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IMMIGRANT LANGUAGES AND THE VENETO DIALECT IN THE LINGUISTIC REPERTOIRES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS OF IMMIGRANT ORIGIN IN THE VENETO REGION

Abstract

This study investigates the linguistic repertoires of children of immigrant origin in the Veneto region, which include Italian, the Veneto dialect and immigrant languages. Sociolinguistic questionnaires were distributed in three secondary schools in the Veneto region, to collect information on language choice and maintenance. A total of 149 pupils filled in the questionnaire, representing 23 nationalities. More than half were Moroccan, Romanian, Albanian, Moldovan and Chinese, the five main immigrant groups in the region. The results show different degrees of both maintenance and use of immigrant languages among different nationalities. They also reveal the use of the Veneto dialect in communication by second generation children with peers, classmates, within the family domain and in communication with native Italians (neighbours and in shops).

1. Introduction

In Italy, where mass migration is a more recent phenomenon that in other European countries, the study of multilingualism and language maintenance among children of immigrant origin is also relatively new. School classrooms now have high numbers of pupils of immigrant origin: in the last decade, the number of pupils with foreign citizenship in Italian schools nearly doubled, from 431,211 in the school year 2005-06 to 814,851 in the school year 2015-16. This increase is mainly due to the growing number of pupils born in Italy from immigrant parents (MIUR 2017).

Under Italian law (*ius sanguinis*), children born in Italy of foreign parents cannot acquire Italian citizenship until they reach the age of 18, before which time they hold the citizenship of their parents. They are usually referred to as the *seconda generazione* ('second generation') in the lit-

erature and the term is often extended to include children born abroad who have joined their families in Italy, either pre-school (0-5 years of age) or in their teens (Demarie & Molina 2004; Fincati 2010a, 2010b).[1] Some sociolinguistic studies refer to children born abroad as the 1b generation (Clyne 2003), acknowledging similarities with those born in the country. Although the label 'second generation' puts together children of different origins and life experiences, a common denominator seems to be their negative attitudes towards their parents' decision to migrate, their perceptions of immigration and their multiple identities, even for those children who were born in Italy (Botta 2005: 167). In this article, the terms 'second generation' and 'children of immigrant origin' are used interchangeably.

The Italian government has so far been most concerned with pedagogical issues of linguistic integration, the teaching of Italian and avoiding delays in curriculum delivery and learning among the children of immigrants. The growing number of children of immigrant origin in schools in particular areas of the country has recently been the focus of political and educational debate. The *Gelmini Education Reform* (*legge n.* 133/2008 and *legge n.* 169/2008) set a cap of 30% on the number of pupils with foreign nationality in each class in order to maximize the delivery of teaching and integration. The government encourages initiatives related to intercultural education and awareness of multilingualism and language diversity (paragraph 3, art. 38 of the 1998 Consolidated Act of Provisions concerning immigration and the condition of non-nationals). However, intercultural educational projects are very much left to the initiative of individual teachers and schools and are dependent on stretched budgets. There are very few cases of schools offering classes in immigrant languages[2] in collaboration with immigrant communities associations or as a result of bilateral agreements with a country of origin.

National statistics on immigrants and children of immigrant origin fail to provide a clear picture of the new multilingualism in Italy as they only focus on information such as nationality and place of birth. Furthermore, more often than not schools themselves lack a clear understanding of multilingualism among their pupils. Pupils of immigrant origin are listed under the nationality of their parents in school records. However, pupils with the same nationality often belong to different ethnic, religious or linguistic subgroups. Nigerian families in Italy, for example, may belong to several ethnic groups (mainly Yoruba, Edo and Igbo) and speak completely different languages. Indian immigrants in Italy, on the other hand, come predominantly from two Indian states: the northern state of the Punjab (80% of Indians in the country), and the southern state of Kerala. Punjabi Indians speak Punjabi, while Indians from Kerala belong

to the Malayali ethnic group and speak Malayalam as their main language (Goglia 2017).

The first studies on multilingualism and the linguistic repertoires of the second generation have investigated the linguistic repertoires of children of immigrant origin in several Italian towns. The data have been collected by distributing language surveys in schools, as this is the most suitable method to collect a large amount of information efficiently and ethically, as survey data can remain anonymous. These studies have focused on both the presence and use of Italian and immigrant languages in various domains. Only a limited number have included questions on the use of Italo-Romance dialects, have made incidental remarks on their use, or have been conducted in regions or big towns where the dialects are no longer widely spoken. This study aligns itself with previous research by using a language survey that we distributed in secondary schools. However, given that our focus is on the Veneto region, an area where the dialect is still widely spoken by the local native speaker community, both on its own or mixed with Italian, we added explicit questions on the use of the Veneto dialect as well as the use of immigrant languages and Italian.

The aim of the study is to present a new sociolinguistic analysis of multilingualism among children of immigrant origin in two provinces of the Veneto region with high numbers of immigrant families. This will not only provide a useful comparison with previous studies in other Italian regions and cities with different immigration patterns, but also shed light on the understudied presence of Italo-Romance dialects in the linguistic repertoires of children of immigrant origin and their families. The linguistic repertoire of the Veneto region typically includes standard Italian, the regional variety of Italian and the Veneto dialect. In the Veneto region, Italian is used in all linguistic domains, while the Veneto dialect mainly mixed with Italian is used in informal domains and everyday communication within family and friends (Istat 2014; Santipolo & Tucciarone 2006).[3] Nationally, the use of dialects is declining among younger generations: in 2010 2.1% of students used a dialect on its own, but 23.3% used Italian mixed with a dialect (Istat 2014).

