (1991) and Paulston (1987), the three main factors that allow the preservation of minority languages are family, education, society, and community. The teaching of minority languages is fundamental to preserve their cultural heritage of communities and maintain their personal identity and identification within a community. Indeed, the European Union recognises the need to protect the minority communities, especially in border areas, in order to promote integration within states (Mezgec, 2021).

A trilingual or multilingual education involves languages as school subject, as well as language of instruction. Thus, the languages' status is different: in a monolingual school other languages other than Italian are considered just as school subjects (second or third languages), whereas in a multilingual school they have the same status and role as Italian.

The school is not the only part involved in the institution of a multilingual school, indeed the whole population, the minority communities, local and public institutions, as well as associations are involved. Indeed, it is essential to remember that learning a language is not limited to the school hours, but it needs to be a relevant competence in the everyday familiar, social and even work context of students.

However, currently it is not clear whether a multilingual education aims at the protection and promotion of cultures and diversity, or if it aims at the development of useful linguistic skills for their use outside the school context. Sometimes it is not clear if a multilingual education refers to a "transitional model" where the teaching and use of minority or foreign languages is gradually increased compared to the use of the official language(s). Other multilingual schools propose a model that involves perfect multilingualism with the aim of acquiring all languages with the same proficiency, in order to develop the same linguistic skills in all languages taught.

It is also important to note that most of times, given the many studies regarding the cognitive advantages of bi- and multilingualism, especially early learning, parents decide to enrol their children to schools that offer a multilingual curriculum, sometimes without considering which languages are offered, but considering the socioeconomic benefits that bilingualism could bring to their children.

6.1 Early attempts for a multilingual education in Valcanale

In 2011, local institutions and the community started showing an increasing interest in the organization of a multilingual school, involving the city councils of Tarvisio and Malborghetto-Valbruna.

In 2016, local cultural and linguistic associations organized a conference regarding other examples of multilingual schools in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Carinthia and South Tyrol to promote the education in more languages. Later, the municipalities of Malborghetto-Valbruna and Tarvisio, as well as the local Slovene and German association (Association Don Mario Cernet, Cultural Centre Planika for Slovene and the Kanalter Kulturverein association for German) signed a resolution to appeal to relevant authorities, in order to establish a multilingual school in Valcanale and other areas of the Region.

In 2017, an international scientific committee, led by Alexandra Krause, professor at the University of Vienna, had the task of defining a multilingual model for each school managed by the Bachmann Institute with the help of Italian, Slovene and Austrian experts, which could be applied to all school orders, from pre-school to upper secondary school. In 2017, a multilingual pilot project has been activated in the last year of pre-school and the first two grades of primary school in Ugovizza, which has been later activated in all pre-schools of the valley - involving 118 pre-school pupils and 134 primary school students -, except for the pre-schools of Pontebba and Chiusaforte, as they are not included in the 38/2001 regional law. Meanwhile a formal request has been sent not only to the regional administration, but also the to Ministry of Education (MIUR) (Mezgec, 2021).

The project includes two phases, the planning stage, and the testing phase if it will be approved by the MIUR.

During the first phase the Bachmann Institute must raise fundings, sometimes with the support of Slovene and German associations, for the organization of the project and the activities, as it is considered as an internal project of the school. During this stage, the Ministry of Public Education evaluates the proposed activities, as well as upgrading the multilingual curriculum; consequently, the costs for the institution of such school would be covered by the Ministry.

6.1.1 Testing phase

Compared to the current project, the multilingual school would provide for an increase of the teaching hours in each minority language (5 hours per week for each language) and for changes concerning the methodologies used by teachers. Currently, they follow the national guidelines for pre-school education, where the method adopted is “one person – one language” and the CLIL method, which content revolve around their daily life routine. Moreover, association and public local institution are currently responsible for hiring the teacher as external collaborators, whereas with the multilingual school they would be hired as regular teachers by the Ministry of Education in compliance with the regulations, allowing them to enter the national teachers’ rankings.

