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**MINORITY AND ENDANGERED LANGUAGES IN THE
WORLD**

INTERNATIONAL, EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL POLICIES TO COUNTERACT
LANGUAGE DEATH

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this master's thesis is a linguistic and cultural deepening. The following study, as the title suggests, aims to analyze and examine the linguistic crisis, which presents itself as an issue of significant philological depth, but which inevitably and unfortunately leads to complications in multiple cultures that cannot be ignored at all, primarily represented by extinct and endangered linguistic minorities. This declining condition impacting the global language environment, named "Language Death", is described in the first chapter, in which the significant relevance of this issue is highlighted not just for linguistic experts, but it should worry every individual. The second section provides an overview of minority languages and those in risk of extinction around the world and in Europe, with a special focus on Italy. This analysis wants to strengthen awareness of which and, above all, how many minority languages exist in the world and constitute a substantial cultural heritage. The third chapter examines the policies and measures adopted over the years and implemented at present, both by international legislation and by the European Union. The research aims to serve as a warning for a problem that is still often underestimated, demonstrating that the extinction of a language is not simply an unavoidable process, but, since it implies much more serious repercussions, it must be prevented and contested in all possible ways.

INTRODUCTION

“If I forget my native speech, And the songs that my people sing
What use are my eyes and ears? What use is my mouth? [...] How can I believe the foolish idea
That my language is weak and poor If my mother’s last words
Were in Evenki?”¹

These are the words of Alitet Nemtushkin, an Evenki poet (nomadic Siberian ethnicity), concerning his endangered language.

This thesis aims to analyze a process of crucial linguistic and cultural importance: the progressive disappearance of languages.

The choice to deal with this subject is due to the great diffusion of the phenomenon: in each European and global legal system, there are groups of subjects, numerically inferior to the majority, who speak a different language from the most common one.

Globalization has certainly imposed the hegemony of English, neglecting all these other languages, and encouraging their disappearance. The main European bodies have deemed it necessary to enact several sources of law, which will be analyzed, to protect these minorities and to initiate actions for the recovery of endangered languages, to protect both linguistic minorities and languages in danger of disappearing.

It may be considered an issue of secondary importance, or at least a topic that has always occurred in the history of the linguistic world. Unfortunately, this is indeed the case, but we must not confuse the process of evolution of a language with that of extinction. The former is an historical and evolutionary process that every language we know today has undergone due to the necessity of events, but it is not the focus of this work: this process cannot be changed because it is an intrinsic feature of the progress of societies and populations. This work wants to analyze, instead, the process by which a language not only does not evolve anymore and does not continue its development process, but it disappears without leaving any trace of what it has been.

¹ Christopher Moseley, *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, 3rd ed. Paris 2010, UNESCO Publishing.

A comparison with ancient languages is all that is required to demonstrate the significance and gravity of this event. The process in which we were involved cannot be conclusively equated to the process of extinction that afflicted the languages of ancient Rome and Ancient Greece. Greek and Latin are clearly dead languages, but they are not extinct: they no longer exist since they are no longer spoken today, but they are evolving. In terms of these languages, they have not vanished in favor of other languages; rather, they have developed, and we now find them existing but in their most contemporary forms. Ancient Greek is now Modern Greek, while Latin has developed and branched out into numerous varieties, depending on the area: Italian, Spanish, French, and Romanian. Even medieval English is no longer in use since it has only developed into contemporary English.

So, this work aims to find out why the process of extinction of languages, already disappeared, or still existing today but that may soon disappear, is still so widespread and seems unstoppable.

In the first chapter, I will examine the concept of language death, that of dying languages, and we will try to explain why this phenomenon should be considered as relevant by every individual and not only by scholars specialized in this matter. I will look at the reasons why languages die, and I will try to find out ways to preserve them.

In the second chapter, a list of minority languages that are considered, or may become, endangered will be presented. Certainly, it is not feasible to list and study all minority languages in the world, but the issue is so widespread, and so often disregarded, that even at a global and European level, it should be enough to cause contemplation. Most people mistakenly believe that endangered languages are a topic and an issue far removed from the European or American worlds, or, in any case, civilized enough to be relegated to more distant nations. Even if the list provided in the second chapter is not completely exhaustive, it is meant as a modest demonstration that no country in the world is without a chance because of this problem. Emphasis is being devoted to Italy, the cradle of civilization, which, exactly because it is regarded as an aggregation of culture, artistic riches, and history, should not allow a portion of its cultural legacy to be destroyed.

The third chapter will discuss and demonstrate the worldwide policies and procedures that have been put in place to protect endangered languages throughout the years. We will then examine the European Union's stance on this problem, attempting to comprehend how supranational entities have behaved and aim to react in the short term to mitigate the

damage caused by the process of language extinction. The goal of this research will be to determine if and how what is being done at the global and European levels is sufficient to counteract the process of language loss.

Difference between Language and Speech

“But what is language [langue]? It is not to be confused with human speech [language], of which it is only a definite part, though certainly an essential one. It is both a social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty”.²

This quote by Ferdinand de Saussure helps us to understand what the substantial difference between language and speech is.³ Considered as a whole, speech is multifaceted and heterogeneous; covering multiple domains at once (physical, physiological, and psychological), it belongs to both the person and society; we cannot categorize it as a human reality because we cannot uncover its unity. Language, on the other hand, is a self-contained totality and a classification concept. When we prioritize language over other facts of speech, we inject a natural order into a mass that lends itself to no other categorization.

Basically, the ways that humans use to communicate are presented as both verbal and non-verbal codes. Language uses words (verbal language), while language in a broader and more general sense encompasses a whole other set of forms through which humans can exchange messages: painting, music, kinesthetic. Before arriving at a language, men communicated to each other the same, and this happened through other systems of

² Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, Translated by Wade Baskin, Edited by Perry and Haun Saussy, Columbia University Press, 1967, p.10.

³ Ferdinand de Saussure, Swiss linguist, semiotician, and philosopher widely considered one of the founders of 20th-century linguistics and one of major founders of semiotics.

communication, for example in prehistoric times to deal with others they used gestures or even pictographic writing.⁴

‘Speech’ is about man’s innate ability to communicate; we are not talking about the proper spoken language, because, for example, a kind of speech for human communication is also the sign system. The speech reflects those capacities proper of man that allow him to develop a verbal or non-verbal communication system (verbal, gestural, etc.).

‘Language’, on the other hand, is the verbal medium by which language is expressed. So, the speech is a form in which language can be manifested that, in this sense, it can also be understood as the set of words of a particular human community: the language instead is the real form for which this communication system is adopted by a specific community.

Difference between Language and Dialect

It is often thought that a language is superior to a dialect since it should be a consequence of language and therefore worthy of less importance and consideration. It should be clarified that ‘dialect’ is a critical term because there is no univocal definition and there is not one single parameter to determine whether a certain idiom is to be considered as a language or as a dialect.

The most general definition describes ‘dialect’ as a variant of the national language or a territorial characterization opposed to the official language, however there are no specific and clear parameters with which to evaluate the difference between language and dialect. What is evident is that the official national language is the one taught at school and used in public institutions, but all the variants to the one spoken are divided between languages and dialects without following a precise and defined scheme.⁵

A dialect in fact is commonly a variety of a language, which means that from that language are born different variants that represent a sort of deformation. According to

⁴ Flavia Anastasi (Trainer of Italian for Foreigners on-line), *Lingua e linguaggio: le differenze*, infopuntoevirgola.it.

⁵ Carla Marcato, *Dialetto, dialetti e italiano*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2002.

this strictly linguistic definition, in Italy, for example, dialects are very few, as most of them are not variants of Italian, but languages that developed independently and, in some cases, even before it.

Italian as an official language derives from the Florentine dialect, that is from the Romance language that, after the death of Latin, was spoken in Tuscany and specifically in Florence. When Florentine began to be used as the language of all of Italy (first in literature and then also in speech), there were already many languages in Italy that are precisely those that we today define as dialects. Therefore, the definition that sees the dialect as a variant and deformation of the official language is true but not absolute.⁶

From a sociolinguistic point of view, language is no longer considered a 'language' but a dialect when speakers perceive it as such: that is, they do not consider it their official language and do not use it to communicate in a formal or working environment.

Therefore, the criteria to distinguish a language from a dialect are debatable and not so clearly defined, but surely it is not questionable the fact that a dialect has a relevance and importance that is equal to that of a language.⁷

⁶ Yasmina Pani (Literature Teacher), *Lingua e dialetto: che differenza c'è?*, Linguistica Tascabile, yasminapani.it.

⁷ Michele Ghilardelli, *Dialetto: definizione semplice di una parola controversa*, SPL Comitato per la Salvaguardia dei Patrimoni Linguistici, patrimonilinguistici.it, 2016.

CHAPTER 1: LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT IN THE WORLD

CONTENTS: 1.1 What Is Language Death and Why Do Languages Die? - 1.1.1 UNESCO's positions and the Atlas of the World's Endangered Languages - 1.1.2 Different Scholars' Studies - 1.2 Why Is Language Death so Important? 1.2.1 Beyond Language - 1.2.2 Online Language - 1.3 How Can Language Death Be Opposed? - 1.3.1 UNESCO's suggestions - 1.3.2 UN positions - 1.3.3 Linguistic advice.

In the following chapter, I will first explain the concept of 'Language Death', and analyze the positions taken on this issue, both by UNESCO and by various scholars. After explaining the extent of their importance and, following a brief discussion of the language of the web, I will try to analyze ways to preserve languages, again both initiatives taken by UNESCO, and suggestions by experts on the subject.

Firstly, it is important to define what is meant by 'minority language'. Minority languages can be considered, in some contexts, as local, circumscribed dialects. A dialect is usually regarded as a language system, used in a geographically limited area.⁸ So we can conclude that a dialect that is spoken by a large number of people, can rise to the status of language. Another difference is that a dialect enables people to talk about everyday topics; in contrast, a language has a much more scientific, bureaucratic, and administrative dimension. The origin also changes: a dialect is born from the oral and common use; a language is defined and coded.⁹

Languages, on the other hand, are less exposed to the risk of extinction than dialects, because they are stronger from the social status point of view: they are considered an expression of culture and scientific knowledge, while dialect is a proliferation of ungrammatical and sometimes even vulgar expressions. Therefore, the authorities are pushed to protect with greater intensity languages rather than dialects. But, if we can consider also dialects as minority languages, that is languages spoken in circumscribed

⁸ Nicola Zingarelli, *Vocabolario delle Lingua Italiana*, undicesima edizione a cura di Miro Dogliotti e Luigi Rosiello, 1991.

⁹ Michele Ghilardelli, *Dialetto: definizione semplice di una parola controversa*, SPL Comitato per la Salvaguardia dei Patrimoni Linguistici, patrimonilinguistici.it, 2016.

places, we are faced with a real cultural problem of great socio-cultural impact: the proper language death. The protection of those minority languages is not the same as that provided for real languages, codified and spoken by much larger groups; however, whether we speak of dialects or minority languages, the phenomenon is in any case the death and extinction of a unique way for speakers to communicate, therefore of a language. We should not be so much interested in the degree of importance, recognition, and diffusion of the language in question, as in the fact that a vehicle of communication is disappearing.

To link up with that topic, within the concept of minority, it is then necessary to distinguish ‘*minorities by will*’ from ‘*minorities by force*’, a distinction coined by Alessandro Pizzorusso, a distinguished Italian jurist and constitutionalist.

Minorities by will are defined by their opposition to the majority group, because members of the minority aspire to preserve and enhance the characteristics that distinguish them from the majority, claiming for this purpose certain interventions of positive protection, i.e. special and derogatory measures that establish a privileged regime for them.

Minorities by force, on the other hand, would want to integrate with the majority, but the majority does not allow it and strives to preserve regimes of isolation or, worse, exclusion, so that negative forms of protection are adequate to prevent discrimination.¹⁰

Depending on the different type of minority, the principle of equality will be implemented differently: in the case of minorities by force it will be sufficient to adopt equal rules for all, restoring formal equality. In the case of minorities by will, this would be insufficient: it is necessary to adopt special measures through which to authorize exceptions to the rules that refer to the language, religion, and culture of the majority. In this regard, it should be noted that the presence of voluntary minorities represents a threat to the territorial integrity of the State. Consequently, to protect minorities and endangered languages means not only to ethically respect a group of people, but also to protect the internal order of a state.¹¹

¹⁰ Valeria Piergigli (Full Professor of Comparative Public Law at Roma Tre University), *Rileggendo l'opera di Alessandro Pizzorusso sulle Minoranze Linguistiche: Le "Nuove Minoranze" tra Identità e Integrazione*, Nomos – Le attualità nel Diritto, text of the report presented at the conference *Ricordando Alessandro Pizzorusso. Minoranze e maggioranze*, Pisa, 14.12.2018.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

1.1 What is Language Death and why do Languages die?

An endangered language is one that is likely promptly to become extinct since it is not massively used any longer: endangered languages are usually replaced by those languages that are more commonly used, for example English or Spanish, in a specific region or in the entire world. When a language's last native speaker dies, it means that its other speakers had previously switched to a lingua franca like English, Arabic, or Spanish: it is frequently the result of a marginalization. According to David Crystal, most current endangered languages will become extinct within the next century: new generations of children, or new adult speakers, are no longer learning many languages, and languages that now are in danger of extinction, will disappear. In his book *Language Death*, he sustains that currently thousands of languages have just one native speaker still alive, and the death of that individual will mean the language's extinction: this means that the language will no longer be spoken or understood by anyone.¹²

Moreover, in a growing number of cases, people use their native language only in specific circumstances or situations, such as religious settings, and do not use it to communicate with others. In such situations, it is believed that such languages would survive for a reasonable period of time and may recover some importance, as in the examples of Ancient Greek, Church Slavonic, Coptic, and Latin.¹³

Furthermore, there may be circumstances when there are no genuine speakers of a language in a given environment, and as a result, languages may only be used for limited reasons, with just specific phrases or words used. Such languages are not considered extinct because they can be found in written documents and, more importantly, there is a possibility that their status as a living language will be restored; in other words, they can be classified as 'sleeping languages' that are likely to awaken from their dormancy. One example is the Miami language, an Algonquian language widely spoken in Oklahoma that had declined in the previous 30 years but is now on the rise.¹⁴ To understand why a language begins its process of extinction, we need to go deep and analyze why its speakers

¹² David Crystal, *Language Death*, Cambridge University Press, 2014.

¹³ Stephen A. Wurm 1991. *Language Death and Disappearance: Causes and Circumstances*, in "Diogenes" 39 (153), pp.1-18, 1991.

¹⁴ Wesley Y. Leonard, *When Is an "Extinct Language" Not Extinct? Miami, a Formerly Sleeping Language*, in *Sustaining Linguistic Diversity - Endangered and Minority Languages and Language Varieties*, Georgetown University Press Washington, D.C., 2008, pp.23-33.

stop using it: the death of a language, its disappearance, is only the last stage of a process that began long before. The main reason why native speakers stop using their language is because it no longer serves them. The reason is that they begin to use another language that is more widely known and allows them to have more interpersonal but also work and social relationships, and therefore abandon the use of their native language

1.1.1 UNESCO's Positions and the Atlas of the World's Endangered Languages

According to UNESCO, 6,000 languages are on the verge of extinction, and this process is neither inevitable nor irrevocable. UNESCO creates, coordinates, and disseminates resources to aid groups, researchers, and governments in addressing this issue: Services include reporting, lobbying, and evaluating linguistic diversity status and developments; policy consulting, strategic experience and preparation, best practices, and a platform for talent exchange and transfer.¹⁵

The aim of the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* is increasing the awareness about the threats affecting languages in order to make policymakers, groups of speakers, and the general population, aware about the need to safeguard the linguistic heritage that we can still save, since it has also a platform for tracking the status of languages at risk and global developments in linguistic diversity.

To increase information and make it available to more people, the printed version of the Atlas provides for each language: the name; the degree of threat; the country or countries where it is spoken. The Atlas identifies 2,473 Endangered languages, of which: 178 Languages with 10 to 50 speakers; 146 Languages with fewer than 10 speakers; 577 Languages in critical danger; 230 Languages in extinction since 1950.

UNESCO, in 2002-2003, assigned a multinational community of linguists with developing a method for evaluating the “the vitality of a language in order to assist in

¹⁵ UNESCO Project, *Atlas of the World's Endangered Languages*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011.

policy development, identification of needs and appropriate safeguarding measures.”¹⁶
The *Language Vitality and Endangerment* concept was developed by this linguistic team, which set out the following nine criteria for determining the resilience of language and endangerment:

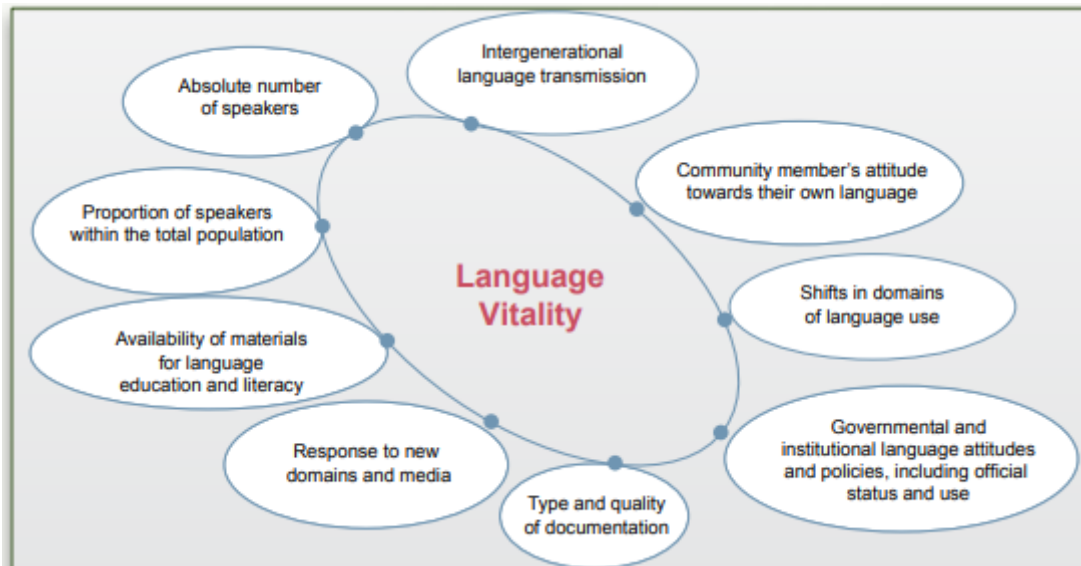


Figure 1: *UNESCO Language vitality and Endangerment*, UNESCO “Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger”, published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011.

- Intergenerational language transmission;
- community members’ attitude towards their own language;
- shifts in domains of language use;
- governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use;
- type and quality of documentation;
- response to new domains and media;
- availability of materials for language education and literacy;
- proportion of speakers within the total population;
- absolute number of speakers.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.5.

To determine the state of the language of a culture, no single factor is enough. Taken together, however, these nine factors will decide the viability of a language, its position in society and the type of measures needed to preserve or revitalize it.

Furthermore, the *Language Vitality and Endangerment document* report identifies six degrees of danger concerning languages:

	Degree of endangerment	Intergenerational Language Transmission
	Safe	Language is spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted
📍	Vulnerable	Most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)
💡	Definitely endangered	Children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home
📍	Severely endangered	Language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves
📍	Critically endangered	The youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently
📍	Extinct	There are no speakers left >> included in the Atlas if presumably extinct since the 1950s

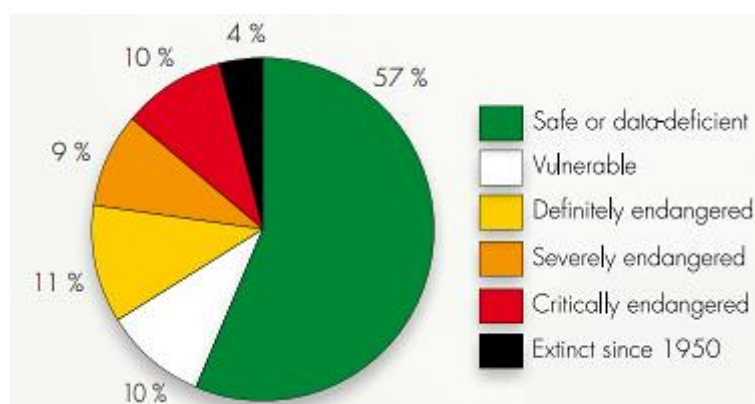


Figure 2: UNESCO's flagship activity in the domain of linguistic diversity in the *Atlas of the world's Language in Danger*, UNESCO “Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger”, published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011.

From this graph, it can be observed that that only 57% of the world’s languages are safe, while 43%, so almost half of the languages spoken in the world, although in different ways and with different degrees of criticality, are endangered.

Many scholars, as well as speakers of endangered languages, have contributed to the interactive online version of the Atlas: it has been available since 2009 and provides about 2,500 languages with the following data: name, degree of risk, countries where it is spoken, number of speakers, related projects, sources, geographical coordinates, ISO language codes (a method designed to identify all languages, including all spoken languages across the globe, by assigning each language a unique identification code).

Search tools

Country or area: Italy(30) Language name: Number of speakers from: to:

Vitality: Definitely endangered ISO 639-3 code:

Legend:
 ♀ vulnerable
 ⚠ definitely endangered
 ⚠ severely endangered
 ⚠ critically endangered
 ⚠ extinct
 ☑ R = Revitalized

Search languages Clear Search [more on vitality](#)

Number of languages found : 22

Map showing locations of languages in Europe. Legend of languages:
 Algherese Catalan
 Alpine Provençal
 Arbëresh
 Cimbrian
 Corsican
 Emilian
 Faetar
 Francoprovençal
 Friulian
 Gallo-Sicilian
 Gallurese
 Ladin
 Ligurian
 Lombard
 Mòcheno
 Piedmontese
 Resian
 Romagnol
 Romani
 Sardinian
 Sassarese
 Yiddish (Europe)

Figure 3: *The Interactive online edition of the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, unesco.org

“With this edition, and particularly with the ever-changing, ever-growing digital version, the Atlas has become a powerful tool for monitoring the situation of the world’s endangered languages, while continuing its proven role as an instrument for raising awareness among policy makers, the media, the general public and especially the speakers of languages in danger”.¹⁷

To demonstrate and validate the General Director’s goals, the UNESCO online Atlas of Endangered Languages is an interactive multimedia resource that can be continually updated with increasingly detailed facts and is accessible to anybody anywhere in the world. It can be continually augmented, rectified, and updated as a result of user contributions.