Currently, to summarize what explained before, Slovene, German and Friulian are taught as school subject for 2 hours per week and they are used during non-linguistic subjects for 2 hours per week with the CLIL method. During this type of lessons, the content is not merely translated into one of the three languages, but the teacher proposes a different approach to the same content in order to learn the Slovene terminology. The lessons involve 40 minutes of teaching in Italian and 20 minutes in Slovene in which both the Slovene and the subject teacher work together, including workshop activities, individual or in groups, according to the national guidelines. The proficiency linguistic level required at the end of the primary school is not clearly defined, however teachers aim at an A1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Currently, Slovene is not taught in lower and upper secondary schools as subject, but the Bachmann Institute provides for internal projects in collaboration with Austria and Slovene.

Regarding the lower secondary school, the new multilingual project would provide for 1 hour per week of Slovene as school subject and 2 hours per week as CLIL method in non-linguistic subjects, maintaining the methodology used in primary schools with 40 minutes of teaching in Italian and 20 minutes in Slovene. Concerning the upper secondary school, the new programme would provide for 1 or 2 hours per week of Slovene teaching and 1 hour during the CLIL method in non-linguistic subjects. Moreover, it would provide 3 hours per week of Slovene language for the last year of tourism section (Mezgec, 2021).

6.1.2 Potential issues

One of the main problems regarding the teaching of Slovene is the availability of teachers with an adequate proficiency level and adequate didactic knowledge. Currently, the Bachmann Institute hires external collaborators with annual employment contracts, which undermines the concept of continuity during the school years; indeed, it is important for children to have the same teachers throughout schools in order to avoid changes in the approach and methodologies used. Moreover, since the Bachmann Institute is not considered a multilingual school, it cannot search for teachers in the rankings of Slovene teachers in the Region. Given a drastic reduction in the public fundings granted for the teaching of Slovene and the low availability of teachers, the hours devoted to Slovene have been decreased from 5 to 2 hours per week.

The availability of books and didactic materials is another possible issue as they are not easily accessible. The association usually proposed didactic materials that they consider adequate for the teaching of Slovene according to the different age and grades.

Moreover, the language certificates to establish the proficiency level in Slovene are not recognised as the certificates for German. Indeed, the Bachmann Institute is not part of the Slovene educational network, thus the Office for the education in Slovene does not have any competence regarding the didactic materials and hiring of teachers (Mezgec, 2021).

Moreover, given that in the municipalities of Pontebba and Chiusaforte there is not a Slovene community, the Bachmann Institute cannot guarantee the teaching of Slovene. This would be an issue when students from these two municipalities enrol in the upper secondary school of Tarvisio which would provide the teaching in Slovene, creating

classes an educational gap between students that have a good proficiency in the language and students who do not have any (Mezgec, 2021).

6.1.3 Advantages of a multilingual model

A few hours per week of Slovene teaching, as well as 20 minutes of CLIL method during non-linguistic subjects, are sufficient to facilitate the acquisition of lexicon and grammatical rules in different disciplines and contexts. Indeed, students would be able to express themselves in more languages in all topics, switching from one language to another without difficulties.

A multilingual school could create a stimulating and inclusive educational environment, adopting different didactic methodologies to satisfy the needs of the students, especially considering students with learning disabilities. A multilingual school could also be interesting for foreign students coming from Slovene and Austria.

The collaborations with local linguistic and cultural association would increase with the institution of a multilingual school, allowing students to be introduced to more extracurricular activities concerning the local context they live in. Indeed, it is essential to promote the cultural heritage as an added value to the richness of valley, both from a social and economic point of view by promoting the use of Slovene – and German – outside the school context and giving it a new linguistic status, now only relegated to the domestic context (Mezgec, 2021).

6.2 Future perspectives

In October 2022, the Ministry of Education has signed the authorization of a trilingual education project for the Bachmann Institute. At national level, it is the first project that involves the teaching not only in Italian, but also in German, Slovene and Friulian from pre-school to upper secondary school. The aim of the project is to offer an implementation of the school offer taking into consideration the needs of the social and territorial context, in order to promote the cultural, linguistic, economic, and touristic activities in the valley and to protect its cultural heritage. Indeed, giving adequate linguistic competences to new generations could be essential to avoid the depopulation of the valley, increasing the employment opportunities both locally and with a cross-border perspective.

Conclusions

Starting from a general overview on bilingualism, multilingualism and the intrinsic relationship between language, culture and personal identity, I focused on the unique linguistic situation in Valcanale, in particular on the teaching of the Slovene language.

After researching the historical events that have influenced the use of that language through the centuries, I have noted that, in Valcanale, Slovene has often had a disadvantaged status compared to Italian and German, as it has often been relegated to language used at home or linked to the ecclesiastic context. Given this characteristic, the language has recently been kept alive thanks to the activities of various associations that have passed on Slovene traditions and customs over the years, as well as to the families who wanted to maintain their origins.

Subsequently, various international, national, and regional laws have regulated the recognition, protection and promotion of minority languages, allowing Slovene to be recognized as a minority language in Friuli Venezia Giulia.

With regard to education, Slovene language teaching has been ensured in recent years mainly in pre-schools and primary schools of Valcanale, now managed by the Bachmann Institute. Through multiple projects that often also involve Austrian and Slovene students, the institute aims at ensuring continuity in language teaching from pre-school to elementary school and then primary and secondary lower schools. Innovative and flexible projects lead to the promotion of students' personal identity linked to the local multilingual and multicultural contexts, as well as at the collaboration with Austrian and Slovene schools.

Future perspectives envisage establishing a multilingual school in the valley with Italian, German and Slovene as teaching languages from pre-school to secondary school. The project may be ambitious, but I personally believe that it would be an ideal project to promote multilingualism and allow students to acquire, throughout their educational path, fundamental language skills and competences that will allow them to take advantage of academic and work opportunities both in Italy and in neighbouring countries.

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Riassunto in italiano

Crescendo in Valcanale, sono sempre stata incuriosita dalla peculiare realtà linguistica e culturale della valle. Con il seguente lavoro ho quindi deciso di indagare la diffusione dell'uso della lingua slovena nella valle.

Nel primo capitolo della tesi mi sono concentrata sul concetto di bilinguismo e plurilinguismo. Attualmente sono stimate tra le 5.000 e le 7.000 lingue nel mondo, considerando lingue ufficiali, lingue minori, dialetti e varietà linguistiche. Tale dato indica che bilinguismo e plurilinguismo sono un fenomeno globale molto comune, nato dalle migrazioni e dai processi di colonizzazione che hanno messo in contatto innumerevoli popoli, lingue e culture.

Una delle prime definizioni di bilinguismo è offerta da Bloomfield, il quale nel 1933 definisce il bilinguismo come il controllo di due lingue con competenze equivalenti a quelle dei parlanti nativi monolingue, però tale definizione è piuttosto limitante. Successivamente sono state proposte altre definizioni meno restrittive, definendo come bilingue le persone in grado di formulare espressioni in più lingue ma senza specificare il livello di competenza necessario o il contesto in cui vengono usate, includendo anche i dialetti e le varietà linguistiche. Inoltre, in tali definizioni vengono incluse sia le persone che sono cresciute parlando più lingue, sia le persone cresciute in un contesto monolingue ma che hanno imparato altre lingue nel corso della vita.

Il bilinguismo non è un fenomeno statico, infatti il livello di competenza nelle lingue muta nel tempo, a seconda del contesto d'uso (scuola, lavoro, sfera sociale...) e quindi di quanto tempo e pratica viene dedicato a ciascuna lingua.