1.1.2 Different Scholars’ Studies

In general, there are several factors or events that lead to the extinction of languages. First, when all or most of its speakers die because of war or genocide, languages are likely to disappear quickly.¹⁸ For example, in El Salvador in 1932, Pipil (Nawat) people stopped speaking their own language out of fear of retaliation.¹⁹ Another cause of language extinction is the development of infectious illnesses among groups of people who lack appropriate immunity to such diseases: infectious diseases have a significant influence on indigenous peoples and their languages. One example is the impact of Europe’s arrival in the Americas, when nearly 90% of the indigenous people perished from illnesses caught from Europeans and their animals.²⁰

When a geographical area or nation is invaded by colonial powers, the language used by the newcomers becomes increasingly significant, and the indigenous are virtually obligated to adopt the language of the settlers, as well as the traditions and customs. This sort of circumstance can also have a financial impact: adopting the “new” language may provide an edge for locals in terms of new employment possibilities, services, and availability.

¹⁷ Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, UNESCO Project, *Atlas of the World’s Endangered Languages*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011, p.10.

¹⁸ Wurm, *Language Death and Disappearance: Causes and Circumstances*, cited work, p.2.

¹⁹ Daniel Nettle, Suzanne Romaine, *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World’s Languages*, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 6.

²⁰ David Crystal, *Language death*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, p.94.

As a result, during the era of colonization, there is frequently a type of bilingualism in which the locals retain their native language while learning the language of the settlers.²¹ The period of actual transition from the native language to the new language is obviously extended, and there is no definite time frame, partly because it varies with different populations and colonizers; but when the younger generation of the native population is more comfortable with the language of the newcomers rather than their native language, there is a greater chance that they will consider adopting the new language. Of course, when languages are not handed on from parents to children, the number of individuals who can speak a language drops. Consequently, the language will gradually fade away since it will be utilized in very few contexts, and those who are still able to speak it may be obliged to limit their social contact in the language. Original languages may be altered or changed to a simpler form due to the impact of the dominant language, but if this change in the native language is not prevented, the native form has a larger risk of disappearing.²²

Many cases have occurred across the world in which native languages have been intentionally suppressed. In Kenyan schools, for example, any youngster discovered speaking Gikuyu was punished, flogged, or forced to carry a chalkboard with the words “I am an idiot” or “I am ignorant”. Similar methods were utilized in numerous areas, such as the usage of Welsh or Breton in the United Kingdom. Because of their embarrassment about their mother tongue, some native speakers have been hesitant to utilize it, robbing the following generation of its knowledge.²³

The number of speakers of a language is the primary criterion for analyzing its viability and forecasting how it will survive in the long run. A language with a hundred speakers in a population of tens of thousands, for example, may be thought severely endangered. A language spoken by only a few hundred individuals, on the other hand, may have a solid position in a population, whereas a language spoken by thousands but scattered among a huge number of more dominant language speakers may not.

The American linguist Joshua Fishman uses the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) to measure language vitality and proposes the notion of language shift reversal (RLS). Economic pressures, social identities, demographic variables, and mass

²¹ Wurm, *Language Death and Disappearance: Causes and Circumstances*, cited work, p. 13.

²² Crystal, *Language death*, cited work, pp.101-103.

²³ Mari Jones, Ishla Singh, *Exploring language change*, Routledge, 1st ed. 2005, p.83.

media, according to Fishman, are four societal shifts that might impact language choice.²⁴ First stage languages are the least threatened since they are utilized at the highest levels of the media, labor, government, and education. The eighth stage languages, on the other hand, are the most critically threatened due to a scarcity of speakers. The remaining six phases, on the other hand, are located between these two extremes.²⁵

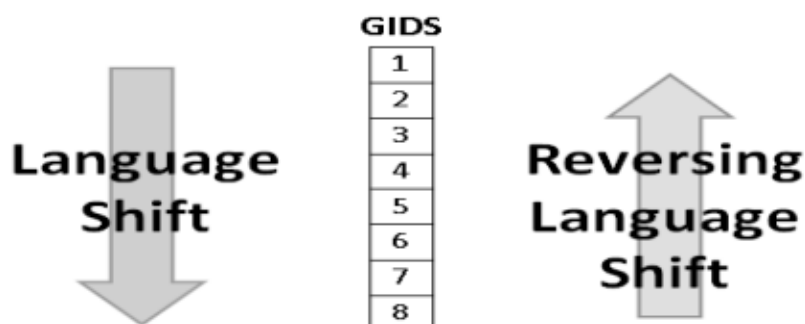


Figure 4: Wayan Arka, Seri Malini, Puspani, *Fishman's 1991 Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) in Language documentation and cultural practices in the Austronesian world: papers from 12-ICAL, Asia-Pacific Linguistics, Volume 4.*

Stage One	Used by higher levels of government and in higher education.
Stage Two	Used by local government and the mass media in the community.
Stage Three	Used in business and by employees in less specialized work areas.
Stage Four	Language is required in elementary schools.
Stage Five	Language is still very much alive and used in community.
Stage Six	Some intergenerational use of language.
Stage Seven	Only adults beyond child bearing age speak the language.
Stage Eight	Only a few elders speak the language.

Figure 5: *Adaptation of Fishman's Scale for Threatened Languages in Černý's work Language death versus language survival: A global perspective.*

²⁴ Joshua A. Fishman, *Reversing language shift*, Multilingual Matters, 1st ed., 1991.

²⁵ Miroslav Černý, *Language death versus language survival: A global perspective*, in "Beyond Globalization: Exploring the Limits of Globalization in the Regional Context", Department of Human Geography and Regional Development University of Ostrava, 2009, p.52.

The associate professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, with experience in community language programs, Wesley Leonard evaluates the vitality of languages by separating languages that are no longer spoken on the right and languages that are extensively spoken on the left; thus, languages on the left are classed as less endangered, while languages on the right are deemed endangered. There are no languages that are completely safe. Languages that have little or no documentation or no speakers are deemed extinct and are no longer on the endangered list.²⁶

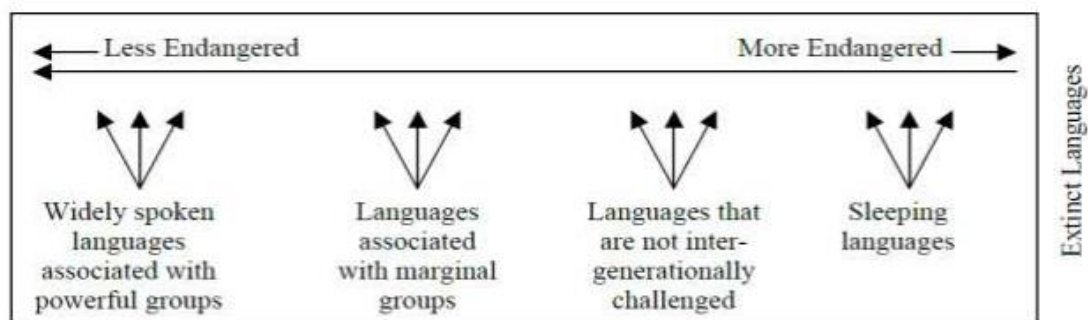


Figure 6: A Revised View of the Language Endangerment Continuum in Leonard Wesley’s work *When is an “Extinct Language” Not Extinct?*

1.2 Why is Language Death so important?

Preserving language diversity is crucial because languages are the instruments, the common memory, the features that most characterize a certain people, country, or culture and that make it unique and different from others. Languages are an essential element of our identities, as well as a foundation for our history of variety and existence.

The first catastrophe that results from the loss of a language, which is perhaps the most important and most significant is the fact that some people can no longer use the language they learned to speak and with which they began to communicate. It happens that some even find themselves to be the only speakers left and therefore must adapt to speaking in another way in order to be understood by other members of their own community.

²⁶ Leonard, *When Is an “Extinct Language” Not Extinct?* cited work, pp.23-33.

But, going beyond mere linguistic position, the loss of a language causes problems that cut across many other fields.

1.2.1 Beyond Language

Knowledge and Traditions

According to Lauren Johnson, a fifteenth and early sixteenth Century historian, writer, and cultural interpreter, the knowledge of human beings is by no means codified entirely in encyclopedias or manuals.²⁷ On the contrary, knowledge and traditions, especially of populations of modest size, have been passed down orally in the native language, through stories and teachings, from one generation to the next. We are not only talking about stories, customs, and habits, but also and above all about knowledge, experiences, notions, and perceptions of a specific place, of a land, of particular flora and fauna. If this language, in which all the knowledge of that particular people has been handed down, dies, it is as if all the manuals of that culture would completely disappear. We would lose the blueprint of that culture on how to survive in the world, leaving a void of knowledge and understanding in all of humanity.

A study carried out by UNESCO regarding Māori sayings, has brought to light new knowledge about certain plants, their growth, the soils in which they grow and the nutrients they are rich in, which were unknown until then even to experts in the field. This point of view confirms both how important it is any kind of knowledge in order to deal for example with the climate changes we are witnessing, but it confirms also that this information is often lost or not disseminated due to the disappearance of the language in which it was handed down.²⁸

Nature and Culture

Moreover, a very important factor that is often not considered with the importance it should be, is the relationship between nature and culture. Similarly, to the example of

²⁷ Lauren Johnson, *What is language extinction and why should we care?*, National Indigenous Television (NITV), sbs.com.au/nitv/, 06.10.2016.

²⁸ Ibid.

Māori sayings, it has been shown that the disappearance of language, also has a negative impact on biodiversity. Specifically, a study published in the ‘Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine’ has shown that the gradual disappearance of the native population of the Peruvian Amazon, and consequently also of the native language, has had important repercussions on crops.²⁹ Therefore, it is clear that culture and nature are closely connected and interdependent: protecting endangered languages is therefore now also an environmental issue.

Associate Editor Kate Yoder’s article deals with the effects that climate change causes in the loss of the words of a language, or even more so in the disappearance of an entire language. In the Grist site she describes the Greenlandic language as fascinating and incomparable since it is composed of very long words that can be adapted to any need that the speaker presents when he wants to express a concept, being customizable. The problem is that several of these Greenlandic words (there are several words to differentiate winds for example) are disappearing before linguists have even studied them. The disappearance of this diversification of words has very critical effects on the comprehension abilities of its own speakers.³⁰

“When people settle in a new place, they begin a new life, complete with new environments, new traditions, and, yes, a new language.”³¹ Climate change then, whether caused by storms, famine, or drought, accelerates the disappearance of some words to end up with the disappearance of the whole language in the worst case, as people are forced to change habits and necessarily ways of speaking.

Cultural identity

The disappearance of a language represents the disappearance of a cultural reality and, consequently, of a community since language and culture are interconnected.

²⁹ Gaia Luziatelli, Marten Sørensen, Ida Theilade, Per Mølgaard, *Asháninka medicinal plants: a case study from the native community of Bajo Quimiriki, Junín, Peru*, in Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine, 2010.

³⁰ Kate Yoder, *As ice melts and seas rise, can endangered languages survive? From Greenland to the Marshall Islands, climate change threatens unique cultures*, Grist Magazine, grist.org, 2016.

³¹ Ibid.

David Harrison, in his work *When Languages Die*, tries to understand and report the feelings that the last speakers of a language feel: a feeling of isolation and alienation.³²

The Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs' report *Our Land, Our Languages* explains how native speakers have a higher level of well-being, better education and learning skills have, use less alcohol and drugs, and present even lower levels of suicide. The explanation stems from the fact that these populations, including young people, feel an integral part of a community close to them, feel connected to their culture and country, which provides them with a sense of inclusion, making them feel less alone or abandoned.³³

Bilingualism

Bilingualism, that is maintaining an indigenous language at the same time as the international language, is good for the brain, whether people are young or old. This note shows how, maintaining a native language, does not imply speaking less of the internationally recognized one: the latter, in fact, is fundamental as it provides the possibility to learn, train and consequently participate in a wider international and global perspective.

Bilingualism has been linked to higher levels of metalinguistic awareness (the capacity to identify language as a system that can be controlled and studied), as well as increased memory, visual-spatial abilities, and even creativity.³⁴

Speaking one language rather than the other does not imply a choice: the two can coexist perfectly as in any person who speaks or studies two or even three languages. The native language must be an extra piece of the linguistic baggage, to be preserved with care.

³² David K. Harrison, *When Languages Die: The Extinction of The World's Languages And the Erosion of Human Knowledge*, Oxford University Press, 2007.

³³ House of Representatives Committees, *Our Land Our Languages. Language Learning in Indigenous Communities*, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2012.

³⁴ Rafael M. Diaz, Cynthia Klingler, *Towards an explanatory model of the interaction between bilingualism and cognitive development*, in Ellen Bialystok, *Language processing in bilingual children*, Cambridge University Press, pp.167-192.

For this reason, native language bilingualism must be considered exactly like any other bilingualism, which can only bring positive and enhancing aspects.

1.2.2 Online Language

Language is as essential in creating human relationships online, as it is offline: it serves as the foundation for how users identify with one another, the lines on which exclusion and inclusion are frequently defined, and the limits within which communities emerge around shared interests.

English was almost probably the first language used on the Internet. It was believed in the mid-1990s that English constituted about 80% of material. However, English, which once dominated the web, now represents only one language among an online linguistic elite. English's share of cyberspace has decreased to around 30%, while French, German, Spanish, and Chinese have reached the top ten internet languages. Some of these have expanded rapidly: Chinese, for example, increased by 1277.4% between 2000 and 2010. Out of the approximately 6,000 languages in use today, the top ten account for 82% of all material on the Internet.

Even though English is the most often used language on Twitter, an estimated 49% of tweets are in other languages, with Japanese, Spanish, Portuguese, and Indonesian users being the most active. According to user behavior analysis, Twitter users prefer to limit their followings, tweets, and retweets to people who speak the same language, thus while it is theoretically a platform for global dialogues, in practice these connections are fragmented and frequently constrained by language. Twitter users in various languages are also likely to exhibit a variety of behaviors. Some languages cause individuals to interact with the platform in unexpected ways. In Chinese, for example, more may be conveyed in the 140-character restriction than in English. The researchers concluded that different linguistic groups use Twitter for different reasons: some primarily for discussion, while others largely for information sharing.³⁵

³⁵ Graham Neubig, Kevin Duh, *How Much Is Said in a Tweet? A Multilingual, Information-Theoretic Perspective*, text in *Analyzing Microtext: Papers from the 2013 AAAI Spring Symposium*, Nara Institute of Science and Technology, 15.03.2013, pp. 32-38.

The Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology published a study that looked at bilinguals who used Facebook in English and the Chinese counterpart, Renren, in Mandarin. It demonstrated that the same people behave differently on these various platforms. Facebook users had greater individualistic inclinations, whereas Renren users posted posts that benefitted a wider community more frequently.³⁶

Google claims that one of its primary goals is to increase the number of languages available on its search engine, but there are unavoidably significant difficulties to inclusion, especially when many small languages are only spoken or have no standardized spelling. However, out of an estimated 6,000 in use today, Google can only be searched in little over 130 different languages.³⁷

The amount of online information on Wikipedia varies greatly among language versions. In terms of users, English is by far the most popular of the 288 official language versions, followed by German and finally French. On the other end of the scale, many African and Asian languages have almost little substance. Wikipedia is only one website, but even this tiny example indicates that the universe of knowledge on the Internet varies greatly depending on language.

Access to the internet also provides opportunities for language empowerment, such as documenting and preserving languages, sharing educational materials to encourage new speakers, translating important information for marginalized groups, and even forming virtual communities of speakers in places where they might struggle to exist offline. The Internet may be a venue for languages to not only evolve, but also to be invented or find a second life.

The United Nations recognized internet access to be a fundamental human right in 2011.³⁸ However, it is apparent that simply having access is not enough to put everyone on an equal playing field in the digital world. The language we use to access this experience is changing as the internet and social media become more intertwined into how we communicate and comprehend the world around us. Today, UNESCO believes that

³⁶ Lin Qiu, Han Lin, and Angela K.-y. Leung, *Cultural Differences and Switching of In-Group Sharing Behavior Between an American (Facebook) and a Chinese (Renren) Social Networking Site*, in *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 2013.

³⁷ Holly Young, *The digital language divide. How does the language you speak shape your experience of the internet?*, *The Guardian*, British Academy, theguardian.com 2015.

³⁸ Nicholas Jackson, *United Nations Declares Internet Access a Basic Human Right*, *The Atlantic*, theatlantic.com, 2011.

speakers of non-dominant languages must be allowed to express themselves in culturally relevant ways online, and it calls on governments to establish comprehensive language policies that promote and enable linguistic diversity and multilingualism online.³⁹

1.3 How can Language Death be opposed?

1.3.1 UNESCO's suggestions

UNESCO, in order to consistently, effectively and actively promote and protect multilingualism, implements a series of programs aimed at promoting and enabling access to information and knowledge, potentially by every individual. In this way, by supporting linguistic differences, it favors the creation of inclusive and participatory societies in multiple fields: on the Internet, in the mass media and in mass communication channels such as TV and radio.

UNESCO supports the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity with the aim of preserving the differences of cultures and languages; in this way, by protecting the diversity of languages and cultures, it strongly believes in fostering tolerance and respect for others, both linguistically and more deeply human.⁴⁰

Regarding endangered languages and their protection, UNESCO compiles and suggests several ways and behaviors to address and prevent the threat of language extinction.

Education

UNESCO stresses the importance of education: education is the first way to fight the process of language disappearance, and it is necessary to support the inclusion of indigenous and minority languages in formal education, with the aim of encouraging the preservation of the heritage of each culture and its progressive transmission between

³⁹ Young, *The digital language divide*, cited work.

⁴⁰ UNESCO, *L'UNESCO e la Diversità Linguistica - Il Caso Dell'Italia*, unesco.it, 18.02.2021.

generations, as well as the promotion of practices that nurture the spread of multilingualism. Policies would be necessary to promote teaching in the mother tongue, in addition to the nationally recognized language, and therefore open to multilingualism. In this way, from the earliest years of education, children would learn the importance and cultural value that their indigenous language has.⁴¹

Information

Certainly another tool that UNESCO considers fundamental to counteract the loss of other languages is culture, closely linked to information: the more data is collected on this issue, the greater the awareness of the seriousness, and the more precise the methodologies to be adopted to preserve an idiom, both by institutions, but also and above all by the communities of speakers, who, if involved, will feel responsible and “in duty” to preserve their native language.⁴²

Communication

The third tool is undoubtedly communication. Multilingualism, once introduced, promoted, and used in the digital world, whether it is used in social media among young people or in any other digital channel, would certainly acquire a greater degree of importance and above all diffusion. We know very well how any content once introduced in the world of internet, can propagate at incredible speed and, moreover, is difficult to eliminate; this would be the case in which internet and the digital world could really and concretely help the propagation of indigenous languages, but above all stop their disappearance.⁴³

⁴¹ UNESCO, *Endangered languages*, Frequent Asked Questions on Endangered Languages, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017, unesco.org.

⁴² UNESCO, *Endangered Languages, What does UNESCO do to prevent the endangerment and disappearance of languages?* unesco.org.

⁴³ Ibid.

Science

In science, UNESCO supports programs that increase the importance of local languages in the transfer of indigenous and local knowledge: the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) initiative promotes indigenous and local knowledge and its participation in global climate research and policy processes. LINKS has been instrumental in ensuring that indigenous and local knowledge holders and their knowledge are included in contemporary science-policy-society fora on issues such as biodiversity assessment and management, climate change assessment and adaptation, natural disaster preparedness, and sustainable development.⁴⁴

1.3.2 UN positions

International Mother Language Day is celebrated on February 21 of each year: its purpose is to promote mother tongues, to foster awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and to support multilingualism. In 2007 it was recognized by the UN General Assembly. The day was chosen in honor of February 21, 1952, when several Bengali students at the University of Dhaka were killed by police forces from while protesting for the recognition of Bengali as an official language.

Bangladesh was formally East Pakistan until 1971 and the official language was Urdu, which is still spoken in the state of Pakistan (West Pakistan until 1971). Although the Bengali language was spread throughout the territory and spoken by millions of people, it was not considered equal in rights to Urdu.

This inferior status of Bengali led to a protest movement, Language Movement. In 1952, however, the police of Pakistan opened fire on many protesting activists, including students and political activists, who were in the middle of a protest for equal rights for their mother tongue. Near the University of Dhaka, it was a real massacre, but not in vain: in 1956 Bengali was recognized the same rights as Urdu. To remember and honor the victims, a monument was built in Dhaka, the ‘Shaheed Minar’ (the statue of the martyrs: Shaheed means martyr) a copy of which was reproduced in Rome, in Rabin Park near Via

⁴⁴ UNESCO, *Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS)*, unesco.org.

Panama: it is a symbol of linguistic independence and of the importance that linguistic realities must have, even in countries with little economic influence at the international level.⁴⁵

On August 9 of each year the World Day of Indigenous Peoples is held, proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1994 with the aim of promoting their diversity and shedding light on the violations and injustices that these peoples continue to suffer.⁴⁶

In 2007, the UN adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which enshrines their right to self-determination, to be free from discrimination of any kind, particularly in the exercise of their customs and the expression of their identity.⁴⁷

In 2016, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages: the purpose is to raise awareness among the world's population about the risk of disappearance of indigenous languages and the need to protect and promote them both nationally and internationally.⁴⁸

1.3.3 Linguistic advice

Because so many languages are at risk of extinction, linguists are attempting to learn as much as possible about them, so that even if the language vanishes, all knowledge of the language does not. Researchers collect video, audio, and textual recordings, as well as translations, of language use in professional and casual contexts.