Le persone bilingue possono essere definite secondo diversi fattori, tra cui l'età di acquisizione linguistica (bilinguismo simultaneo o consecutivo), il tipo e il livello di competenza che possiedono (competenze in lettura, scrittura, ascolto e parlato), gli effetti che il bilinguismo può avere su un individuo (bilinguismo sottrattivo o additivo) e l'influenza di più lingue sulla propria identità culturale (biculturalismo o monoculturalismo). Tale classificazione è piuttosto generalizzata e tende a semplificare un fenomeno complesso in cui il contesto di acquisizione e il contesto d'uso hanno un ruolo fondamentale.

Una delle più importanti questioni in questo ambito riguarda l'acquisizione simultanea di più lingue e gli studiosi si sono interrogati su come vengono organizzate due o più lingue a livello cognitivo e se questo fenomeno possa avere effetti negativi sullo sviluppo linguistico dei bambini. Nel corso degli anni sono state svolte diverse ricerche su bambini bilingue e inizialmente era diffusa l'idea che imparare più di una lingua fin dalla nascita potesse essere dannoso per i bambini in quanto portava a ritardi nello sviluppo linguistico e cognitivo, giustificati dai fenomeni di code mixing e code switching esaminati nei bambini. Studi successivi invece dimostrano che le lingue imparate fin da piccoli vengono distinte a livello cognitivo in modelli separati e che i fenomeni di code switching e code mixing sono semplici strategie messe in atto dai bambini per farsi capire meglio dall'interlocutore, spiegando quindi che il bilinguismo non è dannoso.

Con bilinguismo consecutivo si intendono le persone che imparano altre lingue dopo aver acquisito la propria madrelingua e ciò può avvenire in contesti formali come la scuola oppure in contesti informali.

Alla fine degli anni '80, Noam Chomsky ha teorizzato che tutti i bambini possiedono una predisposizione mentale all'acquisizione linguistica e che tutte le lingue condividono una "grammatica universale". Tale concetto postula che i principi della grammatica sono condivisi da tutte le lingue e che sono innati per tutti gli esseri umani. Successivamente, Bruner ha aggiunto che anche le interazioni e gli input sociali con altre persone sono essenziali per un'acquisizione linguistica efficace.

Inoltre, negli anni '70 Gardner ha teorizzato il concetto di intelligenze multiple, spiegando che ogni individuo possiede diversi tipi di intelligenza, combinate in maniera unica (intelligenza linguistica/verbale, logico/matematica, visivo/spaziale, musicale, corporeo/cinestetica, intrapersonale, interpersonale).

Considerando tali teorie a livello scolastico, gli accademici in questo ambito hanno ipotizzato che ogni studente presenta un approccio del tutto personale all'apprendimento, influenzato da diversi fattori. Indubbiamente, il fattore più importante durante il processo di apprendimento è la motivazione, influenzata da tre elementi: il dovere, il bisogno e il piacere. È infatti indispensabile che la motivazione principale durante l'apprendimento sia il piacere personale per assicurare un'acquisizione piacevole ed efficace. Inoltre, in ambito educativo, è essenziale

conoscere le caratteristiche degli studenti in base all'età e alle loro esigenze, in modo da poter adattare il contenuto delle lezioni ai stili di apprendimento e ai bisogni degli studenti, creando un ambito sereno e piacevole che favorisca un'acquisizione efficace.

Nel secondo capitolo ho parlato della relazione intrinseca tra lingua, cultura e identità personale.

L'identità viene definito come un concetto complesso e non statico, basato su una moltitudine di fattori (età, religione, etnia, nazionalità...), in costante evoluzione e costruita durante la vita di ogni individuo. Oltre all'identità personale di ognuno di noi, è importante considerare il concetto di identità collettiva che ci permette di immedesimarci in alcune caratteristiche specifiche di diversi gruppi.

La definizione di lingua è un concetto a cui Owen nel 2011, conferisce l'aggettivo di malleabile, in quanto lo status di una lingua (lingua ufficiale, lingua minoritarie, dialetti...) è spesso frutto di questioni politiche, basate spesso sullo status sociale o economico. A prescindere da ciò, ogni lingua occupa un ruolo fondamentale nella vita quotidiana, svolgendo due funzioni principali: la funzione strumentale, che fa riferimento alla lingua come forma di comunicazione, e la funzione simbolica che invece fa riferimento alla lingua come rappresentazione della cultura e dell'identità. Infatti, è diffuso il pensiero che la lingua influenzi la nostra percezione del mondo e che sia intrinsecamente collegato con l'identità etno-culturale della comunità parlante. Tale concetto non è condiviso da tutte le comunità, talvolta i parlanti perdono la lingua nativa ma mantengono vive le tradizioni, gli usi e costumi - ad esempio, nel caso di colonizzazioni -, mentre in altri casi la lingua è considerata un forte elemento distintivo della propria identità. La lingua è spesso considerata come veicolo di cultura, tradizioni e percezione del mondo, la cui perdita sarebbe una perdita inestimabile per tutta l'umanità.

Un'altra nozione chiave in questo capitolo è il concetto di cultura. Secondo il National Center for Cultural Competence della Georgetown University, la cultura è un "modello integrato di comportamento umano che include pensieri, comunicazioni, linguaggi, pratiche, credenze, valori, costumi, cortesie, rituali, modi di interagire e ruoli, relazioni e comportamenti attesi di un gruppo razziale, etnico, religioso o sociale, e la capacità di trasmettere quanto sopra alle generazioni successive". Rimane comunque difficile dare una definizione unica e definitiva di cultura, in quanto tale concetto include altri

elementi quali etnia o nazionalità, spesso nati come risultato di costrutti sociali ed in continua evoluzione, adattandosi ai cambiamenti della società.

Tale concetto risulta più complicato nel caso di persone bi- o plurilingue simultanei, quando crescono acquisendo due o più culture, o nel caso di bilingui consecutivi che spesso acquisiscono la lingua ma non necessariamente si identificano con la cultura.

In ambito educativo, imparare una lingua senza la relativa cultura non porta ad un'acquisizione linguistica completa ed efficace, in quanto vengono a mancare tutti gli elementi culturali e sociali che caratterizzano una determinata comunità linguistica. Di conseguenza è necessario che gli insegnanti propongano attività che implicano l'uso di materiali autentici recenti (film, serie tv, riviste, brochures...), da cui gli studenti possono imparare elementi culturali autentici.

Come spiegato da Taylor e Thoth (2011), la cultura viene acquisita in tre diversi modi. La prima tipologia viene definita verticale e fa riferimento alla trasmissione di cultura da parte dei genitori, parenti o di chi se ne prende cura ai bambini. Il secondo tipo, definito obliquo fa riferimento alla trasmissione delle conoscenze da individui non imparentati alle generazioni successive. Infine, la trasmissione orizzontale si riferisce alle conoscenze acquisite dai propri coetanei. La cultura viene infatti assimilata tramite i processi di inculturazione, acculturazione e socializzazione, i quali sono tutti processi permanenti durante la vita di ogni individuo.

Nel terzo capitolo ho ritenuto necessaria un'introduzione geografica e storica della Valcanale. La valle è collocata nel nord-est del Friuli Venezia Giulia, sul confine con Austria e Slovenia e comprende diversi comuni e le loro frazioni: Pontebba, Malborghetto-Valbruna e Tarvisio. Data la sua posizione, la valle è sempre stata un crocevia di diverse lingue e culture che hanno portato ad una situazione di multilinguismo unica, infatti in Valcanale convivono italiano, tedesco, sloveno e friulano.