Making endangered languages available to interested learners is the first step toward their promotion. Offering language courses to schoolchildren is one of the most efficient methods to do this. Offering language classes and striving to record the language, its vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, as well as making it available to a large audience, are also good ways to avoid language extinction. They also study the language's

⁴⁵ Hilary Smith, *International Mother Language Day: sustainable development in everyone's language*, Devpolicy Blog from the Development Policy Centre, Australian National University, devpolicy.org, 2018.

⁴⁶ United Nations, *International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 9 August*, un.org.

⁴⁷ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Indigenous Peoples, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, un.org.

⁴⁸ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Indigenous Peoples, *High-Level Event to launch the International Year of Indigenous Languages*, un.org.

lexicon and norms, as well as produce dictionaries and grammars. Linguists also engage with communities across the world to conserve their languages, providing both technical and practical assistance in teaching, preserving, and revitalizing the language. This assistance is based in part on the dictionaries and grammars they create. Linguists, on the other hand, may contribute in different ways, drawing on their expertise teaching and studying a wide range of languages. They may apply what they have learned about other endangered languages to assist a community conserve its own language, and they can employ cutting-edge technology to record and study languages.⁴⁹

Any approach that leads to increasing usage and exposure, especially for youngsters, has the potential to conserve the language. The most difficult problem in preserving language use is retaining new generations' interest in their linguistic history. This interest can be difficult to cultivate when young people are expected to utilize English in almost every aspect of their life. However, several tribes have achieved improvement.

Although there are several reasons that might contribute to the extinction of indigenous languages, there are also numerous elements that can maintain endangered languages and save them from extinction. To begin with, languages are less likely to disappear if their speakers first believe that it is necessary and valuable to save their language: if the speakers themselves are interested and aim to preserve their mother tongue, this is already a good starting point; otherwise, the process is more complicated if even the speakers themselves are not interested in passing on their language.

Furthermore, language may be conserved through applying strategies such as employing language in media and technology, as well as obtaining governmental and community support.⁵⁰ According to the American linguistic and professor Michael Krauss, television has the potential to shape cultural views, therefore both television and radio may play an important part in maintaining a language's life.⁵¹ Because a show is broadcast in a native language, speakers will be encouraged to use it more by seeing it spoken on television, and so language use will stay active. Furthermore, the employment of the local language in mass media rather than the frequently used dominant language shows that native

⁴⁹ Anthony C. Woodbury, *What Is an Endangered Language?* Linguistic Society of America, linguisticsociety.org.

⁵⁰ Maureen Hoffmann, *Endangered Languages, Linguistics, and Culture: Researching and Reviving the Unami Language of the Lenape*, A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Linguistics, Bryn Mawr College, p.18

⁵¹ Michael Krauss, *The world's languages in crisis*, in *Response to Language Endangerment*, 1992.

languages may operate well even in the current period. Several philanthropic organizations have come out in favor of the usage of endangered languages in the media. The Guatemala Radio Project, for example, enables local radio stations to broadcast in native languages such as news, education and health-related programming, and classical music, all while instilling pride in Mayan history.⁵²

⁵² Cultural survival, Community Radio Project, 2008, available at: “<https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/guatemala-radio-project-update>”

CHAPTER 2: MINORITY AND ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

CONTENTS: 2.1 Minority and Endangered Languages in the World - 2.1.1 America - 2.1.2 Russia - 2.1.3 China - 2.1.4 Turkey - 2.1.5 Morocco - 2.1.6 Algeria - 2.1.7 Tunisia - 2.1.8 Libya - 2.1.9 Egypt - 2.2 Minority and Endangered Languages in Europe - 2.2.1 Austria - 2.2.2 Germany - 2.2.3 France - 2.2.4 Great Britain and Ireland - 2.2.5 Spain - 2.2.6 Portugal - 2.2.7 Luxembourg - 2.2.8 Belgium - 2.2.9 The Netherlands - 2.2.10 Slovenia - 2.2.11 Croatia - 2.2.12 Greece - 2.2.13 Albania - 2.2.14 Romania - 2.2.15 Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark - 2.2.16 Ukraine - 2.2.17 Serbia - 2.3 The Case of Italy - 2.3.1 Law N.482/1999 - 2.3.2 MiBACT - 2.3.3 Germanic Minorities in Italy - 2.3.4 Ladin - 2.3.5 Minority Languages and Dialects in Friuli Venezia Giulia - 2.3.6 Walser - 2.3.7 French, Franco Provençal, Occitan - 2.3.8 The Greek Linguistic Minority in Salento and Calabria - 2.3.9 Tabarchino.

In this chapter I will present an overview of minority languages and those at risk of extinction both at international and European level, with the aim of reinforcing the awareness of how many and which minority languages are present in the world: the list is meant to be a warning to reflect on the vastness and importance of the issue. A particular section is dedicated to Italy and to the minority languages mostly present on the territory.

2.1 World overview

2.1.1 America

Regarding the official languages recognized in the Americas, over 400 million people speak Spanish as their first language, 247 million speak English, 204 million speak Brazilian Portuguese, and approximately 8 million speak French.

The expression Native American languages (also known as Amerindian languages) refers to a group of languages spoken by the indigenous peoples of America prior to European colonization. The indigenous languages of America have a high level of linguistic variety,

with around 80 language groups. They are divided into three groups depending on their geographical location: minority languages of North, Central, and South America. It can be said that all native languages are in danger of extinction.

North America - USA

In addition to English, languages spoken in the United States with more than 1 million speakers, according to the 2016 American Community Survey, include: Spanish (40.5 million), Chinese (3.4 million), Tagalog (1.7 million), Vietnamese (1.5 million), Arabic (1.2 million), French (1.2 million), Korean (1.1 million).

Limited-English proficient people make about 8% of the US population (25.1 million people), indicating they can't speak English at an appropriate level to engage a conversation.

Only 194 of the hundreds of languages that were formerly spoken in North America are still spoken today, and only the 33 languages appear to be "safe". Even yet, the majority of languages are under jeopardy because their speakers reside near other communities where children understand English. And all Own American groups in North America are under pressure to forsake their native languages in favor of English. The younger generation is particularly affected by the pressure; television and movies frequently send a message that discourages the preservation of community values, inviting young viewers to join a more glamorous and commercialized world with no apparent connection to their native community, its elders, and traditions.⁵³

Even though much of Native American linguistic heritage is plainly endangered, the fact that so many of these languages have persisted into the twenty-first century is a tribute to the tenacity of these communities and the inherent significance of language to human beings.

In terms of language protections, Hawaii is the only legally bilingual state in the United States, with Hawaiian and English recognized as official languages. For Cajun and Creole speakers in Louisiana, there are linguistic safeguards in place. The Council for the Development of French in Louisiana ("CODOFIL") directs the creation and extension of

⁵³ Anthony C. Woodbury, *What Is an Endangered Language?* Linguistic Society of America, linguisticsociety.org.

initiatives promoting French culture, tradition, and language in Louisiana. CODOFIL also supports French language immersion education programs and instruction at all levels of primary and secondary education in the state, as well as expanding the number of French language immersion schools.⁵⁴

Regarding endangered languages, Indigenous peoples' original languages have been declining in the United States since European colonialism started. Approximately 300 languages were spoken throughout the nation before to colonization. There are around 167 languages now, with predictions indicating that just 20 Indigenous languages would survive by 2050. The government began assimilation operations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to destroy Indigenous cultures, including their languages. The government maintained boarding schools for Indigenous children as part of these initiatives, requiring the students to learn English. They were not only punished for speaking their native tongues, but their traditional names were also changed to European-American names. The objective was to develop a unified culture in the United States: now there are approximately 180 endangered minority languages in the US.⁵⁵

The Native American Languages Act, which acknowledged the significance of maintaining Indigenous languages, was approved by the US government in the 1990s, reinforcing this. Congress granted money for tribes who wish to start language programs in their local schools in 2006.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Samuel W. Crowe, *Comparatively Speaking: Language Rights in the United States and Canada*, Canada-United States Law Institute, Volume 37, Article 20, 2012, p.221.

⁵⁵ Amber Pariona, *Endangered Indigenous Languages of the United States*, World Atlas, worldatlas.com, 2017.

⁵⁶ S.2167 - Native American Languages Act, 101st Congress (1989-1990), Congress.Gov, 11.10.1990.



Figure 4: Distribution of native languages in North America, The Language Gulper, languagesgulper.com

Central and South America

In Central America, Spanish is spoken fluently, and the most widespread religion is Catholic, characteristic traits that derive from the imposition of the Spanish conquerors.

Also in Latin America, the five colonial languages are Portuguese (52%), Spanish (46%), English (2%), Dutch (2%), and French (2%). Non-European spoken languages are also prevalent, such as Guarani, which is predominantly spoken in Paraguay, and Quechua, which is one of the official languages of Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador.

South American nations are extremely different, not only in terms of geography and ecology, but also in terms of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic makeup. Throughout the area, many language families are represented. The central Andean area is home to around 100 important languages, all of which are endangered (Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia). The most frequently spoken languages in the Andean highlands are Quechua and Aymara. Quechua is divided into two branches: those spoken in central Peru (Quechua I) and those spoken elsewhere (Quechua II), which are found both north and south of Quechua I.

In Colombia, the language is known as Inga, Quichua in Ecuador and Argentina, and Quechua everywhere. It has between 8 and 12 million speakers in South America (from Colombia to Chile) and has spread into rural and urban areas, displacing indigenous languages such as Zaparo and Andoa in Ecuador. Nonetheless, Quechua communities are

impacted by poverty, migration, local political crises, social and economic disparities, and other globalization issues that have a detrimental influence on the viability of their language. Spanish has been influenced by a number of Quechua phonological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features, and the transition to Spanish is the goal of many Quechua-speakers. The degree of vitality of Quechua varies greatly in each country, each region, and each language community.

In Colombia alone, 18 indigenous peoples are on the endangered list. During the eighteenth century, almost 50 languages vanished in Brazil. In Mexico, where just 290 people remain, the Zapotec, Zoque, Kiliwa, and Matlazinca languages are on the verge of extinction. Marie Smith Jones, an 89-year-old woman who was the last person to speak the Eyak language, died in Alaska in early 2008. In Tasmania, just one old woman, Fanny Cochrane Smith, is still fluent in the aboriginal language.⁵⁷

Indigenous languages have historically been discriminated against, and its speakers have been considered as second-class citizens. As a result, many speakers have systematically concealed their languages to attain higher social, economic, and political standing in mainstream society and better social, economic, and political conditions. When establishing new efforts to assist indigenous languages and peoples, the influence of industrialization and globalization on most traditional lives must be considered.

At least one indigenous language has been proclaimed official in all central Andean nations, and new language and cultural policies have been established with the purpose of preserving original languages and customs. However, considerable work must be done in terms of implementation. Furthermore, each of these countries has created cross-cultural multilingual educational programs. It is believed that this would help both indigenous language speakers and society. Indigenous groups at the national and local levels in each of the nations covered have developed means to raise their voices to demand equitable treatment. So far, they have resulted in significant societal improvements at several levels (local services, internal funds devoted to indigenous concerns, and so on); nonetheless, the most isolated indigenous tribes still require extra assistance and encouragement. The preservation of their ancestral lands is currently one of the most important prerequisites for the preservation of language and culture. Many of Latin America's indigenous languages have been the subject of significant academic inquiry;

⁵⁷ Marica Di Pierri, *Le lingue indigene a rischio di estinzione*, A Sud Onlus, asud.net, 2009.

others require more investigation. Existing documents must be transformed into effective resources for language preservation and revitalization.⁵⁸



Figure 5: *Distribution of native languages in Central America*, The Language Gulper, languagesgulper.com



Figure 6: *Distribution of native languages in South America*, The Language Gulper, languagesgulper.com

⁵⁸ Victoria Reyes-García, Vincent Vadez, Neus Martí, Tomás Huanca, William R. Leonard, Susan Tanner, *Ethnobotanical Knowledge and Crop Diversity in Swidden Fields: A Study in a Native Amazonian Society*, *Hum Ecol* (2008) 36:569–580, Springer, 04.06.2008, p.570.

2.1.2 Russia

There are over 160 ethnic groups in the Russian Federation, each with its own language family. Russian is spoken by 79.83% of the population, over 137 million people throughout the world.

Armenians, Bashkirs, Chechens, Chuvasci, Tartars

Armenians can be found in significant numbers throughout the Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia.

The Bashkirs, on the other hand, are a Turkic ethnic minority living in Russia, mostly in the Republic of Bashkiriya, who speak the Kipèaki linguistic strain of Basque (Turkish linguistic family). Approximately 4,000 Bahkirs speakers speak Tatar, with others also speaking Russian.

In the territories north of the Caucasus, the Chechens are the biggest native ethnic group. Although Chechens are concentrated in Chechnya, there are over a million Chechens living in other parts of the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Russia. Chechens speak Russian and Chechen as their primary languages (the Cheche is a language that belongs to the North-Central Caucasian language family).

The Chuvasci are a Turkic ethnic group that mostly inhabits the Republic of Chuvashia in central Europe, as well as Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The Chuvashis are split into three groups: hill Chuvashis who reside in northern and northeastern Chuvashia, prairie Chuvashis who live in central and southwestern Chuvashia, and southern Chuvashis who live in southern Chuvashia. The Chuvasci speak Chuvashia, but many of them also know Russian and Tatar.

Tatars are a Turkic-speaking ethnic group from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The name comes from the Mongolian tribe Ta-ta or Dada, who lived in what is now northern Mongolia in the 5th century. Most Tatars now live in Tatarstan, Ukraine, Poland, Bulgaria, China, Kazakhstan, Romania, Turkey, and Uzbekistan, all of which are located south of Russia. Due to many migrations and inter-racial mixing, the word Tatars has

practically vanished, and we now refer to an ethnic spectrum that includes individuals of Mongolian and Caucasian descent.⁵⁹

2.1.3 China

The concept of what constitutes a separate language is a key issue in defining southern Chinese languages; Chinese linguists tend to categorize as dialects what would otherwise be considered a different language. Another critical issue is the scarcity of detailed surveys in several regions of the country's southwest. For many years, Chinese linguists have done substantial and outstanding work, but the most of it has focused on the official languages of the fifty-five recognized national minorities. For these reasons, the information provided here is unlikely to be complete and will very definitely need to be changed when new information becomes available; it is also probable that the degree of endangerment of most of the languages mentioned will grow. The two Tujia languages had more than 170,000 speakers in 1982, but by 2000, that figure had dropped by nearly two-thirds to 70,000 and is still declining. A similar pattern may be observed everywhere, and the trend is accelerating as education and communication increase, as does economic growth.

The first point to clarify is the distinction between Chinese and Mandarin: Mandarin, the Chinese language's official language, is a variety of the Chinese language. Other than the fact that one is a subdivision of the other, there isn't much difference between the two: Mandarin is a subset of Chinese, which is the generic name for the language. They differ based on how effectively individuals understand and communicate in the language.⁶⁰

China wants to show that it is protecting the country's minority communities by presenting this argument in a variety of international forums, including the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Council's Universal Periodic Review Working Group, as well as in white papers published on a regular basis.⁶¹

⁵⁹ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Russian Federation*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

⁶⁰ Giorgio Francesco Arcodia, *La derivazione lessicale in cinese mandarino*, Franco Angeli, Collana: Materiali linguistici-Univ. di Pavia nr. 62, 2008.

⁶¹ Adam Hayes, "White Paper: is an informational document usually issued by a company or not-for-profit organization to promote or highlight the features of a solution, product, or service that it offers or plans to

The city of Beijing claimed in its September 2019 white paper, “Seeking Happiness for People: 70 Years of Progress on Human Rights in China”, that it had effectively guaranteed the rights of ethnic minorities in the administration of state affairs, with representation in the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference of all 55 ethnic minority groups.

Regarding the languages and endangered ones, China protects the preservation of original languages “[...] in the areas of administration and judicature, press and publishing, radio, film and television, and culture and education”;⁶² bilingual education is offered in the 53 language minority zones; a database for endangered languages of ethnic minority groups was created, and the Program for Protecting China’s Language Resources was launched.

However, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is progressively replacing ethnic minority languages with the Chinese language, and the government has also begun the process of replacing the local language in certain autonomous regions in favor of Mandarin, which is taught in schools.

In the case of Mongolia, the presidential republic has frequently asked State Council approval to recognize the Mongolian language as one of China’s national minority languages, but the Chinese government has refused.

On the other side, starting of September 2020, the Mongolian Provincial Education Office has replaced the Mongolian language in schools and colleges with the Chinese language; moreover, history and political science are taught in Mandarin language: all of this is because the Mongolian language is more closely related to Central Asian and West Asian languages, and hence should be supplanted by Chinese. Mongolian language lessons, which had previously been halted owing to the COVID-19 epidemic, will be discontinued, and all instruction will be in Chinese. Tongliao, China’s prefectural city in Inner Mongolia province, was chosen to start off this language replacement process since it is home to almost 1 million ethnic Mongolians.

In contrast to what has been stated, Beijing aims to replace all ethnic minority languages with Mandarin across China in order to provide consistency to the language and enhance

offer. White papers are also used as a method of presenting government policies and legislation and gauging public reaction”, Investopedia, 01.02.2021.

⁶² The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, “Seeking Happiness for People: 70 Years of Progress on Human Rights in China”, cap. V. Protecting the Rights of Special Groups, September 2019.

Chinese identity. As a result, it is unavoidable that a substantial portion of minority languages will vanish over time to make room solely for Mandarin: also in China, all minority languages are endangered.⁶³

Conversely to the minority pride that most other countries have for previous generations, many parents who speak minority languages in China are reluctant to pass them on to their children, fearing that it will jeopardize their children's Mandarin skills and thus their chances of finding a good job once they finish school.

"I can only understand it a little and say a few everyday expressions. My children don't understand it at all. They only learn Chinese," said Du Mei, an Inner Mongolian.⁶⁴

2.1.4 Turkey

The Turkish ethnic group is by far the most prominent ethnic group in the Turkish Republic, because of the strong nationalism that emerged following World War I. The genocide of the Armenians and the deportation of the Greeks occurred during those years, and the Turkish government continues to deny autonomy to the Kurdish people.

Kurds

The Kurds are a minority of the Middle Eastern Iranian ethnic group that live in Mesopotamia's northern and northeastern regions. Parts of this land are now part of the countries of Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and, to a lesser degree, Armenia. Kurdistan is a term used to describe the region. Lebanon, Jordan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan all have small Kurdish minorities. The Kurdish population is believed to be between 20 and 30 million people, making them one of the biggest ethnic groups without a national identity. Kurds speak a variety of dialects of the Kurdish language, which they all comprehend. The contemporary Kurds are said to be derived from the residents of the old Kingdom of Corduene, also known as Carduchi, who were descended from the ancient

⁶³ Jianli Yang and Lianchao Han, *China is replacing ethnic minority languages with Mandarin*, MCLC Resource Center, Modern Chinese Literature and Culture, The Ohio State University, 31.07.2020.

⁶⁴ Ben Blanchard, "China's minority languages face threat of extinction", Reuters Lifestyle, reuters.com, 12.03.2010.

Medes, with additions from Celtic Galatians. They would be ethnically similar to a number of other people who live in Iran's highlands.

Lazi, Albanians, Circassians, Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews are among the other minorities present.⁶⁵

2.1.5 Morocco

The languages of ethnolinguistic minorities have persisted in significant numbers throughout Africa due to the ongoing marginalization of their speakers. But what has kept them alive until now is likely to turn against them: a lack of access to economic resources, which is the primary cause of language relocation and language death in modern times. Even rural villages in Africa's most distant locations no longer exist in isolation, and few did in the past. Poverty is not only a rising danger to ethnolinguistic minority languages, but it may also become the initial criterion for quitting one's native language. If a community's native languages are not economically and socially valued, it will forsake them as soon as it could develop in contemporary economic and sociopolitical life. To preserve and perpetuate Africa's linguistic variety, people of these languages must discover solid economic and cultural reasons to keep their ancestral languages alive as important methods of natural everyday contact with their children.⁶⁶

Morocco accepts both Modern Standard Arabic and Berber as national languages; Berber is spoken by between 60% and 80% of the Moroccan people. French is the primary language of the country in economy, culture, business, medicine, and science, and it is also used in government and schools.

Arabic

The standard and classical versions of Arabic are among Morocco's prestige languages. Darija, the Moroccan Arabic dialect, is the most frequently spoken mother language; it is comparable to dialects spoken in Libya, Mauritania, Tunisia, and Algeria. Standard

⁶⁵ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Turkey*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

⁶⁶ Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, UNESCO Publishing, Third edition 2010, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Arabic is primarily heard in schools, government buildings, and mosques. Classical Arabic can be heard in traditional formal addresses, religious disputes, and cultural and literary features.

Berber

Berber is widely spoken in rural Morocco, although speakers do not utilize it in their writing; nonetheless, precise statistics on Berber speakers is difficult to get due to the lack of thorough censuses. Morocco contains numerous dialects of Berber. In 1990, there were around 1.5 million speakers of the Riffian dialect, which is mostly spoken in the Rif area of northern Morocco; the most common dialect is Tashelhit. Furthermore, in 1998, there were around 3 million speakers of the Tamazight dialect of central Morocco, which was mostly spoken in the Eastern High Atlas, High Atlas, and Middle Atlas areas. There are also several dialects of the Berber language.⁶⁷

French, Spanish and English

The presence of French is owing to French colonial rulers who established it as the language of media, administration, and education; after gaining sovereignty, Morocco began the Arabization process. In modern Morocco, French is utilized in a variety of contexts, including industry, finance, education, government, and trade. Moroccans learn French at school, and those who finish secondary school gain proficiency in the language: as a result, many Moroccans are bilingual in French and Moroccan Arabic.