I reperti archeologici trovati suggeriscono che la valle è stata abitata fin dal secondo millennio a.C., successivamente dopo la caduta dell'Impero Romano diverse tribù slave si sono stanziate nelle zone pianeggianti a tra le frazioni di Ugovizza e Camporosso. Successivamente una seconda ondata di tribù slave raggiunse la frazione di San Leopoldo (Pontebba). Dal 976 la valle fu annessa al Ducato di Carinzia e successivamente dal 1007 iniziò il cosiddetto "capitolo bamberghese" in cui la

Valcanale fu governata dal vescovato di Bamberga fino al 1759, quando passò sotto il dominio dell'Impero austro-ungarico. Alla fine della Prima guerra mondiale, con i tratti di Saint Germain (1919) e di Rapallo (1920), la Valcanale divenne territorio italiano. A seguito dell'annessione in Italia, molte famiglie italiane si trasferirono nella valle cambiando radicalmente l'assetto sociale e il governo non riuscì a garantire la salvaguardia delle minoranze già presenti sul territorio. Dal 1923, l'ascesa al potere di Mussolini, sancì anche l'inizio del processo di italianizzazione di tutte le zone conquistate, tra cui anche la Valcanale. I vari comuni presenti furono accorpati in tre comuni (Pontebba, Malborghetto-Valbruna e Tarvisio) e la lingua ufficiale divenne l'italiano. Nel 1939, Mussolini e Hitler firmarono un accordo, definito come "le opzioni", con cui le popolazioni di origini tedesca potevano scegliere se rimanere in territorio italiano e diventare a tutti gli effetti cittadini italiani, oppure se spostarsi in territorio tedesco. È stimato che circa 5600 persone migrarono dalla valle per trasferirsi nei territori tedeschi più vicini al confine, mentre rimasero in valle 2500 persone, di cui 800 erano cittadini parlanti tedesco e 1700 parlanti sloveno. Alla fine della Seconda guerra mondiale, alcuni cittadini decisero di rientrare in Italia, ma il fenomeno di migrazione ha cambiato radicalmente la struttura etnico-sociale della valle; infatti, dal 1945 la maggior parte dei nuclei familiari è di origine italiana.

Nel quarto capitolo ho esposto il quadro normativo internazionale, nazionale e regionale per la salvaguardia delle minoranze linguistiche. Sulla base della "Dichiarazione universale dei diritti umani" del 1948, le normative europee si concentrano sulla protezione e sulla valorizzazione delle minoranze linguistiche storiche, riconoscendone il valore come patrimonio culturale inestimabile. Il Parlamento europeo ha definito il concetto di plurilinguismo integrale, un principio che dà la stessa dignità a tutte le lingue presenti tramite politiche concrete per la salvaguardia delle minoranze. Nel 1992, il Consiglio d'Europa ha firmato la "Carta europea delle lingue regionali o minoritarie" per promuovere e proteggere le minoranze linguistiche, sia scritte che orali, in diversi ambiti della vita sociale, comprendendo l'educazione, l'amministrazione pubblica, le attività socioculturali. L'articolo 8 della Carta riguarda l'ambito dell'istruzione e prevede che gli Stati membri debbano rendere disponibile l'istruzione e dei corsi nelle lingue minoritarie, in modo da mantenere viva sia le lingue che le relative culture. L'obiettivo principale della Carta europea è quella di proteggere

le minoranze presenti nei territori in quanto ciò è essenziale per la mantenere la stabilità democratica e rispettare tutte le identità etniche, religiose, linguistiche e culturali, affinché tutte le persone siano in grado di esprimere, preservare e sviluppare la propria identità.

Successivamente nel 1996 fu firmata la “Dichiarazione universale dei diritti linguistici” che sancisce che tutte le lingue hanno lo stesso valore, non distinguendo tra lingue ufficiali, lingue minoritarie, dialetti o varietà regionali. Nel 1998 entra in vigore la “Convenzione-quadro per la protezione delle minoranze nazionali”, firmato dal Consiglio d’Europa, al fine di garantire la tutela delle minoranze, non solo a livello linguistico, ma considerando l’intero bagaglio culturale delle comunità.

Nel 2005 fu adottata la “Convenzione UNESCO per la protezione e la promozione della diversità delle espressioni culturali”, il cui obiettivo è quello supportare politiche e misure volte alla protezione e promozione di tutte le culture, considerate come portatrici di identità e valori delle minoranze e popolazioni autoctone.

Per quanto riguarda il quadro normativo nazionale, la Costituzione italiana sancisce che la Repubblica italiana ha il compito di garantire la salvaguardia delle minoranze linguistiche e promuovere lo sviluppo della cultura. Di fondamentale importanza è la legge 482/1999 “Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche”, con la quale vengono tutelate le lingue e culture delle minoranze che si sono stabilite sul territorio italiano nel corso dei secoli, comprendendo la lingua friulana, lo sloveno e il tedesco.

Per quanto riguarda la lingua slovena, la regione Friuli Venezia Giulia emanò la legge regionale 46/1991, mentre la legge nazionale per la tutela della comunità slovena fu emanata nel 2001. La legge 38/2001 riconosce per la prima volta la minoranza slovena nella provincia di Udine, istituendo fondi per tutelare le minoranze slovene in Valcanale, Valli del Torre e Valli del Natisone. Tale legge comprende diversi aspetti dell’uso della lingua slovena, tra cui il diritto all’uso della lingua scritta e orale in ambito pubblico, la toponomastica bilingue, nonché la tutela dell’eredità culturale e artistica della comunità slovena, e l’educazione in lingua slovena. Inoltre, la legge 38/2001 regola le relazioni tra il governo italiano e quello sloveno per promuovere lo sviluppo di collaborazioni transfrontaliere per supportare la comunità slovena in Italia e quella italiana in Slovenia.

La legge regionale 26/2007 stabilisce che le tre minoranze linguistiche presenti in Friuli Venezia Giulia (friulano, sloveno, tedesco) sono parte essenziale del patrimonio umano, storico e culturale della regione, facendo riferimento alle normative internazionali in materia di tutela delle minoranze. Tale legge riassume le linee guida riguardo l'uso delle tre minoranze in ambito di amministrazione pubblica, garantendo l'uso pubblico delle lingue nei rapporti tra cittadini e istituzioni statali. Inoltre, la legge riguarda la promozione delle minoranze a livello culturale e educativo, con l'implementazione del sistema scolastico.

Nel quinto capitolo ho esposto lo sviluppo dell'insegnamento della lingua slovena in Friuli Venezia Giulia e nello specifico in Valcanale.

Nelle provincie di Trieste e Gorizia è possibile trovare diverse scuole con la lingua slovena come lingua d'istruzione o con istruzione bilingue.

Nella provincia di Udine, la comunità slovena è stata riconosciuta solo recentemente e di conseguenza, è presente una sola scuola bilingue a San Pietro al Natisone, inizialmente nata come scuola dell'infanzia privata e ora presenta classi dalla scuola dell'infanzia alla scuola secondaria di primo grado. Inoltre, è possibile notare un incremento stabile per quanto riguarda corsi di lingua slovena per adulti, organizzati sia da istituzioni pubbliche che private.

A livello universitario, diversi corsi di lingua slovena sono offerti dalle Università di Trieste, Udine, Padova, Roma e Napoli.

Data la posizione e il suo ruolo come crocevia di culture, la Valcanale è sempre stata caratterizzata dalla convivenza di più lingue sul suo territorio. A livello educativo, per diversi secoli le capacità di leggere e scrivere erano riservate alle classi sociali più alte e al clero. I preti, infatti, usavano il tedesco e lo sloveno per la comunicazione con le popolazioni locali. Dal XVIII secolo, si diffuse la necessità dell'insegnamento scolastico e l'Imperatrice Maria Teresa emanò l'"Ordinamento scolastico generale per le scuole normali, medie e triviali" che riguardavano tutti i territori dell'Impero, compresa la Valcanale. Successivamente l'imperatore Giuseppe II stabilì l'obbligo di frequentazione scolastica per i bambini, istituendo scuole domenicali per permettere a tutti di frequentare le lezioni presso la propria parrocchia. Nel 1849 con la "Costituzione di marzo", fu riconosciuto il diritto di educazione nella lingua nativa delle diverse

popolazioni e non c'erano normative per quanto riguarda la lingua d'uso a scuola, di conseguenza l'educazione in Valcanale fu spesso impartita in lingua slovena.