Spanish is spoken by almost 5 million Moroccans, especially in the northern area, and is largely utilized in the media and public discourse. Spanish presence may be dated back to when Spain seized the territory and recognized Western Sahara as a province.

English usage was encouraged by national educational reforms that began in 2002, and the language is now used throughout the country's education, business, and scientific sectors.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Mohamed Tilmatine, Yasir Suleiman, *Language and Identity: The Case of the Berber*, in *Language and Identity in the Middle East and North Africa*, Routledge London, 30.09.2013.

⁶⁸ Moha Ennaji, *Multilingualism, Cultural Identity, and Education in Morocco*, Springer, 29.10.2010.

2.1.6 Algeria

Algeria has two official languages: Modern Standard Arabic and Tamazight (Berber), which became a national language of Algeria following a constitutional change on May 8, 2002. Berber and Algerian Arabic are the mother tongues of more than 99 percent of Algerians. Algerian Arabic is mostly used for casual conversation, whereas Modern Standard Arabic is utilized for formal purposes. Algerian Arabic is spoken by most of the Algerian population and is mostly used for entertainment and daily communication. The language is simpler than Standard Arabic, with influences from Berber, French, and Turkish.

The government, the media, and schools mainly utilize French, which was introduced into the country during the French occupation and is still extensively used: Algeria is the second most French-speaking country in the world. In Algerian schools, English is also taught.⁶⁹

2.1.7 Tunisia

Tunisia's three major ethnic groups are Arabs, Berbers, and Turks. Most of the population identifies with Arabic; just a tiny percentage of the people in Dahar's mountainous parts identifies as completely Berber. The numerous migrations that have occurred throughout Tunisia's history, including Greeks, Romans, Jews, Phoenicians, and French, have contributed to the country's linguistic variety.⁷⁰ Tunisia's official language is literary Arabic, but Tunisian Arabic is really a collection of dialects with no formal or standard body. The language evolved over time and was affected by Tunisia's different conquerors; in fact, it is influenced by Arabic, Turkish, Spanish, French, and Italian languages, and it is now the national language.

⁶⁹ Benjamin Elisha Sawe, *What Languages Are Spoken in Algeria?* WorldAtlas.com, 13.06.2019.

⁷⁰ Sarah Lawson-Sako, Itesh Sachdev, *Ethnolinguistic Communication in Tunisian Streets: Convergence and Divergence*, in *Language and Identity in the Middle East and North Africa*, Routledge London, 30.09.2013.

Berber languages are the most common minority languages of Tunisia, spoken by fewer than 1% of the population. This group is primarily located in semi-Berber communities in the country's south.

Tunisia's primary foreign languages are French, English, and Italian, owing to the country's closeness to Europe. In Tunisia, Turkish is also spoken by a sizable percentage of the people.

Although French was widely spoken in Tunisia during the French protectorate, Arabic languages eventually took over as the major language following the country's independence; nonetheless, educational systems and governmental activities in Tunisia continue to utilize French alongside literary Arabic. Despite the country's promotion of Arabic languages, a solid command of French remains an essential social marker: in reality, French is extensively utilized among intellectuals, businesspeople, and scientists in Tunisian society.⁷¹

2.1.8 Libya

Arabic is the official language of Libya, and many dialects of the language are spoken throughout the nation, although Libyan Arabic is the native language spoken, along with Tunisian and Egyptian Arabic. Berber, Domari, and Tedaga are the primary minority languages.

Berber languages were once not recognized by the Libyan government and were not taught in schools because the country's former leader Muammar Gaddafi was completely opposed to the use of the language and saw it as a "product of colonialism" that divided Libya, even banning the use of Berber names for children. However, with the recent upheavals in Libya, attitudes regarding Berber languages have shifted.

The Domari language, which belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family, is presently considered endangered since it is only spoken by the Dom people's older generation.

⁷¹ Oishimaya Sen Nag, *What Languages Are Spoken in Tunisia?* WorldAtlas.com, 25.04.2017.

The Teda people, who speak the Tedaga language, a Nilo-Saharan language, live in the country's south.⁷²

Italian, English and French

The Italian language is the second most spoken foreign language in the nation, and it is utilized not only as a commercial language but also as a lingua franca, allowing Libyans to interact with outsiders. The Libyan Italian community that lives in the country also speaks Italian.

English is another significant foreign language spoken in Libya, and it is particularly popular among the country's younger generation, since Libyans educated in Western European countries are also fluent in English.

The usage of French in Libya has grown in popularity since France began assisting Libya in its recovery from the harsh Libyan civil war, which significantly impacted life in the nation. The language, like English, is notably popular among Libya's younger population.⁷³

2.1.9 Egypt

Egypt's official language is Modern Standard Arabic, which is used in most written documents and is taught in schools throughout the country. Arabic blends well with languages like Syriac, Berber, and Assyrian, resulting in various varieties of Arabic spoken in the nation today. The expansion of Western languages such as English and French, which are associated with the elite and rich in contemporary Egypt, was helped by Egypt's colonization.

Although Egypt is largely a monolingual country, having Arabic as its official language, it is defined as a country of pan-Arab nationalism. One must distinguish 'mother tongue' from 'native language'. The former refers to Arabic as a variety of spoken language; while

⁷² Oishimaya Sen Nag, *What Languages Are Spoken in Libya?*, WorldAtlas.com, 24.08.2017.

⁷³ Ibid.

the latter is related to the linguistic community that wants to experience a sense of 'nativeness'.

Despite the fact that Modern Standard Arabic is the official language, Egyptian Arabic is the most widely spoken language in Egypt and the de facto national language: 68% of the population speaks it, and it is widely used in literature such as plays and novels, as well as in media such as advertisements, films, and newspapers.

Sa'idi Arabic is spoken by 29 percent of the current Egyptian population; it is related to Egyptian Arabic and Sudanese Arabic, and it is notably common among non-urbanized people and rural immigrants. The language has minimal respect in the country, although it is nevertheless widely spoken.

In Egypt, Arabic is a minority language spoken by 1.6% of the population; it is linked with traditional Islamic literature.

Sudanese Arabic, on the other hand, is more widespread among Sudanese immigrants and differs linguistically from Egyptian Arabic. Egypt has the highest number of Sudanese immigrants and refugees of any African country; the movement of many Sudanese citizens to the country is the result of years of civil conflict.

The Domari language is spoken by Muslim Gypsies in Egypt and accounts for 0.3% of the country's population. It has been designated as endangered owing to increased urbanization and the spread of other common languages. In contrast, the Bedouin language is spoken by barely 0.15% of the country's population.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Yasir Suleiman, *Language and Identity in Egyptian Nationalism*, in *Language and Identity in the Middle East and North Africa*, Routledge London, 30.09.2013.

2.2 Europe

2.2.1 Austria

Minorities in Austria, whose legislation is primarily regulated by the government in Vienna rather than the Länder, have a distinct territorial connotation: Slovenes (50,000: 0.6 percent of the total population) are found in the south, in Carinthia and Styria; Hungarians (30,000), Croats (42,000), and Roma are found in the east (20,000), in Burgenland; and Czechs are found in the north, in Carinthia and Styria. The latter two groups are not autochthonous, but are descended from immigrants, most of whom arrived in the late 1800s. In Austria minority groups have the possibility to participate only in an advisory capacity in decisions that concern them: although the recognition of all civil and political rights is fully assured to members of minorities, it does not seem to be possible an adequate participation of minorities.

More particularly, the Burgenland Croats, also known as Water Croats, who fled the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century and settled in Austria, today enjoy substantial protection, including the teaching of the local Croatian dialect in schools, and representation in institutions through the Hrvatsko Kulturno Društvo u Gradiscu (Cultural Council of the Water Croats).⁷⁵

The Slovenian minority in Carinthia had been the target of certain unfriendly sentiments in the past but is now adequately protected by federal regulations. The Slovenian language is recognized as a second official language, and the public can benefit from the efforts of cultural organizations and a representative body, the Narodni Svet Koroskih Slovencev (Council of Slovenes in Carinthia).

Another group in Carinthia is the Wendi, who speak a Germanic Slavic composite dialect that is not classified as Slavic.

The Hungarian minority in the Burgenland is under Austrian authority and has considerable protections, particularly in terms of language instruction in schools.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Regione Autonoma Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol, Ripartizione III, Ufficio per le minoranze linguistiche e biblioteca, *Minoranze in Europa, Austria*, regione.taa.it.

⁷⁶ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Austria*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

2.2.2 Germany

Internal minorities are less of a concern in Germany than in other nations, both because there are no clearly distinct realities and because German policy toward minorities has always been progressive and has not posed a barrier to the social and cultural lives of the ethnic communities who live there.

Austrians

A portion of the German-speaking population is concentrated in Austria; nevertheless, there is a distinction to be made between German and Austrian German. Because of the Habsburg Empire's large size, there were also Germanizations of Slavic (Croatian, Slovenian, Polish, Czech, Slovak, and so on), Italian (particularly Venetian and Friulian), and Hungarian terms.

After the fall of the Holy Roman Empire, Germany as we know it today was created in 1871, the year of unification with Prussia in a single national state of all the minor states from which it was composed. Prior to this period, they were known as Germanic people because, despite their differences, they all spoke German. The Habsburg Empire was formed in 1804, just before the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire, with Austria as the most powerful of the Germanic nations, politically hostile to Prussia but unified by a shared language. Within the Habsburg empire, German was the most widely used language among merchants, and Emperor Joseph II designated German to be the official language of the state government and colleges. From Vienna to Hamburg, German was spoken, but it was broken down into dozens of dialects, some of which were incomprehensible to one another. However, written German had grown relatively homogenous, making a clear distinction between Austrian and German literature indistinct until the nineteenth century.

The Republic of German Austria was founded in 1918, following the First World War, and Austria was annexed to Germany of the Third Reich in 1938, with the so-called Anschluss, linked by the language and the desire to establish the Great Germany. Austria was occupied by the Allies at the conclusion of the war and regained independence in 1955, becoming more independent of Germany. Today, determining whether a document, a newspaper story, or even a television program was generated in Germany or Austria is extremely difficult. However, there are significant variations between standard German and Austrian dialects spoken by ordinary people, although this is an issue that exists

partially inside Germany. Despite the less-than-ideal connection between the two countries, it is acceptable to speak German in Austria.⁷⁷

Jenish

Jenish people, Europe's third biggest nomadic community after Roma and Sinti, dwell in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and a portion of France, mostly in the Rhine valley, with reports of their existence in Italy as well. Because to their nomadic lifestyle, they have been dubbed "zingari" or "white gypsies" because of their distinctions from Roma. Their culture is distinct from that of the Roma and Sinti, and they speak their own language, which is a hybrid of German, Hebrew, and Celtic elements, as well as certain borrowings from the Romani language. If the Jenish's origins are unknown, they refer to themselves as Celt descendants.⁷⁸

Poles and Synti

A few thousand people of Polish descent live in Westphalia and the Ruhr, descendants of miners who arrived in the second half of the twentieth century: this minority is linguistically almost completely assimilated (only about 5,000 locutors remain), but there are some cultural associations active in the revitalization of the Polish language and traditional customs of this group.

Synti are one of the Romani population's ethnic groupings, also known as gypsies. The term is said to have originated from the name of the Sindh province, now part of Pakistan, or the location from whence this ethnic group is thought to have originated.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Marco Gobetto, *Perché in Austria si parla tedesco*, Berlino Magazine, berlinomagazine.com, 01.02.2019.

⁷⁸ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Switzerland*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

⁷⁹ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Germany*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

Sorbis or Sorabis

They are a tiny Western Slavic people that live as a minority in the region of Sorbia or Sorabia, which corresponds to Upper Lusatia today. The Sorbs are the last remaining Slavic peoples who once inhabited much of what is now East Germany. During the 12th and 13th centuries, the Sorbs had already been Germanized or driven away, and they were a persecuted people, notably under Nazi Germany. They have several rights as minorities in today's Germany, such as the right to send their children to Sorbian-speaking schools, the right to communicate with local government in Sorbian, and the right to bilingual street signs. Because nearly the whole Sorbian population lives in Germany and has German citizenship, the German public does not doubt their allegiance to the German country as much as it does for other minorities. The primary issue facing the Sorbs, who number around 60,000 people, is their low birth rate and the impact of German culture, which threatens to destroy their ancient cultural legacy, particularly among younger generations.⁸⁰

2.2.3 France

The confirmation of the Revolutionary War's political ideals, as well as the historical events that preceded it (Paris vs. the provinces, the city vs. the countryside, the center vs. the autonomies), resulted in a significant socio-cultural devaluation of France's linguistic minority. The devotion to the republican set of ideas has stifled constructive development in the subsequent two centuries, and France is now one of the few European nations that has not signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (with Andorra, Monaco and Turkey)⁸¹. For these reasons, France, being one of Europe's most centralist countries, has long been known for its repressive and discriminating policies toward internal minorities. Even now, despite significant progress, the country is still far from achieving true cultural and political protection for minorities. To summarize, France still has several DOM (Domains d'Outre-Mer) and TOM (Territories d'Outre-Mer) remnants of the colonial empire, which it does not appear to want to give up. Despite the

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on February 1, 1995, the international convention was established within the framework of the Council of Europe to ensure the protection of minorities.

absence of minimal recognition, it is clear that a number of minority languages with distinct cultures continue to be spoken. Broadly speaking, these are the numbers of speakers of linguistic minorities in France: Catalans 150,000, Basques 80,000, Flemish 80,000, Bretons 350,000, Germans 1,000,000 (2.1% of the total population).⁸²

In addition, there are two other minority groups.

Armenians

Armenians are an ethnic group that has lived in the Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia for over 3,500 years, with numerous smaller groups spread across the world. There are around 8 million Armenians worldwide, including 1,130,491 in Russia. Armenian is an Indo-European language spoken in the Caucasus region (particularly in the Republic of Armenia) and in various states around the world as a result of the Armenian diaspora, and is the only language belonging to the homonymous branch of the Indo-European family because there are no idioms closely related to it (some scholars believe that Armenian is very similar to Phrygian, an Indo-European language now extinct, spoken in ancient times by the Phrygians, a people who migrated in the Bronze Age, probably from the Balkans or Thrace, in Asia Minor). It has also been compared to Tocarius (an Indo-European language spoken between the 7th and 8th centuries in Xinjiang, an autonomous province of the People's Republic of China). Greek is the closest modern language to Armenian, which also contains several Persian loan words (which, in turn, belongs to the Indo-European family).

Corsicans

They are an ethnic community (approximately 143,000 speakers) who live on the island of Corsica in the French province of Corsica, and who have a unique law known as the "Collectivité territoriale de Corse". Most of Corsicans live on the island of Corsica, although there are significant minority on mainland France and in certain French areas outside of the capital, such as Farino on the island of New Caledonia in Oceania. Corsu is a Romance language of the Tuscan group and an autochthonous language of Corsica

⁸² Regione Autonoma Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol, Ripartizione III, Ufficio per le minoranze linguistiche e biblioteca, Minoranze in Europa, Francia, regione.taa.it.

recognized as a regional language by the French state; it is also spoken in Gallura, Anglona, and Sassarese in northern Sardinia. Bonifacio, an old community colonized by settlers from Liguria during the Middle Ages, is a Ligurian linguistic island in southern Corsica. According to recent surveys, Corsicans whose primary language is now French are using the Corsican language less and less.

As noted above in the section about Switzerland, there is a Jewish community in France as well, particularly in the Rhine valley.⁸³

2.2.4 Great Britain and Ireland

In the United Kingdom, no single language is spoken. The European Charter for Regional Languages has legally recognized Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaelic, Cornish, Scots, and Ulster Scots as indigenous and regional languages, despite English being the most frequently spoken language. Currently, Welsh Gaelic is the most important of the strain's languages, with around 550,000 speakers spread over the nation, primarily in rural areas. Despite this, Gaelic culture and language are gradually being lost in favor of English. Manx, a Celtic dialect of the Goidelic group that has gone out of usage since the seventeenth century, was spoken on the island of Man, previously an autonomous Viking state, a Scottish dominion, and now annexed to the English crown (the last native speaker disappeared in 1974).⁸⁴

The Irish Republic is a country that is ethnically homogenous. The bulk of Irish people are of Celtic ancestry, however there is a distinct ethnic group existing on the island: the “Travellers” or “Calderai”. The Travellers are a nomadic people believed to number around 30,000 people. Their origins are unknown, although there are three primary ideas. The first thinks them to be the offspring of youngsters orphaned during the mid-nineteenth-century potato famine. The second believes they are linked to Cromwell's army refugees who fled west. The third theory, which is more scientifically credible, links them to Bronze Age boilermakers, implying that their origins and language are old. The

⁸³ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *France*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

⁸⁴ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *United Kingdom*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

current state of nomad-resident relations is so terrible that it has created a kind of silent apartheid against them, effectively excluding them from all social contact with other residents.

The Irish Constitution declares the Irish language to be the first official language, as it is the country's native language. The English language is the second official language of the country.⁸⁵

English has been an official language of EU since 1973; the United Kingdom's exit from the EU has not resulted in the removal of English as an official language: all EU countries would have to agree unanimously on that, and given that English is also an official language in Ireland and Malta, the probability of English being ousted wasn't high.⁸⁶ The European Commission has reaffirmed that English would remain an official language of the European Union even after Brexit.⁸⁷

2.2.5 Spain

The population is mostly made up of Spaniards of different ethnic and linguistic groups (Castilian, Catalan-Valencian, Galician, Basque, and so forth) and a small number of immigrants, especially Romanians, North Africans, and Latin Americans. Catalonia, Madrid, and the Valencian Community are the autonomous communities with the most continuous presence of foreign communities. Castilian or Spanish is the official language, and Catalan (Catalonia), Valencian (Valencian Community), Galician (Galicia), and Basque (Basque Country and Navarre) are co-official languages in several autonomous communities. Some languages and dialects that do not have co-official status, such as Asturian, Leonese, the Extremaduran dialect, and Aragonese, are protected and encouraged in the local region by the Spanish state and peripheral authorities. Aranese, a variant of Gascon of the Occitan language group, is also legally recognized in the Aran Valley, alongside Castilian and Catalan.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Ireland*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

⁸⁶ European Parliament, *Which languages are in use in the Parliament?*, News European Parliament, europarl.europa.eu.

⁸⁷ The Cube, *Will English remain an official EU language after Brexit?*, euronews.com, 31.12.2020.

⁸⁸ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Spain*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

2.2.6 Portugal

From a linguistic standpoint, Portugal has long been thought to be a highly homogenous country. In reality, out of a population of over 10 million, just one municipality in the country's far northeast speaks a language that is significantly distinct from Portuguese: Mirandese.

The Mirandese language is spoken in northeastern Portugal and differs from Portuguese in phonology, morphology, and syntax. It has origins in the Vulgar Latin of northern Iberia, which is a descendent of the old Leonese of northern Iberia, the final vestige of the ancient language of the Kingdom of León, as well as the languages of Asturias, but to a lesser extent. Despite its proximity to Spanish territory, Mirandese has remained linguistically unique from both Portuguese and Spanish, although it does share much of the lexicon with nearby Portuguese dialects. Mirandese, which is spoken in the villages of Miranda do Douro and other eastern locations of the Municipality of Vimioso, has less than 5,000 speakers and is divided into three varieties: 'Border Mirandese', 'Central Mirandese', and 'Sendinese Mirandese'. The majority of speakers also speak Portuguese, while a few also speak Spanish; Picote, in northern Portugal, is the only place where Mirandese is spoken exclusively.⁸⁹

Official Portuguese policy has always denied the existence of national minorities in the country, and Lisbon's decision to ratify the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was made more to demonstrate political alignment with certain fundamental principles of government than in response to genuine requests from the territory. Portugal, on the other hand, has not accepted the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which may have aided Mirandese in their vulnerable condition.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Portugal*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

⁹⁰ Regione Autonoma Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol, Ripartizione III, Ufficio per le minoranze linguistiche e biblioteca, *Minoranze in Europa, Portogallo*, regione.taa.it.

2.2.7 Luxembourg

Luxembourg, located between France, Germany, and Belgium, has long been a crossroads for the cultures of these three nations, and today three languages are recognized as official: French, German, and Luxembourgish, a dialect of German. Luxembourg is a tiny but wealthy country (the steel sector is particularly important), and, also for this reason, a significant portion of the population was born to parents from other nations. The Portuguese, French, and Italian populations are the most consistent in this regard.⁹¹

In terms of immigration, Luxembourg has the greatest percentage of resident foreigners in the European Union, at 48 percent, while the Portuguese make up the largest foreign population, with 100,460 people.⁹²

Luxembourg has three official languages: Luxembourgish, French and German but, it is French that is predominantly used in the courts and in public communications.⁹³

2.2.8 Belgium

Fleamers and Flamingers

In Belgium, two major ethnic groups coexist: the Flemish, who speak Dutch in the north, and the Walloon, who speak French in the south. Flemish, a variation of Dutch, is spoken in Flanders, the country's northern area, whereas French is spoken in Wallonia, the country's southern province. The Brussels area, on the other hand, is officially bilingual, despite the fact that the French-speaking population is by far the largest.

Germans

In Belgium, a German-speaking minority exists in nine municipalities around the cities of Eupen and Saint-Vith, in the province of Liège's eastern portion.⁹⁴

⁹¹ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Luxembourg*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

⁹² Data January 2018 source Eurostat – picture:

<https://www.altoadigeinnovazione.it/alto-adige-granducato-del-nord-italia-e-il-lussemburgo-ce-lo-spiega/>

⁹³ Luxembourg Embassy Rome, <https://ambasciatalussemburgo.it/>

⁹⁴ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Belgium*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

2.2.9 The Netherlands

The Frisians are an ancient Germanic people who lived on the North Sea coast between the Scheldt and the Weser in the first century. Specifically, this region inherited the name Frisia from these people, which today corresponds to Holland and Germany's west coast.