Nel corso degli anni furono istituite diverse scuole utraqustiche, abolite dopo l'emanazione della riforma Gentile, che prevedono l'insegnamento sia nella lingua ufficiale che nella lingua delle minoranze. Alla fine del XIX secolo iniziò un processo di germanizzazione del sistema scolastico in Valcanale, che portò a un rapido indebolimento delle scuole in lingua slovena. Di conseguenza, iniziò una 'battaglia' riguardo la lingua da usare per l'insegnamento e un maggiore riconoscimento della lingua slovena nella valle.

Dopo la Prima guerra mondiale e l'annessione della Valcanale al Regno d'Italia, le scuole in lingua tedesca e le scuole bilingue slovene-tedesche, furono riorganizzate secondo il sistema scolastico italiano. Di conseguenza la lingua slovena fu relegata principalmente a lingua familiare, usata nelle interazioni sociali, per dare più spazio alla lingua italiana come lingua ufficiale. La riforma scolastica Gentile del 1923 e il processo di italianizzazione imposero definitivamente l'italiano come lingua d'istruzione in tutte le scuole, accantonando la lingua tedesca e slovena, le quali furono mantenute come lingue d'uso quotidiano in famiglia, nella vita sociale e ecclesiastica.

Dopo la Seconda guerra mondiale, le associazioni culturali tedesche e slovene della valle cercarono di insegnare le lingue delle due minoranze con corsi pomeridiani per bambini e ragazzi, al fine di mantenere vive le lingue e le tradizioni.

Dal 1997, il Centro Culturale Sloveno Stella Alpina Valcanale, sta promuovendo l'insegnamento della lingua slovena come materia scolastica obbligatoria nelle scuole di ogni grado della valle. Nel corso degli anni il Centro Stella Alpina ha organizzato diversi progetti per la promozione, la tutela e l'insegnamento della lingua slovena.

Uno dei primi progetti fu il "Progetto Pollicino", attivato nella scuola dell'infanzia del comune di Tarvisio con l'obiettivo di insegnare le quattro lingue parlate nella valle.

Al momento tutte le scuole della valle sono gestite dall'Istituto omnicomprensivo Bachmann, il quale sta promuovendo l'acquisizione della lingua slovena tramite diversi progetti, ad esempio il progetto "Rete Sentieri" che coinvolge diverse scuole della regione. Il progetto coinvolge scuole dell'infanzia, scuole primarie e scuole secondarie di primo grado, le cui attività sono impartite tramite il metodo CLIL, al fine di migliorare le competenze linguistiche e comunicative.

Dal 2006 al 2011, le tre lingue della valle furono insegnate nelle scuole dell'infanzia grazie al progetto "Tre mani – Drei Hände – Tri Roke", che prevede la collaborazione con scuole austriache e slovene per sviluppare il patrimonio culturale, etnico e linguistico che caratterizza il contesto multiculturale della valle. Successivamente l'Istituto ha organizzato diversi progetti che, oltre la scuola dell'infanzia e la scuola primaria, coinvolgono anche le scuole secondarie di primo e secondo grado della valle. Inoltre, l'insegnamento della lingua slovena è promosso da corsi di lingue organizzati grazie alla collaborazione tra l'Istituto Bachmann e le associazioni culturali della valle. Nel sesto capitolo ho presentato le prospettive future in quanto nell'ottobre del 2022 è stato approvato il progetto per l'istituzione di una scuola trilingue in Valcanale. Tale progetto prevede l'insegnamento delle materie in italiano, tedesco e sloveno, con l'obiettivo di implementare l'offerta scolastica nella valle, tenendo in considerazione le esigenze del contesto sociale e territoriale, al fine di promuovere le attività culturali, economiche e turistiche della valle e di tutelare il suo patrimonio culturale. L'istituzione di una scuola trilingue potrebbe essere essenziale per evitare lo spopolamento della valle, aumentando le opportunità di lavoro sia a livello locale che transfrontaliero.