The Frisian language is a Germanic language of the West Germanic branch spoken by roughly half a million people in the Netherlands and Germany along the southern coasts of the North Sea. Frisian is a closely related language to English, with the majority of speakers residing in The Netherlands, Germany, and North Friesland (Schleswig-Holstein). The Frisian language is one of the two official languages of the Dutch province of Friesland and is recognized as a minority language in Germany.⁹⁵

2.2.10 Slovenia

In Slovenia, there is an indigenous Italian community in the Istrian region and a Hungarian community in the east, with Serbian and Bosnian immigration on the rise. In state institutions, kindergartens, elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools, the Italian language is taught. Slovenian is the official language across the country, with Italian spoken in the three bilingual Italian-Slovenian coastal municipalities of Koper, Izola d'Istria, and Piran, and Hungarian spoken in three municipalities of Prekmurje (Dobrovnik, Hodo, and Lendava). The Magyars are another ethnic group that resides in Slovenia.⁹⁶

2.2.11 Croatia

Most of the population is Catholic Croats, but there are significant minorities, especially after the deadly conflicts that followed the dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation. The Croats are a Slavic people that arrived in what is now Croatia about the seventh century

⁹⁵ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Netherlands*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

⁹⁶ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Slovenia*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

AD. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Slovenia, Serbia, and Montenegro, as well as ancient Croatian villages in Austria and Italy, have Croatian communities (in Molise).

Serbs

Serbs are a South Slavic people who live mostly in Serbia, Montenegro, and parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Croatia and North Kosovo, but in less numbers than in the past. Serbs existed in Eastern Slavonia before the war, but the Croatian population of these areas was compelled to relocate to Zagreb under government protection during the conflict. The majority of Serbs speak Serbian, a South Slavic language; Serbian identity is inextricably tied to the language, which uses both the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets interchangeably.

Bosnian

Bosnian Muslims are a Slavic people who live mostly in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Sangiacato area, which lies between Serbia and Montenegro, and speak Bosnian. The official Bosnian language used in public communication differs only slightly from Serbian or Croatian, and there are virtually no distinctions between Bosnian and Croatian or Serbian languages. As a result, linguistics classifies Serbian, Croatian, and all Bosnian dialects as a single macro-variant.

Magyars

Magyars and Hungarians (a name used for historical eras after the establishment of the Hungarian state) are the same people: “Magyar” simply means “Hungarian” in Hungarian.⁹⁷

According to the 2011 national census, Hungarians in Rijeka make up less than 1% of the entire population, although they made up around 13% of Rijeka’s citizenship in 1910. The Hungarian population in Croatia, on the other hand, is represented by up to two legally registered groups, and they are entitled to a Magyar lawmaker in the Sabor,

⁹⁷ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Croatia*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

Croatia's National Assembly. In total, Croatia's indigenous Hungarian minority numbers around 14,000 people, or 0.33% of the country's population.⁹⁸

2.2.12 Greece

The population of Greece is 98% Greek, with the remaining 2% made up of other minorities, mostly from Albania, Bulgaria, and Georgia. Greek is the official language of the Hellenic country, and 98.5 percent of the people speaks it.

In Eastern Thrace, where the Muslim minority lives, Greek, Turkish, Bulgarian, and Romani are spoken in addition to Greek. Some Slavomacedonian dialects are spoken in the north of the nation, along the border with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Furthermore, the Judeo-Spanish language, known in Spanish as Ladino (not to be confused with Dolomite Ladino), is still spoken by Jews who fled to the Hellenic peninsula after being driven from Spain in 1492. The Pontic dialect, a variation of Greek spoken by Greeks in the Pontus area of Asia Minor, and the Tsakonic dialect, spoken by around 1200 people in the Peloponnese, stand out among the Greek population for their uniqueness.

Arvanites: the Albanians of Greece

There are now at least 60,000 Albanians residing in Greece, with a portion of them belonging to the Orthodox Christian faith and known as Arvanites, a community in central Greece.

The existence of these Albanian people on Greek land goes back to the 13th century and peaked in the 14th century, however the reasons for their migration are unclear. Arvanitic is an Albanian dialect that borrows heavily from Greek and is close to the dialect spoken

⁹⁸ Michele Migliori, *Gli ungheresi di Fiume: un patrimonio da custodire*, Ungheria News – Portale di informazione sull'Ungheria, ungherianews.com 15.01.2019.

by Albanians in Italy. However, unlike in Italy, the Arvanites have not been granted the status of a recognized linguistic minority by the Greek government.

Other minorities

The ethnic group of Aromuni mostly inhabits Epirus, Pindus, and Thessaly, and speaks two neo-Latin dialects, Macedoromanian and Meglenoromanian, which are linked to Romanian.

The Karamanlidi are a Turkish-speaking group with a Christian Orthodox faith who originated in Anatolia's Karaman and Cappadocia areas. The Karamanlids left their country after the 1923-1924 population exchange between Greece and Turkey, and their descendants currently dwell in Greece (although there are communities in Western Europe and North America).

Micrasiatic refers to Greeks and Orthodox Christians who hail from Asia Minor and speak Modern Greek, Pontic and Cappadocian, Turkish, Lazic, Georgian, or even Arabic.

The word, which may also be used as an adjective, refers to the hundreds of thousands of Greek refugees from Anatolia who were ejected from Turkey and settled in Greece, as well as their descendants.

The Pomacchi, commonly known as Bulgarian Muslims, are Slavic Muslims who follow Islam. They are Christian Bulgarians who converted to Islam throughout the centuries of Ottoman domination in the Balkans, according to certain academics. The Pomaks are primarily located in Bulgaria, although there are also significant populations in Greece and Turkey.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Greece*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

2.2.13 Albania

The 95% of Albanians live in Albania and Kosovo, where they are the overwhelming majority and Albanian is the official language. The Albanian language is traditionally split into two dialects: Ghego and Tosco. Ghego is spoken in northern Albania, as well as among Albanians in Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro, whereas Tosco is spoken in the country's center and south. Another Albanian language is Arbresh, which is descended from the Tosco dialect of the country's south. There are linguistic distinctions between the Italo-Albanians of southern Italy and Sicily and Albania's contemporary Albanians. Arbresh preserves a large number of ancient words, as well as a large number of Greek phrases.

A tiny portion of the population speaks Greek in the extreme south, a linguistic minority speaks Macedonian in the east, and yet another linguistic minority speaks Serbian in the northwest. Italian, English, Greek, German, and French are the most widely spoken foreign languages.

Greeks and Montenegrins

Greeks residing in or coming from Albania make about 3% of the Albanian Greek population. Because they are mostly located in the country's south, also known as 'Northern Epirus', Greeks from southern Albania are sometimes referred to as Northern Epirus. The "Greek minority in Albania" is officially acknowledged by the Albanian government as Greeks residing in Albania's "minority region".

Montenegrins are an ethnic minority in Albania, mostly concentrated in the north, where they have preserved their native language, culture, religion, and traditions.¹⁰⁰

2.2.14 Romania

The Romanians are a Neo-Latin-speaking people who originated in Dacia and Thrace, and they make up the great majority of the population. Romanians are concentrated in Romania and Moldova, with many additional groups dispersed across the world, totalling

¹⁰⁰ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Albania*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

roughly 24.5 million people. Romanian is the official language, a neo-Latin language from the Romance language family that is linked to other languages from the same family spoken by over 800 million people worldwide, primarily in America and Europe. The Romanian vocabulary comprises around 75% Latin and other linguistic components. The only Eastern European countries where a Neo-Latin language is spoken are Romania and Moldova. Only tiny Romanian minority, either Romanian-speaking or connected to Romanian, live in Greece, Albania, Serbia, Macedonia, Turkey, Croatia, Hungary, and Bulgaria. Linguistically, they share connections with everyone who speaks a Romanian language.

Minorities speak their own languages, and French has long been the most widely taught foreign language in Romania.

Italians

Around 20,000 Italians live in Romania, virtually all of whom immigrated in the previous twenty years and who own small or medium-sized companies in almost every area of the country. Along with recent immigrants, there is an Italian minority, particularly members of the Association of Italians in Romania RO.AS.IT., the country's biggest and most influential Italian community. The Italian presence in Romania stems from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Italians from impoverished parts of the country (particularly Veneto and Friuli) came to Romania to work in mines, railway yards, and the construction sector. According to historical research, 130,000 Italians came there between the end of the nineteenth century and the Second World War, with the majority returning home after 1945.¹⁰¹

2.2.15 Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark

The official language of Norway is Norwegian, which is written in two different ways: bokml and nynorsk. Bokml is the most widely spoken and is the primary language of 85

¹⁰¹ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Romania*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

percent of Norwegians, whereas Nynorsk is spoken by the remaining 15%, particularly in the Vestlandet regions. Both types are taught in Norwegian schools, though.

In addition, the official languages of several municipalities in Finnmark and Troms are Sami or Finnish. Because the three languages are so close, all Norwegians are able to understand both Danish and Swedish. English is also widely spoken, with 70% of the people speaking it fluently. The majority are ethnic Norwegians, with substantial Sami and Finnish minorities, particularly in the north.¹⁰²

The Finnish ethnic and linguistic group makes up the majority of the people of Finland. The national languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish, according to the Finnish constitution: Finnish is spoken by 91,7% of the population, while Swedish is spoken by 5,5%.

The Sami, also known as the Lapp, are a nomadic people who live in central Norway and the northernmost parts of Finland and Sweden, in the region of Lapland. The Sami have their own culture, language, occupation, way of life, and sense of self. It also has members in Sweden, Norway, and Russia. The Sami lived peacefully until the eleventh century, hunting, fishing, and collecting, but with the arrival of Scandinavian colonists, the fall into nomadism started. Initially, Christianization of these areas led to the loss of Lapp culture, particularly the indigenous language, and it was prohibited to use the Sami language in Norway from 1888 until the Second World War.¹⁰³

Apart from Swedes, there are the Tornedalians, who are Finnish people who migrated to Sweden's north. The Swedish government acknowledged the Tornedalian minority as a linguistic minority in 1999, acknowledging Meänkieli, the dialect, as a linguistic minority in Sweden.¹⁰⁴

Danish is the official language of Denmark. It is a Scandinavian language that belongs to the Germanic language group of the Indo-European language family. It is the official language of Denmark, as well as Greenland and the Faroe Islands, where it is the second official language (on these islands a Germanic language of the Nordic group is spoken

¹⁰² World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Norway*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

¹⁰³ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Finland*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

¹⁰⁴ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Sweden*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

that is closely related to Icelandic and the rural dialects of Norway, alongside the Faroese language).¹⁰⁵

2.2.16 Ukraine

Since the mid-nineteenth century, a significant population of Italian origin (several thousand individuals, mostly from Puglia) has lived in Crimea, Ukraine. With the advent of communism, some returned to Italy, but approximately 1200 individuals stayed, some of them are still living in those areas, while others are spread over the former Soviet Union.

The Ruthenians, a people who dwell in Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland, and other Eastern European countries, are another ethnic group. Ruthenians speak their own language, which, like Slovak and Ukrainian, is not uniform across the country. Apart from Ukraine, they are now concentrated in southern Poland and northwestern Slovakia.¹⁰⁶

2.2.17 Serbia

Because of the many migrations and exoduses that happened over the tumultuous history of the Balkans, the population of the Serbian Republic is very diversified. Although ethnic Serbs account for 82.86 percent of the population, the country also has 37 other nationalities, all of whom are granted equal rights and obligations under the Constitution.

Serbs dwell mostly in Serbia, Montenegro, which is part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Croatia and North Kosovo (Kosovo). The majority of Serbs speak Serbian, a South Slavic language. Serbian identity is inextricably linked to the language, which uses both the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets interchangeably.

¹⁰⁵ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Denmark*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

¹⁰⁶ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Ukraine*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

The Khorakhane are Roma Muslims from Kosovo; their name literally means “Koran Readers”. They are found throughout Serbia, as well as Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Albania, and Kosovo; they also make up the largest group of Rom immigrant in Brescia and throughout Italy. The exodus occurred between the second half of 1991 and the summer of 1993, coinciding with the deterioration of the conflict situation in former Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, *Serbia*, Minority rights group international, minorityrights.org.

2.3 The Case of Italy

Italy is a country with many linguistic and historical minorities: the Ministry of the Interior estimates that around 5% of the Italian population speaks a language other than the official one as their mother tongue.

Isaia Ascoli was the first to take an interest in the subject of minority languages, classifying dialects and languages. Two criteria were used: distance in time (how ancient was the spoken language) and distance in location (where did the speakers come from); and minor or significant distance from the Tuscany.

The Italian Republic is one of the few European countries with a constitution that protects linguistic minorities. “La Repubblica tutela con apposite norme le minoranze linguistiche”¹⁰⁸ (The Republic safeguards linguistic minorities with suitable standards), according to Article 6 of the Italian Constitution. This article, however, was not used until 1999. Prior to that date, minorities were only protected by a special legislation in three regions: Valle d’Aosta, Trentino Alto Adige, and Friuli Venezia Giulia.

Law 482 of December 15, 1999, and the following implementing rule included in Presidential Decree 345 on May 2, 2001, are the primary legislative measures that ultimately accomplished what the Constitution allowed for in 1948.¹⁰⁹

2.3.1 Law n.482/1999

Also in Italy there are some linguistic minorities, among which twelve “Historical Linguistic Minorities” are protected by a special law (Law 15th December 1999, n. 482), that provides:

“In attuazione dell'articolo 6 della Costituzione e in armonia con i principi generali stabiliti dagli organismi europei e internazionali, la Repubblica tutela la lingua e la cultura delle

¹⁰⁸ Silvana Schiavi Fachin, parliamentarian, teacher, author, language expert, “Articolo 6: lingue da tutelare”, *PatriaIndipendente.it*, 15.06.2017.

¹⁰⁹ Regione Molise, “Minoranze linguistiche – Minoranze in Italia”, *regionemolise.it*.

popolazioni albanesi, catalane, germaniche, greche, slovene e croate e di quelle parlanti il francese, il franco-provenzale, il friulano, il ladino, l'occitano e il sardo.”¹¹⁰

In implementation of Article 6 of the Constitution and in harmony with the general principles established by European and international bodies, the Republic shall protect the language and culture of the Albanian, Catalan, Germanic, Greek, Slovenian and Croatian populations and those speaking French, Franco-Provençal, Friulian, Ladino, Occitan and Sardinian.

These minority languages belong to non-Italian-speaking cultures that have settled and integrated into the national territory in different ways over the years, until they became an integral part of both the Italian territory and its culture.

Most of these populations still have strong links with their places of origin and, still using the minority language, they are an example of historical continuity and preservation of culture in Italy.

With the term ‘linguistic minorities’, the Italian legislation refers exclusively to those linguistic minorities that have been present for centuries in the territory where they were born.¹¹¹ In other countries, on the other hand, ‘linguistic minorities’ also include those of more recent origin, born of migratory flows that took place a few years ago, or even are still in progress, without implying a more or less long period of presence on the territory. The IGI Global Dictionary in the four definitions it provides of a minority language, never mentions a temporal requirement to allow the language to be one: a minority language is a language

“[...] spoken on the territory of a national state without being that state’s first or official language, [...] that is spoken by a minority of the population of a country, that a minority of the people use in a population, [...] that is spoken by a small group of people in the country”.¹¹²

On the other hand, an Italian requirement is that the language must be ‘historically present’¹¹³ in order to be defined as a minority language, and also according to this principle, the Italian law provides that the state protects the language and culture of the populations of:

¹¹⁰ Parlamento italiano, Legge 15 Dicembre 1999, n. 482, *Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche*, Gazzetta Ufficiale n. 297, 20.12.1999, art.2, camera.it.

¹¹¹ Fiorenzo Toso, *Quante e quali minoranze in Italia*, Treccani, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, treccani.it, 09.11.2011.

¹¹² IGI Global Dictionary Publisher of Timely Knowledge, *What is Minority Language*, igi-global.com

¹¹³ Brocardi Dictionary, *Minoranza linguistica*, brocardi.it.

Albanians in southern Italy (between 70 and 100,000 people), as a result of past migrations that occurred between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries in a few dozen municipalities scattered from Sicily to Calabria, from Basilicata to Campania, from Apulia to Molise and Abruzzo;

Catalan (about 15,000 people) in Alghero in Sardinia: today's Alghero dialect is nothing more than the Catalan language spoken between the middle of the 14th century and the end of the 17th century, isolated from the rest of Catalonia, which changed very little independently from it, under the ever-increasing impact of Sardinian and later Italian¹¹⁴;

Croatian (about 3,000 people) in three small towns in Molise;

Germanic, along the Alpine arc;

Greek, in Aspromonte and in Salent;

Slovene (about 60,000 people) along the eastern border in the province of Trieste and Gorizia.

The Law n.482/1999¹¹⁵ refers not only to these languages and cultures, but also to those populations that generally speak:

French, meaning the official use of the language in Valle d'Aosta and its traditional use in some mountain centers of the province of Turin;

Francoprovençal (from 50 to 70,000 people), which is a group of dialect varieties with original characters, widespread in spoken use in Val d'Aosta and in part of the mountainous area of the province of Turin, also practiced, following an ancient emigration, in two small towns in Puglia;

Friulian, practiced in most of Friuli, with a branch in the province of Venice;

Ladin (about 30,000 people), widespread in some valleys of the province of Bolzano, where the population speaks German as a second language, and in areas of the provinces of Trento and Belluno (where it is spoken equally to Italian);

¹¹⁴ Regione Molise, *Minoranze linguistiche – Sardegna*, regionemolise.it.

¹¹⁵ Normattiva - Il portale della Legge vigente, *LEGGE 15 dicembre 1999, n. 482*, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, normattiva.it.

Occitan (from 20 to 40,000 people) spoken in the valleys of western Piedmont between Vermentina and Val di Susa and in a municipality of Calabria following a migratory flow;

Sardinian (about one million people) spoken in its many varieties in most of Sardinia, with the exception of the Catalan and Tabarkine linguistic islands and the northern part of the island, where Corsican dialects prevail.

Regarding the topic of speaking populations, Fiorenzo Toso, Associate Professor of General Linguistics at the University of Sassari,¹¹⁶ offers some remarkable observations. The difference between the definition of ‘Albanian, Catalan etc. populations’, for which national belonging seems to be implicit, and the definition of ‘populations speaking French, Franco-Provençal’, etc., which seems to include only linguistic belonging, is not clearly specified in this list. This lack of precision can obviously cause ambiguity.

For example, when speaking of ‘Germans’ or ‘Slovenes’ in Italy, it makes sense to take into consideration also the cultural and political relationship that these populations have had and still have with the State of reference, obviously different from the one in which they possess citizenship (being to all intents and purposes Italian citizens). The same sense cannot be understood with reference to ‘Greeks’, ‘Albanians’, ‘Croatians’ and ‘Catalans’, i.e. the Greek, Albanian, Croatian and Catalan-speaking communities that have been present in Italy for centuries, and that have not had any relationship with their respective countries of origin, beyond cultural contacts.

In fact, with the expression, for example, ‘Germanic populations’, one can mean linguistic and cultural groups that are very different from each other in terms of dialect variations and sociolinguistic realities: one can refer both to the “ethnic” majority of the population of the province of Bolzano, and to the less consistent groups of population scattered along the whole Alpine chain.

On the other hand, standard Slovene is rejected as a linguistic reference base by a part of the Slavic-speaking population of the province of Udine, both for historical-ideological

¹¹⁶ Fiorenzo Toso, associate professor of General Linguistics at the University of Sassari. His interests range from the dialectology of Liguria, his region of origin, to the study of the phenomena of insularity and linguistic contact, from lexicography (as a contributor to the Italian Etymological Lexicon) to the reflection on sociolinguistic issues, with particular reference to minorities. Among his most recent works, *Lingue d'Europa* (Milano, Baldini e Castoldi 2006), *Le minoranze linguistiche in Italia* (Bologna, Il Mulino 2008), *Linguistica di aree laterali ed estreme* (Udine, Centro Internazionale sul Plurilinguismo 2008).

reasons and because of the actual difference between the declinations spoken in the past and those spoken today.

Given this situation, art. 2 of 482 has been firmly contested by local groups of promoters of bills to ask for the admission to protection of the Slavic languages ‘Natisoniana’, ‘Po-Nasen’ and ‘Resiana’ spoken respectively in the valleys of Natisone, Torre and Resia.

Furthermore, it makes no sense to speak of a distinction between populations speaking French and Franco-Provençal, since French is the basis of reference for the dialects of the region, where it has practically no vitality of its own as a mother tongue.

Finally, the definition of ‘Occitan’ has precise political-cultural implications: this has given rise to protests with the aim of adopting an alternative denomination, that of ‘Provençal’.

It is necessary also to refer to the minority cultural and linguistic realities, which for various reasons not indicated, have not been included in the text of the law. These populations are not considered by the Italian law because, perchance, they are objectively extraneous to the linguistic and cultural context in which they are inserted: however, by not including them in the legislation, one of the very principles on which the protection of linguistic minorities is based (or should be based), that is, the recognition of the minority itself, is lacking.¹¹⁷

The populations in question are those who speak:

The so-called ‘galloitalic’ or ‘high Italian’ dialects (about 60,000 speakers) spread in Sicily, Basilicata and Campania, as a result of migrations of medieval times from northern Italy;

Tabarchino (about 10,000 speakers), a variety of Ligurian origin spread today in two centers of southern Sardinia, where it was transferred during the 18th century by groups of settlers coming from northern Africa;

¹¹⁷ Cultura Italia. L’aggregatore nazionale del patrimonio culturale italiano, *Allarme Unesco, trenta dialetti a rischio in Italia*, culturaitalia.it, 21.02.2012.

Gypsy dialects, practiced by a minority whose presence has been historically ascertained in Italy at least since the 15th century, although it has been increased by more recent migratory flows.

The fact that gypsy dialects are excluded from the forms of protection provided for by L.N. 482/1999 is justified by the absence of a rooting in the Italian territory of this population, but the gypsy population in its very definition is uprooted from a territory as a nomad.

In the same way and for the same reasons, Hebrew and Armenian are also excluded languages: the reasons, however, here are not entirely well-founded, also because these two languages are not nowadays used as linguistic expressions of the respective communities, but they are the languages of the cultural and liturgical tradition of religious minorities historically rooted in Italy, therefore they constitute cultural and religious heritage to all effects.

Those mentioned above are the main languages at risk of extinction in Italy, but in reality, the list of Italian dialects at risk includes 30: Sardinian campidanés, Cimbriano, Corsican, Emilian, Faetar, Francoprovenzal, Friulian, Sardinian galurés, Griko calabrés, Griko salentino, Ladino, Ligur, Sardinian, Logudorés, Lombard, mócheno, piamontés, resiano, romaní, sasarés, siciliano, napoletano-calabrés, tóitschu, veneciano, yiddish, alemánico, alguerés, provenzal alpino, arberés and bavaro.¹¹⁸

2.3.2 MiBACT

MiBact is the acronym for Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism (Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e per il turismo)¹¹⁹. The government department was founded in 1974 under the name of Ministry for Cultural Heritage and the Environment, but over the years it changed its name several times. In 1998 the Ministry acquired its current name and deals with matters in the field of sports and entertainment.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ MiBACT, lavoropubblico.org.it

In 2006, the subject of sports was assigned to a department of the Ministry of Economic Development, but responsibility remained with the Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities. In 2013 and 2018, the Ministry further changes its name, finally returning to its current name with the Conte II Government.

The objective of the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities is to protect and preserve Italy's culture, entertainment and landscape heritage; promote culture and entertainment in all its forms, through the organization and financing of cultural, theatrical and cultural events.

In order to carry out these functions, the MiBact collaborates directly with offices operating at a central level, such as the Cabinet Office, the Minister's secretariat, the legislative office, the press office and the secretariats of the undersecretaries.

The organization also provides for a General Secretariat, which coordinates the offices and activities of the Ministry, with the purpose of controlling the functioning and reporting periodically on the various operations to the Ministry. The Secretary also has the task of coordinating the General Directorates and the peripheral General Management Offices of the Ministry; as well as being responsible for the implementation of the guidelines given by the Ministry.

The central structure also includes various advisory bodies, technical and scientific committees and institutes with special autonomy.

At the peripheral level, it operates through the State Archives, the State Libraries, the national museums and art galleries, the archaeological sites and the autonomous conservation institutes.¹²⁰

The Central Institute for the Intangible Heritage (ICPI: Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale) operates within the MiBact for the valorization, in Italy and abroad, of the demoethno-anthropological cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, and of the expressions of cultural diversity present on the territory. It also promotes training, study and dissemination activities, collaborating with universities, public and private bodies, national and international research centers.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Annamaria Villafrate, *MiBACT: cosa fa?*, Studio Cataldi – Il diritto Quotidiano, studiocataldi.it, 07.05.2020.

¹²¹ MiBact, Istituto Centrale per il Patrimonio Immateriale - Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e per il turismo - Direzione Generale Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio, idea.mat.beniculturali.it.

The objective of the Central Institute for the Intangible Heritage is to protect and enhance the cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, through initiatives aimed at supporting the various social groups present on the territory and their cultural diversity. In particular, the project “Gli Italiani dell’Altrove” (Italians from Elsewhere) aims to shed light on the historical and modern reality of the Linguistic Minorities and their culture present in Italy, and consequently to increase awareness of the richness of the cultural diversity present in the country.

This project offers the opportunity to address the extremely topical issue of immigration in Italy, referring to the experience of acceptance and integration of the nation, but also to the preservation of national identity.

The project began with the Arbëreshe, the Albanians of Italy, in 2012 (centenary of Albanian independence), continuing in 2013 with the Croats of Molise and the Occitans, in 2015 with the Slovenes, the Friulians and the Greeks of Puglia and Calabria. In 2017 the protagonists were the Sardinians, the Francoprovenzals, the Ladins, the Catalans of Alghero and the Walsers. In 2018 there were events dedicated to the French and Cimbri and the Mòcheni Communities of Trentino (Cimbri and Mòcheni), and Veneto (Cimbri).¹²²

¹²² MiBact, *Progetto Gli Italiani dell’Altrove*, <http://www.idea.mat.beniculturali.it/attivita/progetti/gli-italiani-dell-altrove>.



La carta illustra la diffusione delle → MINORANZE LINGUISTICHE storiche in base alla presenza effettiva delle lingue minoritarie (anche di varietà non riconosciute come tali dalla legislazione vigente), e al di là dei discutibili criteri di “zonizzazione” ammessi dalla legge 482/1999 (→ LEGISLAZIONE LINGUISTICA). Si tenga inoltre presente che le aree colorate sono per lo più caratterizzate da condizioni di plurilinguismo e pluriglossia, mentre lo scopo della carta è quello di rilevare soltanto la presenza e l’uso delle lingue minoritarie: ad es., così, nelle aree di dialetto provenzale delle Alpi Occidentali sono diffusi anche l’italiano e il piemontese (quest’ultima varietà spesso con percentuali d’uso più elevate del provenzale stesso), mentre l’italiano e il siciliano sono diffusi nei centri di tradizioni linguistiche altoitaliane e albanofone, e così via.

Figure 8: *Map of linguistic minorities in Italy*. Map from Enciclopedia dell'italiano, directed by Raffaele Simone, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, vol. II, Rome 2011, pp. 1628-29.

2.3.3 Germanic Minorities in Italy

Thanks to the studies of Marco Caria, specialized in German language,¹²³ we can deepen the topic of Germanic minorities in Italy. There is a widespread belief, especially among Italians themselves, that German in Italy is spoken only in Alto Adige; this belief can be easily denied for two main reasons. The first is the simple fact that German is not spoken only in South Tyrol: there are linguistic ‘islands’ and ‘peninsulas’ where the language is spoken. The second is that the Germanic language that is spoken in South Tyrol is not a natural language but derives from the mixing of the language of instruction with a Bavarian-Tyrolean dialect, which does not imply an automatic understanding of German itself.

Caria provides a definition of these two expressions: ‘linguistic island’ indicates a territory where a different language is spoken from that of the adjacent regions; the ‘linguistic peninsulas’ are instead more extended areas outside the borders of the nation, where the same language is spoken.¹²⁴ In Northern Italy the German-speaking linguistic islands are constituted by the Walser communities in Piedmont and Aosta Valley, by the Cimbri communities in Trentino and Veneto, by the Mocheni groups in Trentino, Sappadini in Veneto and Sauris and Timau in Friuli. Instead, the German-speaking peninsulas are those of Alto Adige and Val Canale in Friuli, both bordering with Austria.

With reference to article 2 of law 482/1999, we can point out a contradiction regarding the protection of minorities: the article in question does not take into account these precise communities, their characteristics and their cultural and linguistic differences, but classifies them all as Germanic-speaking populations.

¹²³ Marco Caria, graduated in Foreign Languages and Literatures in 2001 at the University of Sassari. Specialized in German language, he wrote a thesis titled *Zwischen Hochsprache und Mundart in Österreich: Austria and its languages through history, literature, everyday life* on the issues concerning the German dialects and the dialects of the Austrian minorities and their use in relation to standard German. He published on the online magazine “Intralinea” of the University of Bologna the translation from Viennese dialect into Italian, and related commentary, of two poems by the poet Walter Bäck. He is part of the “Young Germanists” of the University of Palermo and of the “Deutscher Germanistenverband” of the University of Freiburg (D). He is currently a doctoral candidate at the Doctoral School in Science of Cultural Systems (University of Sassari) with a research project on the Italian Germanic minorities in north-eastern Italy.

¹²⁴ Marco Caria, *Dal Friuli alla Valle d’Aosta: le minoranze germaniche in Italia*, Treccani Magazine *Lingua Italiana*, treccani.it, 09.11.2011.

In South Tyrol, however, it is more appropriate to speak of a national rather than an exclusively linguistic minority: the German-speaking component has been the largest ethnic group since the 7th century, which gave rise to the oldest Ladin population in Val Badia and Val Gardena. In fact, with a total of about 500,000 inhabitants, 70% of them are German-speaking, 26% Italian-speaking and 4% Ladin.

For this reason, the South Tyroleans still feel like ‘children of Austria’, even though they have not been formally Austrian since 1919: a fact that still implies the presence of integration difficulties between the German-speaking majority and the Italian-speaking minority.

The Statute of Autonomy of Trento and Bolzano, which also regulates the coexistence of the various groups, introduced the ‘ethnic proportion’ (in German *Ethnischer Proporz*), a special legal regime in South Tyrol that governs admission to public employment and the enjoyment of certain rights, in order to guarantee an allocation in proportion to the size of the three language groups Italian, German, and Ladin, giving de facto preference to the Germanic majority. The fact that Italians study and learn German does not solve this problem of integration. In fact, the standard language spoken by the *piefke* (a colloquial term, mostly derogatory, which is also used to refer to Italian speakers who speak German) is perceived negatively and used only in formal situations and in education; daily, the dialect is mainly used, further evidence of poor integration between German speakers and ‘foreigners’.

Very different is the situation of the German-speaking linguistic islands, which are more integrated in the Italian context: the populations of these islands in fact do not consider themselves particularly tied to a foreign country, even though they recognize and protect their origins and their diversity.

In the eastern part of Trentino, the Mocheni (a name that derives from the verb *machen*, ‘do’: in fact, the Mocheni were a population of miners and woodcutters) are reduced to 2,276 individuals divided among three municipalities. The Mochena language was imported in the 13th century by Bavarian settlers who moved to the valley known as ‘dei Mocheni’ and has been at risk of extinction for centuries. Also for this language, the causes of the possible extinction are the emigration flows and the increasing use of the Trentino dialect.

As for the Cimbri instead, these communities resided in Luserna and Tezze in Trentino, in the provinces of Verona in Veneto, and in the Altopiano dei Sette Comuni or Asiago in Vicenza. Settled in these places since the thirteenth century as a result of migration from Bavaria or Austria, their name derives from the word *tzimbar*, which means ‘working with wood’.

Like the Mocheni, also the Cimbri are at risk of linguistic extinction, since the people speaking Cimbrian today are only a few hundred, divided between Luserna, Giazza and Roana.

In Friuli there are still the Germanic communities of Sappada and Sauris: although these communities are more tied to their linguistic traditions than the other minor German-speaking groups, even the Sappadini and Saurani have witnessed the slow disappearance of their language, especially in Timau, where only a few elderly people are still able to speak the Germanic dialect. Timau, in fact, a simple hamlet of a Friulian-speaking municipality, is increasingly and almost completely subjected to the overbearing spread of Italian and Friulian.

Finally, that of Valcanale Friulana is a case in itself, since in the municipalities of Tarvisio, Malborghetto and Pontebba multilingualism is concretely affirmed thanks to the presence in the local customs of Italian, Friulian, Slovenian, Carinthian dialect and standard German.

From this information, it can be deduced that only the less widespread Germanic language minorities are in danger of linguistic extinction, whereas the two peninsulas of South Tyrol and Valcanale seem to be far from this danger. In fact, in South Tyrol, German has been spoken ever since the Second World War, and even more so since the implementation of administrative autonomy, in all daily practices and in teaching. In fact, local administrations, in order to contrast the phenomenon of linguistic regression in minor German-speaking communities, have often allowed the use of local dialects in schools, the establishment of bodies responsible for their protection, the creation of dictionaries and grammars, books and magazines: all instruments that may be useful for a rediscovery of this linguistic and cultural heritage by young people as well.

With Law 15/12/1999, n. 482, art. 2, German was acknowledged as a minority language of the Italian state. The Paris Agreement of 1946 recognized the use of German in the province of Bolzano. In the late 1960s, a new autonomy statute for Trentino/Alto

Adige/Südtirol was drafted, which recognized German and Italian equality and was signed into law by presidential decree in 1972.¹²⁵

2.3.4 Ladin

Dolomite Ladin is made up of a series of dialects, all belonging to the Ladin linguistic group present not only in the Dolomites but also in Friuli and in the Canton of Grigioni in Switzerland. Ladin, together with Romansh and Friulian, is part of the Rhaeto-Romanic language group: a group of neo-Latin languages united by close affinities and spoken by over 900,000 people in the central-eastern part of the Alps; and in the territory of Ladinia it is undoubtedly the most widely spoken language, acting as a unifying factor for the Ladinia, which is thus divided from the rest of the alpine territory.

Ladinia is made up of five valleys, Val Badia where Badiot is spoken, Val Gardena with Gherdëina, Val di Fassa, Livinallongo and Ampezzo, and here Ladin is still actively used by the approximately 30,000 local inhabitants. The different dialects are not very different from each other, they only have different influences according to the neighboring languages: for example, Gherdëina is influenced by German, Ampezan and Fodom by Venetian.

Ladino became established in Italy during the first century A.D., following the conquest of the Alpine region, including Ladinia, by the Romans under the command of the Roman leader Drusus. Before the Roman invasion, this territory was occupied by a very complex mix of populations, characterized by various languages and cultures, among which Norici and Celts.

It was the Romans who began to call the people of the Dolomites Reti, an important part of which descends most likely from the Etruscans who retreated on the central-eastern Alpine arc following the violent Celtic invasions in northern Italy; the Norici instead, descend from Norico (the current central Austria) always fled because of the invasions, in this case suffered by the Rugi, Avari and Slavs.

¹²⁵ Regione Molise, *Minoranze linguistiche – Veneto*, regionemolise.it.

The Roman soldiers brought with them the “vulgar” Latin spoken in everyday life, which mixed with the Rhaetian and Noric languages of the Dolomites and gave origin to Ladin. Later, German and then Italian influenced Ladin, giving rise to the language we know today.

The Ladin language is therefore composed of Rhaetian and Norse idioms, and as mentioned above, it is a language in its own right, recognized as such by the European Union.

Many Italian dialects have their origins in Ladin, a very ancient language that has managed to resist until today thanks to the natural morphology of the territory where the people who spoke it lived; in fact, after the migration of the Germanic populations, the Ladin language remained isolated in the valleys that at that time were difficult to reach. Despite the influences and pressures of Italian and German, the Ladin language is still alive with dignity in all five valleys, not only thanks to its isolated location in the territory, but also thanks to the work of linguists and speakers of Ladin who have fought for the preservation of their mother tongue, so much so that they have identified their culture and language with their own flag. This flag was adopted on May 5, 1920, during a protest by representatives of the Ladin valleys on the Gardena Pass, regarding the decisions of the Treaty of Saint-Germain, which did not recognize the existence of the Ladin people as well as the German populations of South Tyrol, which had recently been annexed to Italy: essentially, the protest claimed the right to self-determination of the peoples and recognition as a community.¹²⁶

The determination of the Latin language to remain active and present within the territory of the Dolomites, however, is not exempt from the threat of extinction. In fact, Ladin, oppressed by Italian, English and German among television, internet and globalization, is included in the ‘Atlas of the World’s languages in danger’: certainly, as reported above, from a quantitative point of view the language is doing well and there is a spontaneous adhesion of the population, on the other hand this language suffers from a qualitative point of view: the new generations tend, in fact, not to speak it correctly and for this reason countermeasures are necessary to keep alive the tradition of this dialect.

¹²⁶ Ladinia.it, *La lingua ladina / Nosc lingaz dla uma. La lingua delle cinque vallate della Ladinia nelle Dolomiti.*

In recent years, in fact, schools in Val Badia, Val Gardena and Val di Fassa have been teaching Ladin, both written and spoken, alongside Italian, German and English. The Church has also made changes to the language and for some years now liturgies have often been conducted in Ladin. As far as public roles are concerned, in order to work in this field, with the exception of the armed forces and the police, it is required to pass an exam and obtain a license issued by the province, which recognizes the knowledge of the Ladin language. Moreover, all the official acts of the municipalities, documents and toponymy are also written in Ladin. The inhabitants of Ladinia have also the possibility to read a newspaper “*La Usc di Ladins*” and to watch some television and radio programs completely in Ladin language.

With Law n. 482, Art. 2 on 15/12/1999, Ladin was acknowledged as a minority language of the Italian state. Ladin is recognized as an official language by the Trentino-Alto Adige region’s Autonomy Statute of 1948. The Ladin villages of Bolzano (Val Badia and Val Gardena) do, however, have stronger legal and administrative protection than those in Trento and Belluno provinces.¹²⁷

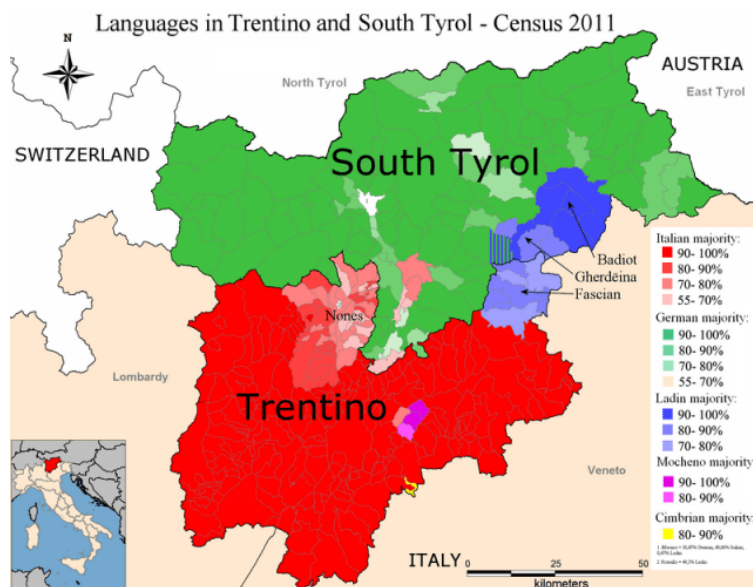


Figure 9: *The linguistic spread of the Trentino-Alto Adige region*, in SCHEGGE Magazine, *Viaggio tra le minoranze linguistiche del Trentino-Alto Adige*, scheggemag.it, 08.06.2018

¹²⁷ Regione Molise, *Minoranze linguistiche – Veneto*, regionemolise.it.

2.3.5 Minority languages and dialects in Friuli Venezia Giulia

Professor Fabiana Fusco¹²⁸ argues that nowadays, and for centuries, Friuli-Venezia Giulia is a space of complex inter-linguistic contact. The current situation of the presence of different linguistic combinations was determined by ancient immigrations and settlements, which brought together the Romans, the Germans and the Slavs. The region thus naturally represents an interesting example of a multilingual community, especially thanks to its geographical position and the consequent relations on the north-south and east-west European routes: Friuli-Venezia Giulia is thus an inevitable point of passage.

For these reasons, it is clear how the presence of neo-Latin idioms is justified, namely Italian (in its standard form and in its regional variants), Friulian (*furlan*, also called *marilenghe*, that is, ‘maternal language’) and Veneto (the Udine Veneto, the ‘*bisiaco*’ in the territory of Monfalcone, Marano and Grado in Udine), and on the other hand, idioms of Germanic (present in the Alpine watershed between Friuli and Austria) and Slavic (along the border with Slovenia). All this inevitably determines that these areas of multilingual intertwining are of considerable historical and sociolinguistic interest. Within this panorama, there are obviously also local and regional varieties, whose presence is due to massive movements of groups coming from various Italian regions, who chose Friuli as a stable landing place or as a place of transit: these are consistent migratory flows that brought manpower from Eastern countries and from the most depressed areas of the world.

Friulian is one of the historical linguistic minorities included in law 482/1999, and it is also the object of protection by regional norms, which have also defined an official spelling: thanks to the presence of these laws, various initiatives for the safeguard and diffusion of the language and projects of normalization and standardization have been encouraged.

¹²⁸ Fabiana Fusco is Associate Professor of Linguistics and Theory and History of Translation at the University of Udine. Her scientific interests are in the field of Italian and Friulian sociolinguistics, linguistic interference (*Che cos'è l'interlinguistica*, Rome, Carocci 2008) and the history and techniques of translation. Since 1997 she has been collaborating with the International Center on Plurilingualism, of which she is Deputy Director.

It should be noted, however, that Friulian is not spread homogeneously in the region: the dialect is in fact predominant and strong in the mountain and hill areas and in those distant from the major centers and communication routes, in the territories of the provinces of Pordenone and Gorizia, while in the urban centers Italian has taken over. In addition, within the Friulian area coexist types of dialect, inter-comprehensible: Western, Central-Eastern and Carnic. Trieste and Muggia are particular cases, where Friulian was once spoken but was abandoned in the second half of the nineteenth century in favor of the Venetian type.

While once the use of Friulian was exclusively linked to the rural and traditional environment, more recently its use has expanded to administrative and official areas, where there is a real bilingualism between Italian and Friulian. Certainly, the progressive decline of Friulian is a phenomenon that should not be ignored but certainly not alarming since this dialect is considered a bond of community cohesion. The history of the region, the conformation of the territory, the temperament of the inhabitants who are little inclined to innovations, the process of urbanization, which is not massive, all favor the continuous use of the language which in this way maintains a relevant degree of vitality.

German

The settlements of the Germanic-speaking communities, already dealt with previously, were mostly spontaneous and by groups of people not too numerous, who from the Carinthian valleys during the 13th century moved to seek employment in mining or for the exploitation of depopulated lands. As for the German-speaking people of Val Canale (whose main centers are Pontebba and Tarvisio) the question is different since they were subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918. These communities use varieties of German or Austro-Bavarian, which have come into close contact with Slovenian and Friulian. It is unfortunately a natural process that in the last decades has seen, especially among young people, a progressive disappearance of the ancient languages: this regression is fortunately partly slowed down by the rediscovery of one's own origins and a more mature linguistic awareness, favored also in this case by many initiatives promoted by cultural associations and local institutions.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Fiorenzo Toso, *Le minoranze linguistiche in Italia*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2008.

Slovenian

Slovenian is spoken on the eastern outskirts of the autonomous region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, close to Slovenia's border. However, it is necessary to distinguish communities in the province of Udine from those in the provinces of Gorizia and Trieste for linguistic, historical, and sociopolitical reasons: the former speak archaic dialect varieties that have long been isolated from their motherland due to the fact that their territory first belonged to the Republic of Venice, then to the Lombardo-Veneto Kingdom, and then to Italy from 1866 onwards. Instead, the Slovenes of Trieste and Gorizia, who entered Italy in 1918, were continually incorporated into the Slovenian cultural and political framework. Slovene language communities are typically found in multilingual settings, coexisting alongside Friulian language or Veneto-Julian dialect groups. Although there are no official statistics on the number of the Slovene minority in Italy, it might be estimated to be between 50 and 100 thousand individuals. Minority protection law has long been related to international treaties that governed relations between Italy and, first, Yugoslavia, and later Slovenia. In practice, the protection of the minority is mainly linked to the educational aspect and to the field of education in the field of ethnic-linguistic minorities; in any case, the legislation of protection was limited to the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia, while no form of protection, except those provided by regional laws, referred to the Slovene communities of the province of Udine, which remained uninvolved in the events of the immediate post-war period and in the issues concerning the sovereignty of Trieste. The situation is now going to new more favorable developments, after the approval by the Italian Parliament of an organic law concerning the whole Slovene-speaking minority of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, law n. 38 of 2001.¹³⁰

The Slavophones of the pre-Alpine strip east of Friuli have preserved their ancient language up to the present day, favored by the consistent isolation in sparsely populated areas where their settlements were found, and by the persistent attachment to their ethnic-linguistic origins. As far as the recognition and the protection of these languages are concerned, the Slovenes of the Province of Udine were not much considered until the coming into force of the law 38/2001, which by introducing "Norme per la tutela della minoranza linguistica slovena della Regione Friuli-Venezia Giulia", started to promote a significant linguistic-cultural policy of development of the local idioms, supported also

¹³⁰ Ibid.

here by regional measures. The other Slovene communities of the region, on the other hand, enjoy the protection of the State, particularly in the educational sector, provided for at the end of the Second World War by the Memorandum of London of 1948 and then by the Treaty of Osimo of 1975.

Part of the inhabitants of the Slovene-speaking areas do not agree in the choice of the linguistic model to be protected and promoted, since they would like to include the various forms below the literary Slovene, considered able to also safeguard the linguistic identity of the valleys of the province of Udine. Opposite is the thought of a consistent part of the population, which considers this an attempt to impose a single language to the disadvantage of the local languages, which are considered instead the heritage to be protected. This position also depends on the fact that it is well known that there is a strong link with the historical and cultural events of Friuli, while relations with the Slovenes on the other side have never been so strong. Moreover, until a few years ago, emphasizing the linguistic relationships with the neighbors of the ex-Yugoslavian Republic was something that many people disliked.¹³¹



Figure 10: *The main linguistic varieties into which the Friulian area is divided*, Laura Vanelli, *Friulani, dialetti*, Enciclopedia dell'Italiano, Treccani, treccani.it, 2010.

¹³¹ Fabiana Fusco, *Il Friuli-Venezia Giulia: mosaico di lingue, lingue di minoranza e dialetti*, Treccani Magazine *Lingua Italiana*, treccani.it, 09.11.2011.

2.3.6 The Walser

Walser is a small community descending from the ancient lineage of the noble Vallaise family, which in the Middle Ages dominated the lower Aosta Valley and enjoyed privileges based on a special statute. Their language is endangered, and it is a particular variant of the Southern German dialect, called High Alemannic, and is very similar to Swiss German in its most archaic form. There are three variants: the *titsch* of Gressoney-Saint-Jean and Macugnaga, the *töitschu* of Issime and the *titzschu* of Alagna Valsesia and Rimella in Valsesia. In Italy the Walser are still present in Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont and in Lombardy only in Livigno.

The speakers of these two languages are called Walser as a whole, more specifically according to the variants they are called Gressonari and Issime, and they still use their dialects to communicate with each other in the daily life of the same community, but they do not speak Germanic between the two groups. As soon as they leave the borders of the village, however, they must be able to express themselves in another language or dialect such as Italian, French, the French-Provençal patois of Valle d'Aosta and Piedmontese.

In Val d'Aosta and Piedmont, the Walsers' language is at risk of extinction. The causes are mainly the substantial emigration from the mountains to the city that has characterized especially the last century, and the current lack of interest of young people to learn and pass on this language. The current number of speakers is about 3,500 units, with the lowest peak in Val d'Aosta, where only 17% of the inhabitants of the German-speaking villages declare themselves to be Walser native speakers.



Figure 11: *Geographical map of the Walser colonies*, Andrea Raimondi, *La lingua walser, l'antico tesoro delle Alpi. Intervista ad Anna Maria Bacher, la poetessa in titsch*, Rivista Savej, rivistasavej.it, 27.12.2017.

2.3.7 French, Franco Provençal, Occitan

There is an official Italian-French bilingualism policy in Valle d'Aosta. The public has the option of using one or the other language in dealings with the administration, and employee recruitment is contingent on active knowledge of French.

Bilingual road signs and toponymy are also available. International accords governing bilingualism are, however, less stringent, and obligatory than those governing the use of German in South Tyrol.

Apart from specific occurrences, the use of French in Val d'Aosta and the Piedmontese valleys is related to school learning, or a tradition learned outside the home setting, making even reasonable estimates of frequency difficult.

The special Statute of political and administrative autonomy of the Valle d'Aosta region since 1948 recognizes the official use of French alongside Italian.

The word "Francoprovençal" refers to a collection of dialects that are quite distinct from one another, having phonetic and morphological characteristics that set them apart from neighboring Occitan and French dialects.

In the Valle d'Aosta and the province of Turin, Francoprovençal dialects are spoken in the Sangone valley, the middle and lower Susa valleys, the Cenischia valley, and the valleys of Lanzo, Orco, and Soana. The dialects of the two towns of Faeto and Celle San Vito in the province of Foggia are likewise French-Provençal, with the language having been brought there by Waldensian immigrants in the 15th century. The progress, even recent, of Piedmontese has diminished the region of the Francoprovençal dialect in the valleys of the province of Turin, which in the past must have been considerably more stretched towards the plain. In the Valle d'Aosta, there are around 70 thousand speakers, while in the Turin valleys, there are about 20 thousand Franco-Provençal dialect speakers. The francoprovençal dialect has long been in decline in the villages of Faeto and Celle San Vito.¹³²

Occitan, also known as Langue d'oc or Provençal, is an Indo-European language that belongs to the western Neo-Latin group. It was developed from Iberian and Celtic-Ligurian languages, which were Latinized during the Roman invasion. The Occitan-speaking population is concentrated in the Piedmontese provinces of Turin and Cuneo; however, a dialect of Occitan is spoken in Guardia Piemontese in the province of Cosenza, where it was introduced by Waldensian settlers in the fourteenth century. The Occitan dialects, which previously covered a greater region, are now very fractured and diverse, owing in part to the centuries of impact of the Piedmontese dialect. The Occitan communities have always lived in these valleys and have undoubtedly been influenced by the nearby Provençal communities over the centuries, through seasonal work performed by valley residents and the presence of immigrants from beyond the Alps, driven by the persecution of the Albigensians in French Occitania.¹³³

¹³² Regione Molise, *Minoranze linguistiche – Valle d'Aosta*, regionemolise.it.

¹³³ Regione Molise, *Minoranze linguistiche – Piemonte*, regionemolise.it.

2.3.8 The Greek linguistic minority in Salento and Calabria

The Greek linguistic communities in Italy are present in the province of Lecce (Salento community) and in the province of Reggio Calabria (Calabrian community) entry Greek, community of the Encyclopedia of Italian Treccani, 2010), the areas in which these communities are settled, called Grecia Salentina and Bovesia, consist respectively in nine municipalities: Calimera, Castrignano dei Greci, Corigliano d'Otranto, Martano, Martignano, Sternatia and Zollino, where the variety is still quite present, Melpignano and Soleto, where instead the number of speakers has been drastically reduced.

The Greek dialects spoken by these communities in Salento are known as greco-otrantini or greco-salentini, those spoken in Calabria are called greco-calabresi or greco-calabri. The Salentine variety is also called 'griko'; to refer instead to the dialect of the Calabrian area, the term 'greco-calabro' is used, even if there are those who prefer to use this term to refer to wider territories of southern Italy characterized by Greekness.

The presence of Greek Hellenophone colonies in Italy, explains Professor Antonio Romano,¹³⁴ dates to various testimonies and news of the end of the thirteenth century and fourteenth century, but only at the beginning of the nineteenth century the question of the origin of Greek communities in Italy began to become of more widespread interest. The origin of such colonies is not entirely clear: the hypothesis of a Magna Graecia origin clashes with the hypothesis of a Greekness of Byzantine imprint. The first hypothesis is supported by the work of Gerhard Rohlfs (*Scavi linguistici nella Magna Grecia*, Rome, 1933), while the second hypothesis was argued by Oronzo Parlangèli, who in 1953 with his essay, *Sui dialetti romanzi e romaici del Salento*, exposed arguments in favor of an ancient Romanization of the area affected by the Greek colonies; theory that had already

¹³⁴ Antonio Romano was born in Castrignano del Capo (Lecce) in 1968. He is a confirmed researcher of Glottology and Linguistics at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the University of Turin, where he is responsible for the Laboratory of Experimental Phonetics "Arturo Genre" (www.lfsag.unito.it). He carries out research on intonational and rhythmic variation in Romance languages and dialects (and not), conducting experimental phonetic investigations also on minority languages. In addition to about a hundred articles on dialectology, descriptive and experimental phonetics, acoustics and articulation (in journals and proceedings of national and international conferences), he has about ten publications of wider scope (books or book chapters), including his PhD thesis, published in France (*Analyse des structures prosodiques des dialectes et de l'italien régional parlés dans le Salento: approche linguistique et instrumentale* , Lille: Presses Univ. du Septentrion), *Inventari sonori delle lingue* (Alessandria, Dell'Orso),

found a supporter in Giuseppe Morosi, who already in 1870 recognized an affinity of these languages with modern Greek.

The theory that seems to hold nowadays, given the presence of forms of ancient bilingualism, is the one that argues that the colonization of these areas in Italy took place through the grafting of Byzantine elements in a pre-existing matrix Magna Graecia, although it is still persistent the hypothesis that at least in the Salento area, the Greek was introduced only in the Byzantine era.

The interest in these Greek languages, in the second half of the last century, led to investigations, conducted for Grecia by the Lecce Group and for Bovesia by Paolo Martino, which brought to light the fact that these communities were profoundly multilingual, even though they had not been so in the past. In fact, at the beginning of the twentieth century, many of these communities were still predominantly Greek, but in the 1950s-60s, more and more family groups were using Romance varieties or Italian to communicate with the other non-Hellenophone inhabitants of the region.

Today, according to UNESCO, the Greek languages of Italy appear among the languages that are defined as seriously threatened with extinction: the number of speakers has in fact been reduced to about 13,000, with a good chance that the real and active use is much lower.

Based on similar considerations, in order to try to counteract the advancement of the extinction of these languages through the collection of linguistic data, the University of Patras had led to the creation of an online sound data base which is now, unfortunately, no longer available. Thanks also to the law for the protection of minorities 482/99, these areas have been the object of impressive recovery campaigns, by local operators and cultural associations, and of intense activities of sensitization of the speakers by the local administrations and some government institutions.

All these initiatives have had considerable repercussions at a political, cultural, and even economic level, since they have actually benefited the reinvigoration of the spoken language in some families, which until then had been classified as culturally inferior and underdeveloped. Now, these languages are gaining a foothold in different segments of the population and are beginning to be considered as bearers of important cultural and identity elements. As far as language policy initiatives are concerned, bodies have been set up to

promote the economic development of these areas and to take care of the protection of their linguistic and cultural heritage.¹³⁵

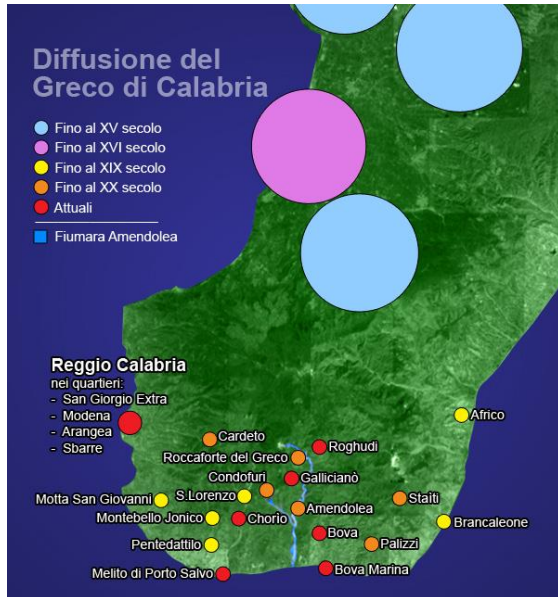


Figure 12: *Spreading of Grecanico in Calabria, Dialetto greco-calabro.*



Figure 13: *Grecia salentina, Rete turistica della Grecia salentina, greciasalentina.info.*

2.3.9 Tabarchino

“[...] Then one of the children slips, sits on the floor and bursts into tears. His mother rushes over: “Meicö, nu stò à cianze, ch'àua a mamma a te tie sciù” (poor thing, don't cry, now your mother will put you back on your feet). The child insists in tears under the impassive gaze of the old men: “ma me fa mò, ma me fa mò” (it hurts me). The mother: “E àua, ascidiuzu! Tite sciù e vagni à divertite” Come on, don't be boring, get up and go back to playing). An old man's voice from under the branches of the ficus tree: “Nu se dixè divertise, o Grasiédà! Se dixè demuose” (you don't say divertise, Graziella, you say demuose)”.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Antonio Romano, *In Salento e Calabria le voci della minoranza linguistica greca*, Treccani Magazine Lingua Italiana, treccani.it, 09.11.2011.

¹³⁶ Fiorenzo Toso, *La minoranza negata: i Tabarchini*, Treccani Magazine Lingua Italiana, treccani.it, 09.11.2011.

Tabarchino is a language used by about ten thousand people between Carloforte and Calasetta, in the islands of Sulcis. The above anecdote is real, and it is an example of how Tabarchinians, and not only the elderly, are attached to their language and face in a negative way its change, inevitable when referring to a language characterized by so much linguistic creativity. This sense of adaptation and the ability to reinvent itself to adapt to new needs, is the main feature that makes this language so active: in 2006 the speakers of Tabarchino in Carloforte were about 86.7%, of which 84% were young people between 15 and 34 years old, homogeneously distributed by gender, social class, and level of education. Even the remaining 13.3% of people who do not speak Tabarchino understand it, unlike Sardinian, which is understood, but not spoken, by 12.2%.

The ancestors of the Tabarchinians, who arrived from Tunisia in 1738, were the descendants of the Ligurians who, in the first half of the 16th century, had moved to the African islet of Tabarca, a flourishing emporium and center of commercial exchanges, where coral fishing was linked to the trades that only its inhabitants were authorized to entertain with the local populations.

Hence the prestige of their idiom, an important instrument of commerce which remained so in Tunisia, even after part of the population of Tabarca moved to the island of San Pietro in Sardinia.

Throughout the nineteenth century, this language was used in Tunis, where a Tabarca community was active and well-integrated even after the establishment of the French protectorate in 1881, and from where in 1770 another group of settlers had meanwhile moved to Calasetta.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, it was also spoken on the island of Nueva Tabarca in Spain, colonized in 1769 by what remained of the remaining population of Tabarca, enslaved in 1741, then deported to Algiers and finally ransomed by the Catholic King. Tabarchin was the Mediterranean language par excellence, since it made it possible to establish relations with Genoese communities distributed from Gibraltar to Constantinople. It maintained for a long time its function as a prestigious commercial vehicle, even after the deportation of the Carlofortini to Tunis, between 1798 and 1803: this episode consolidated its presence in Tunisia under the reign of Ahmad bey (1838-1855), a great reformer sovereign, son of a former Carlofortine slave. Also in Carloforte

and Calasetta the contacts with Genoa and other ports were so frequent throughout the nineteenth century, that the language inevitably remained active and alive.

The use of this language at the expense of Italian is not limited to family contexts, but extends to bars, stores, and offices. The coexistence between the two languages and the importance of Taboque can be perceived in many ways: street names are strictly bilingual, even graffiti on walls are often in Taboque, and the Festival of Taboque Song is an annual event on a par with Sanremo; local radio and television stations often broadcast in Taboque. As far as education is concerned, schools promote didactic initiatives on the local language: the language is not taught, but the history, the local geography, the collective memory are handed down through this language. These initiatives are requested by the parents and strongly supported by the teachers: some years ago, public assemblies were organized by the schools to discuss the definition of the spelling of Tabarchino; a context in which a grammar was also defined, with consequent textbooks illustrated by the children.

Despite the fact that in Carloforte and Calasetta Tabarchino and its use are alive, active and perfectly integrated with the contemporary world, the law L.N. 482 has denied to this language the qualification of “historical linguistic minority”, a fact which has negative repercussions at a wider level, since these two municipalities are the only ones in Sardinia not to be admitted to a program of protection of a linguistic heritage, which until now the regional legislation recognizes as an integral part of Sardinian specificity. Certainly an inconsistency that has persisted since 1999, but that, despite not allowing this language to be recognized contrary to other linguistic minorities, does not discourage the speakers to continue its use and to be proud of their linguistic and cultural distinctiveness.

“Se vaggu pe mò i Turchi m'aciàppan, se vaggu pe tera i Sordi m'amàssan (if I go by sea the Turks capture me, if I go by land the Sardinians kill me): the proverb is indicative of the perception that Carlofortini and Calasettani have of themselves in relation to ‘others’.”¹³⁷

However, despite this sense of identity detached from others, it does not imply contempt or rejection towards those who, coming from outside, have been able to integrate themselves from a linguistic point of view. Moreover, most of the surnames of Carloforte and Calasetta, are not at all Genoese, but Sulcitan, Campidanese, Sicilian, Ponzesi, Campania, Calabria; a fact that finds justification in the migrations of various origins

¹³⁷ Ibid.

following the economic development of the Tabarchino speaking community. The evolution of Tabarchino until today has gone at the same speed as that of metropolitan Genoese: a Genoese and a Carlofortino can easily converse with each other.

In any case, however, the cultural and linguistic identity of the Tabarchini, remains clearly distinct from that of the continental Ligurians; an added value to a language that is intelligently handed down from generation to generation as a positive value.¹³⁸



Figure 14: *Geographical distribution of Tabarchino in Sardinia, Dialetto Tabarchino.*

¹³⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3: POLICIES TOWARDS ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

CONTENTS: 3.1 World Overview - 3.1.1 The Congress of Vienna - 3.1.2 The League of Nations - 3.1.3 The UN and the UN Charter - 3.1.4 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights - 3.1.5 The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - 3.1.6 The General Assembly Declaration on Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities - 3.1.7 The Working Group on Minorities - 3.2 European Policies - 3.2.1 The European Convention for The Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms - 3.2.2 The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages - 3.2.3 The Framework Convention for The Protection of National Minorities - 3.2.4 The Treaty on European Union (TEU) And the Treaty on the Functioning of European Union (TFEU) - 3.2.5 The Charter of Nice.

In this chapter I will examine the policies and measures taken towards minority and endangered languages, both by international legislation and by the European Union, seeking to understand how supranational entities have acted and aim to react in the short term to mitigate the damage caused by the process of language extinction.

3.1 World Overview

3.1.1 The Congress of Vienna¹³⁹

At the end of 1814 the greatest European powers met in the capital of the Habsburg Empire¹⁴⁰, Schönbrunn, with the aim of redrawing the borders of Europe and

¹³⁹ Congress of Vienna: complex of negotiations that took place (1814-15) between the victorious powers of the decade-long confrontation with Napoleon (Austria, Russia, Prussia and Great Britain), in which almost all other European states also participated; Treccani online Encyclopedia.

¹⁴⁰ Austria, United Kingdom, Prussia and Russia.

implementing the reassignment of the throne to the ousted and impoverished sovereigns of the Napoleonic period, initiating what is known as the ‘Restoration’ era.¹⁴¹

Although the term ‘Restoration’ indicates a return to the past, ‘A World Restored’ as Kissinger said,¹⁴² this era has a strong innovative aspect: it is the first historical period in which linguistic minorities have been protected.

The most crucial innovation in Vienna, and the one that justifies speaking of a new phase regarding minority rights, was the appearance for the first time of questions concerning what may be anachronistically called national minority rights. In fact, in the Final Protocol of the Congress of Vienna appeared the term ‘national minorities’: the term was not yet connoted with its later meaning that it has in the present day, but its importance and meaning were already widely known.¹⁴³ It was a rather generic expression that allowed linguistic minorities to be included, even if the term was born to protect more religious minorities. This note is important because, if we analyze the various treaties of protection preceding the final protocol of the Congress of Vienna over the centuries, we can see that religious rights have always been recognized by the legislation, but on the contrary, linguistic rights have always been ignored. It is as if there was a sort of discrimination within the discrimination itself: the linguistic minorities discriminated against, were included in the forms of protection, but were overpowered by the religious ones.

The first proof we can cite is the Edict of Nantes of 1598, through which King Henry IV recognized to his people the freedom to practice a cult different from the state one, with the aim of putting an end to the religious wars that had devastated France¹⁴⁴, soon revoked and replaced by King Louis XIV by the Edict of Fontainebleau.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Restoration: period of European history from 1815 to 1830, characterized by the struggle between on the one hand the old, restored monarchies, the old ruling dynasties and the privileges of the clergy and nobility, and on the other hand the new ideas of freedom and nationality; Treccani online Encyclopedia.

¹⁴² Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Matternich, Castlereagh and the problems of Peace 1812-1822*, Boston, Echo Point Books & Media, 2013.

¹⁴³ Andre Liebich, *Minority as Inferiority: Minority Rights in Historical Perspective*, Review of International Studies, Vol. 34, No. 2, 2008, pp. 253.

¹⁴⁴ The Edict of Nantes was a decree issued in Nantes by King Henry IV in April 1598 that ended the series of religious wars that had ravaged France from 1562 to 1598 by regulating the position of the Huguenots (French Calvinists) and established that there should be a right of freedom, worship, and equal rights between Huguenots and Catholics.

¹⁴⁵ The Edict of Fontainebleau, issued by Louis XIV of France on October 18, 1685, revoked the Edict of Nantes of Henry IV.

Later, the king of Hungary and the prince of Transylvania through the Treaty of Vienna of 1606 put an end to the civil war, started as a feudal revolt, by granting freedom of religion to the Protestant minority under their jurisdiction.¹⁴⁶

Fundamental for the protection of minorities was the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648¹⁴⁷, which sanctioned the principle of ‘cuius regio, eius religio’, which obliged the subjects to profess the religion of the state.¹⁴⁸

And again, the Treaty of Paris of 1763¹⁴⁹, the Treaty of Breslau of 1742¹⁵⁰, of Dresden of 1745¹⁵¹, were all united by the attempt to guarantee worship to religious minorities.

In art. 10 of the ‘Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen’ of 1789, it was stated that: “no one may be disturbed for his opinions, not even for his religious opinions, as long as their manifestation does not disturb the order established by law”.

We have seen how during the course of all these centuries, there has been a total absence of forms of protection of linguistic minorities, in favor of religious ones. This is explained by the fact that religion also had a political and juridical force, contrary to language.

Even if we consider 1815 as the beginning of the protection of linguistic minorities, the classical historical conceptions of minorities, developed between the second half of the 18th century and the 19th century, consider a nation as a single subject, with only one spoken language. The classical theories, therefore, do not present themselves in favor of the protection of minorities, since they do not fit into the concept of an ideal state, devoid of particularism and diversity.

¹⁴⁶ The Treaty of Vienna (also known as the Peace of Vienna) was signed on June 23, 1606 by István Bocskai, voivode of Transylvania, and Archduke Matthias of Habsburg. The agreement reached by the parties, mainly political-religious, closed a feudal revolt that turned into a real civil war.

¹⁴⁷ The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 ended the so-called Thirty Years' War, which began in 1618, and the Eighty Years' War, between Spain and the United Provinces.

¹⁴⁸ It was defined in the treaty resulting from the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 by the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire Charles V of Habsburg: it indicates the obligation of the subject to conform to the confession of the prince of his state, whether Protestant or Catholic and at the time of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 was universally accepted and succeeded in achieving peace.

¹⁴⁹ The Treaty of Paris of February 10, 1763, often also called the Peace of Paris, is a peace treaty signed in 1763 between Britain and France that ended the Seven Years' War, which involved most European states and their respective colonies.

¹⁵⁰ The Treaty of Breslau was a preliminary peace agreement signed on June 11, 1742 following lengthy negotiations at the Silesian capital Wroclaw. The treaty was signed by emissaries of Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria and King Frederick II of Prussia at the end of the First Silesian War.

¹⁵¹ The Treaty of Dresden (or Peace of Dresden) was signed on December 25, 1745 in Dresden between the Kingdom of Prussia, the Archduchy of Austria and the Electoral Principality of Saxony. It ended the Second Silesian War.

3.1.2 The League of Nations

During the 1900s, we witnessed the birth and development of the largest bodies of international law for the protection of human rights, first and foremost the League of Nations: the first intergovernmental organization with the purpose of protecting the quality of life of men, founded during the Paris Peace Conference¹⁵² of 1919-1920 where the problem of minorities was dealt with. The ‘Fourteen Points’ speech pronounced by the President in front of the Senate of the United States of America containing his intentions regarding the world order following the Great War, in fact, proposed a ‘peace without victors’ in order to promote harmony among nations based on equality¹⁵³.

3.1.3. The UN and the UN Charter

The abomination of the great wars and the Nazi period led to the need to adopt international measures for the protection of Human Rights: in 1945 the United Nations Organization¹⁵⁴ was born, with the specific purpose of initiating international action for the promotion and protection of human rights.

In art.1 point 3 of the Charter of the United Nations¹⁵⁵, the purpose of the organization is to achieve worldwide cooperation in the resolution of international issues of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian nature, as well as to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for everyone without regard to race, gender, language, or religion.¹⁵⁶

The first explicit reference to linguistic minorities in international law, although the right of linguistic minorities and the autonomy of language rights in this historical period still fall within human rights and the principle of non-discrimination.

¹⁵² The Paris Peace Conference was an international meeting during which the victorious countries of World War I redrew the borders of Europe.

¹⁵³ Smithsonian Magazine, *What Did President Wilson Mean When He Called for “Peace Without Victory” 100 Years Ago?*, smithsonianmag.com.

¹⁵⁴ It was born on October 24, 1945, at the end of World War II, in the wake of President Wilson's “14 Points”.

¹⁵⁵ The Charter of the United Nations is the founding agreement of the United Nations, un.org.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations Charter, un.org.

3.1.4. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In the preamble to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹⁵⁷ it is stated that human rights are to be recognized universally. The use of this adjective in its modern normative conception is very significant in that it provides that rights are to be referred to man as an individual.

We see how this Declaration symbolizes the beginning of a new way of conceiving human rights and their applicability also from the fact that the General Assembly of the United Nations at the time of its proclamation commissioned the Secretary General to disseminate it not only in the five official languages of the organization but also in all other languages.

A new approach to the individual is immediately apparent from the first article, which states, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”.¹⁵⁸ Thus, the conception that all men are equal is overcome and replaced by a vision that considers individuals in their diversity, and that guarantees them equal rights and equal dignity: in this sense, the purpose of the declaration is to act to protect human rights in accordance with the principle of equality.

The Declaration continues with Article 2 and states that everyone is entitled to all of the rights and freedoms enshrined in this Declaration, regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be established based on the political, juridical, or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it is independent, trust, non-self-governing, or subject to any other kind of sovereignty limitation¹⁵⁹.

At this point we have an obvious, concrete and direct reference to language: language minorities must be protected, and states must employ measures to ensure this protection.

¹⁵⁷ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a document about individual rights individuals, signed in Paris on December 10, 1948, ohchr.org.

¹⁵⁸ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 1, undocs.org.

¹⁵⁹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 2, undocs.org.

3.1.5. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)¹⁶⁰ is a 1966 United Nations treaty whose purpose is to ensure respect for human civil and political rights. Article 27 states that individuals belonging to ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities should not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, profess and practice their own religion, or use their own language in those States where such minority exist.

The modernity of this point is the dwelling precisely on language rights: it is evidence that Europe pays special attention to (also) linguistic minorities and language rights. In contrast, however, to what is stated in the International Pact, there are multiple occasions that can be seen as proof that language is not always an instrument of union, but rather can become a reason for discrimination in the field of politics, study and public life.

In the Treaty reference is made to the existence of the right to use the language in common with other members of one's own group, but at that time this right was not always respected. First of all, by General Franco, who made voluntarily destroy all Spanish texts containing poems, writings, laws and regulations that were written in the language of the Autonomous Community of reference, with the aim of eliminating any cultural difference, prohibiting any language and dialect that were not Castilian. But with this abolitionist behavior, generated the need to give birth to real modern language rights as we understand them now.

3.1.6. The General Assembly Declaration on National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

The 'Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities'¹⁶¹ was adopted in 1992 by the General Assembly of the United

¹⁶⁰ United Nation Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 entry into force 23 March 1976, in accordance with Article 49, ohchr.org.*

¹⁶¹ United Nation Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. Adopted by General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, ohchr.org.*

Nations in order to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of any kind.¹⁶²

The first paragraph of Article 1 refers to the protection and promotion of the linguistic identity of minorities, and states that Governments must preserve minorities' existence as well as their national or ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic identities inside their respective territories, and they must foster conditions conducive to the advancement of such identity. For the first time, language is considered necessary in order to create an identity, since individuals identify themselves in their own language, which consequently has an individual and social value.¹⁶³

The first and second paragraphs of Article 2 state that persons belonging to national or ethnic minorities, religious and linguistic minorities (hereinafter referred to as minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, profess and practice their own religion, and use their own language freely and without interference or discrimination, in private and in public. Minorities have the right to actively participate in cultural, religious, social, economic, and political life.

Here it is therefore understood that the language spoken by the minority must be able to be used both in private places and in public contexts, freely and without any form of discrimination: therefore, both within one's own home or in any other context that can be considered private; and in contexts considered public, therefore in the school, work, bureaucratic, religious sphere for example. It is fundamental that this right can be enjoyed without any form of discrimination, since being able to use one's own language, even a minority one, affects another fundamental right which is that of freedom of opinion. Since speaking and expressing one's opinion is a fundamental right, being discriminated against because of the language in which one expresses such an opinion is a form of damage to both these rights.

The third paragraph deals with a more complicated issue: the use of minority languages in the political sphere, the possibility of minorities to participate in the elections of their country and in political life. This right has seen its violation multiple times.

¹⁶² The United Nations General Assembly is the most representative organ of the UN. It is composed of representatives of all the member states and has mainly advisory functions.

¹⁶³ Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, art. 1.

Here we see a direct reference to the exercise of rights in an effective manner: minorities must be able to exercise all the rights in the declaration and states must ensure this exercise of rights by minorities whenever possible by actively taking measures to avoid discrimination or inequality. The phrase “whenever possible” explains the fact that there are limits to minority rights: national law and international standards. That is, where the practice of a right goes against what is considered acceptable by European culture, that right cannot be protected. Often this situation occurs in the case of national practices that are not only distant from European culture and practices but are even considered unacceptable by the Union. States should take appropriate measures to ensure that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities have adequate opportunities to learn or receive instruction in their mother tongue; additionally, states should, where appropriate, take educational measures to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language, and culture of the minorities that exist. Minority members should have enough opportunity to learn about the society as a whole.

“States should consider appropriate measures so that persons belonging to minorities may participate fully in the economic progress and development in their country”: the fifth paragraph refers to the need for minorities to work, and therefore to have to have the linguistic tools to participate in the working life of the country, to ensure the progress of society.

Article 5 declares that national policies and programs of cooperation and assistance between States must be elaborated considering also the legitimate interests of minorities.

Art. 6 states that states must cooperate in order to promote mutual understanding and trust, including through the exchange of information and experience, although this article is too general: from a practical point of view, it is objectively difficult that states are completely in favor of cooperating, exchanging information and advice. In fact, art. 7 deals with establishing that states must cooperate in order to ensure the respect of the rights enucleated in the declaration, stating that the activity of the state must not be unilateral, but must be collaborative: the states therefore must unite to protect the rights of minorities.

In art. 8, second paragraph, the General Assembly clarifies the fact that compliance with the declaration does not affect the enjoyment by majorities of human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized by universal sources. The last two paragraphs, on the

other hand, recall the principle of equality, territorial integrity and independence as inescapable and inviolable canons.

The Declaration concludes by guaranteeing that the organs of the United Nations are actively engaged in order to guarantee the respect of the principles and rights listed above.

3.1.7. The Working Group on Minorities

It is certain that since the Declaration was drafted by the General Assembly, it has a fundamental importance, even if it does not provide legal obligations for the States that have adopted it and there are no ways to ascertain possible violations committed.

The Working Group on Minorities,¹⁶⁴ founded in 1995 by the Subcommittee on Combating Discriminatory Measures and Protecting Minorities, has as its purpose the protection of the rights of minorities and therefore verifies that the various States are behaving in a manner appropriate to what is stated in the Declaration. Since 2007, the Working Group has been transformed into a Forum on minority issues, accepting the requests of the non-governmental organizations MRG (Minority Rights Group) and IMADR (International movement against all forms of discrimination and racism).

¹⁶⁴ United Nation Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, *The Former Working Group on Minorities*, ohchr.org.

3.2 European Policies

3.2.1. The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

The ECHR¹⁶⁵ is a convention signed on November 4, 1950, by the twelve states which at that time were part of the Council of Europe¹⁶⁶ and came into force in 1953.

Today it is in force in all 47 states of the Council of Europe and, as can be deduced from its name, it is one of the pillars of the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In the Preamble, the signatory governments refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the inspirational source of the convention: the Council of Europe aims at a closer union among its members, through the respect of their rights and freedoms in order to ensure peace and justice in the world. As far as linguistic minorities are concerned, there are two normative provisions to be mentioned.

Primarily, there is Article 6 of the ECHR, which is the reference point for all procedural disciplines since it establishes the concept of fair trial. According to the third paragraph, point a), everyone accused of a crime has the following fundamental rights: the right to be informed immediately and thoroughly about the nature and reason of the allegation filed against him in a language he understands. According to paragraph e) of the same article, every accused person has the right to free interpretation services if he cannot understand or speak the language used in court. According to Article 14, the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms contained in this Convention shall be protected regardless of gender, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, participation in a national minority, property, birth, or other status.

¹⁶⁵ ECHR, https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention_eng.pdf

¹⁶⁶ Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom and Turkey.

3.2.2 The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML)¹⁶⁷ is a treaty that was concluded in Strasbourg on November 5, 1992, within the framework of the Council of Europe and entered into force in March 1998. The very interesting point is that all states can adhere to it, even those that do not have minority languages within their borders.

It was created to promote the safeguard of minority languages as cultural heritage in danger of extinction, but also in order to guarantee minorities the possibility to participate in public life. States that have signed and ratified the convention in Part II, paragraph 1 Article 7 - Objectives and principles, commit themselves to: Recognize regional and minority languages as expressions of cultural richness; respect the geographical area where a regional or minority language is rooted; take effective action to promote these languages; facilitate their use, written and spoken, in public and private life; promote cross-border exchanges; prohibit any distinction, discrimination, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the practice of a minority language or any act intended to discourage or endanger its maintenance or development; and promote understanding among all language groups in a country.¹⁶⁸

The Charter is divided into 23 articles and five parts, and it is in Part III that it deals with indicating the measures to be taken by states in pursuit of the above-mentioned goals. The most relevant are certainly: to ensure pre-school, primary, secondary and university education in the minority or regional language, as well as to ensure adult education or lifelong learning courses in minority or regional languages, ensuring that the history and culture of the minority or regional language are also taught.

The Charter stipulates that in criminal, civil and administrative proceedings, judgments must be conducted in the minority or regional language at the request of the parties, who must be able to express themselves in their own language at no additional cost and with the assistance of an interpreter, if necessary.

Public officials and public administrations must use regional and minority languages in their dealings with persons who address them in those languages and must make available to minorities forms and documents in those languages.

¹⁶⁷ Details of Treaty No.148, *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 05.11.1992, coe.int.

¹⁶⁸ CETS 148 *ECRML*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 5.11.1992, p.3.

An article of the Charter (art. 7, part 3) is dedicated to the mass media, and it is established that the Parties undertake to ensure the creation of at least one radio station and one television channel in the minority language, to facilitate the creation and diffusion of audio and audiovisual productions in minority languages.

In the cultural field, art.12, it is provided that the Parties commit themselves to create theaters, cinemas, libraries, video libraries and other meeting places where minority or regional languages are spoken.

In addition, any provision which without justified reasons restricts the use of the minority or regional language, hindering the participation of the minority in the economic and social life of the country, shall be excluded from the legislation.

Finally, the Parties agree to implement existing bilateral and multilateral agreements that bind them to the countries where the same language is used in identical or comparable forms.¹⁶⁹

3.2.3 The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

In the preamble to Convention, it is stated that the Council of Europe and the member states of the treaty, consider that a pluralist and really democratic society should not only accept each person's ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity, but also offer adequate opportunities for them to express, preserve, and develop their identity.¹⁷⁰ It is necessary to create a climate of tolerance and dialogue so that minorities represent a factor not of division, but of enrichment of the country.

It should also be borne in mind that harmony and peace are not only guaranteed by cooperation between states, but cross-border cooperation at regional and local levels is considered necessary, without prejudice to the Constitution and other norms guaranteeing the integrity of the State. The Explanatory Report of the Convention explains the reasons why it was adopted. Since the ECHR is the most important source of guarantee for the protection of minorities, the Council of Europe should not consider it necessary to enact

¹⁶⁹ CETS 148 *ECRML*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 5.11.1992, p. 11.

¹⁷⁰ CETS 157 *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1.11.1995, p.1.

further sources on the subject; however, if deemed necessary, it will not hesitate to enact new legislation for the protection of minorities.

The Convention was concluded on February 1, 1995, with the main objectives of specifying the legal principles to be observed by States to ensure the protection of national minorities. Considering that the conditions of the minorities present in the States vary from territory to territory, the Council of Europe has granted the States a margin of appreciation at the legislative and decision-making level. It must be made clear, however, that the Convention in no case gives a definition of “national minorities”: a concrete approach has been adopted, based on the assumption that it is not possible to arrive at a single and shared definition of “national minority”.

The implementation of the principles contained in the Convention must be carried out through the adoption of legislation and specific national policies and does not imply the establishment of collective rights. Particular attention is placed on the protection of persons belonging to national minorities, who must be able to exercise their rights individually and in communion with other members of the minority.

The Convention has been strongly criticized by the doctrine, on the assumption that it does not provide any definition of ‘minority’, and consequently it results theoretical and inapplicable to those realities in which state entities have legislated and acted against minorities. It is curious to observe how the act in question was born in the logic of protecting many individuals and for this very reason does not impose any definitional limitations on the concept of minorities, but ends up being, on the contrary, theoretical, and not pragmatic, as desired by the legislator.

3.2.4. The Treaty on European Union (TEU) and The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)

Article 13 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community, born in 1957¹⁷¹, states that without prejudice to the other provisions of this Treaty and within the limits of the powers conferred on the Community by it, the Council may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament.¹⁷² The six signatory states (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and The Netherlands) were evidently inspired by the principle of non-discrimination. The text of the treaty, however, protects against discrimination on the grounds of ‘sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation’, but does not mention ‘language’.

The Treaty Establishing the European Community has been affected by developments at international level. In particular, the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) was signed in Maastricht on February 7, 1992 and came into force on November 1, 1993.

Also in this case, it is clear that the reference to language is not there, a fact of great weight, as it risks excluding from the scope of applicability of the provision, linguistic minorities. However, the expression ‘ethnic origin’¹⁷³ can be interpreted extensively and therefore lead to the extension of protection to linguistic minorities.

Moreover, it should be remembered that the main aims of the treaty are not so much to establish universally recognized human rights, but to establish a common foreign and security policy, police, and judicial cooperation in criminal matters (JAI) and to establish a monetary union.

¹⁷¹ European Union Consolidated Versions of The Treaty on European Union and of The Treaty Establishing The European Community 2002, Official Journal of the European Communities, eur-lex.europa.eu.

¹⁷²Treaty establishing the European Community (Nice consolidated version) - Part One: Principles - Article 13, eur-lex.europa.eu.

¹⁷³ Treaty establishing the European Community, art.13, part I, cited work.

3.2.5 The Charter of Nice

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union¹⁷⁴, also known as the Nice Charter, was proclaimed for the first time on December 7, 2000, in Nice, and a second time on December 12, 2007, in Strasbourg, by Parliament, Council and Commission. It dedicates Title III to “Equality” and states, in Article 21, that:

“Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.”¹⁷⁵

This is an example of how another source refers to the principle of non-discrimination as an application of equality among people.

¹⁷⁴ *Charter of Fundamental Rights of The European Union (2000/C 364/01)*, Official Journal of the European Communities, 18.12.2000, europarl.europa.eu.

¹⁷⁵ *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*, Article 21 - Non-discrimination, Official Journal of the European Union C 303/17, fra.europa.eu.

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the research carried out during this thesis and the positions taken during the course of this work, I have amply illustrated that the issue of minority languages and languages in danger of extinction is a real problem that cannot be ignored. But this topic should not be underestimated either since the speed and the ways in which the phenomenon of disappearance of minority languages is advancing are increasing enormously.

This work does not want to prove a position by refuting another one, since an antithesis would not even have the sense to exist: it is undeniable and it is widely indicated that the phenomenon exists and causes serious damages to many different fields, both linguistic and cultural, of tradition and knowledge. If the properly linguistic sphere is not the priority factor for which a person moves and commits himself to fight against linguistic death, Chapter 1 explains and illustrates all the other reasons why we all cannot remain indifferent to it.

Neither can we put forward the position that the phenomenon of the disappearance of languages does not concern us closely and does not fall within the sphere of interest of any individual, if not of the scholars of the subject: the list of countries given in Chapter 2 is intended to be an undeniable demonstration of how much this catastrophe exists in every country of the world, without exception, and that therefore it concerns, or rather should concern, each one of us.

As far as Italy is concerned, we can see how the country, both at regional and national level, has moved and is moving in a very positive way to preserve those languages that are in danger, mostly dialects and regional languages. I firmly believe that the characteristic of the Italian people to be tied to their traditions, customs, country, and origins, is a great factor in helping to preserve and protect the languages present on the territory besides Italian.

At a world and European level, we have certainly seen how several actions have been carried out to contrast the phenomenon, and how we are increasingly realizing the inestimable value a language carries and how we are moving to preserve this value.

We cannot know now if what is being done at the national, European, and global level is enough, but at least there is concrete evidence that the actions are not in vain. What is certain is that more can always be done to counter Language Death, but a single country, Europe, and the world's governing bodies, cannot do much unless every single person first has a conscience and interest in defending and preserving the history and culture of us all.

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