This article is organised as follows. Section 2 provides a review of the available sociolinguistic studies on multilingualism among children of immigrant origin in Italy. Section 3 focuses on immigration and the children of immigrants in the educational system of the Veneto region. Section 4 describes the study's data collection methods and informants, section 5 discusses the findings, and section 6 presents the study's conclusions.

2. Studies of multilingualism among children of immigrant origin in Italy

In the last 15 years, the first empirical studies, both quantitative and qualitative, have been published on language choice and maintenance among children of the second generation. However, nearly all studies of multilingualism and language maintenance in immigrant communities have focused on the use of Italian and immigrant languages, neglecting to investigate the presence of Italo-Romance dialects in the linguistic repertoires of adult immigrants[4] and their children. This section will briefly review previous studies on multilingualism among children of immigrant origin in Italy and focus on any observations they have made about the perception and use of Italo-Romance dialects.

The first comprehensive quantitative study was by Chini (2004), focusing on language use and language maintenance within the family, the immigrant community and in the school context with teachers and peers. It was conducted in the northern cities and provinces of Pavia and Turin. Sociolinguistic questionnaires were distributed to both adults and children, providing the first picture of language use and maintenance among the second generation and several avenues for future research. The analysis provides a thorough discussion of all the factors that may favour language shift, including differences by country of origin and a comparison of the linguistic repertoire and language use of the informants, both in the country of origin and in Italy. There were no specific questions in the questionnaire on the knowledge and use of Italo-Romance dialects, but it included a question on the languages or dialects informants heard in their city. This question offered four choices, one of which was 'the local dialect'. The answers reveal an awareness of the presence of local dialects: one third of respondents (138 pupils) reported hearing the local dialect with other languages, and one quarter (105 pupils) the local dialect on its own (75% of the respondents lived in small towns in the province of Pavia with a small number of immigrant residents) (Chini 2004: 137). In the bigger urban centres of the north-west such as Turin, the use of dialects is less attested today, and their presence in the linguistic repertoires of immigrants is therefore likely to be less prominent.

Bagna (2011) analysed the results of a survey distributed to pupils in primary and secondary schools in the province of Siena. The study included 686 pupils of immigrant origin out of 1,046 pupils. Italian was the language most often spoken at home, even in families with both immigrant parents, while Italian and the languages taught at school were perceived as most useful, most appealing and the languages to be used with peers. The results also revealed awareness and use of Tuscan dialects at home (mentioned 109

times), but the author does not engage in any further discussion on their use.[5]

Several qualitative studies on the maintenance and use of immigrant languages have provided some observations on the presence of Italo-Romance dialects in the linguistic repertoires of second generation children. Among those focusing on specific immigrant groups and the second generation, Di Lucca *et al.* (2008) conducted a study on language use and shift among Moroccan adolescents living in a rural area of northern Italy, who had arrived in the country at ages between nine and 13. Amoruso (2007) studied second-generation Tunisians in Mazara del Vallo (Sicily). This is a distinctive case, because young Tunisians born in Mazara often attend the Tunisian school there or are sent to Tunisia to study. There are also qualitative studies focusing on the bilingual family and its linguistic repertoire that have commented on differences in language use and attitudes between the first and second generations. D'Agostino (2005) provided a picture of three complex linguistic repertoires within immigrant families (Moroccan, Bangladeshi and Mauritian), while Chini (2003) analysed the language choice of 13 immigrant families of different origins in the Lombardy region. Although these studies do not focus on the use of Italo-Romance, they present some linguistic examples.

The first quantitative study of the presence and use of immigrant languages by the second generation in the Veneto region was by Massariello Merzangora (2004). A sociolinguistic questionnaire was distributed to 267 pupils of immigrant origin in 26 secondary schools in the city of Verona. This study confirmed the use of Italian with peers and of immigrant languages with parents, but also reported on the choice of different languages according to the topic discussed. The immigrant language was preferred to report on events that had taken place in the country of origin, to express feelings and to refer to things that happened at home, while Italian was used to talk about school, reading and television. Massariello Merzangora (2004: 364) also briefly commented on the presence of the Veneto dialect in the linguistic repertoire of her informants. Over three quarters of the informants (218 out of 265) were aware of the presence of the dialect in the local linguistic repertoire, and nearly two thirds (155 informants) said that they understood it. A second study, conducted in upper secondary schools in the town of Treviso, also mentions the Veneto dialect (2006: 2010). Treviso is a medium small city with a high number of immigrants and children and adolescents of immigrant origin. Gallina interviewed 26 students of immigrant origin about multilingualism, including their use of the Veneto dialect. The Veneto dialect was regarded positively by her informants and viewed as a key factor for integration and socialising both inside and outside school among peers (2010: 133). However, Gallina provided no further discussion

on the use of the dialect. The passing remarks made in both the Verona and Treviso studies call for a more in-depth investigation into the presence of the Veneto dialect in the linguistic repertoires of children of the second generation in the region.

3. Immigration in the Veneto region

Almost half a million 'foreign citizens' live in the Veneto region, 9.6% of the national total, making Veneto the fourth region for number of immigrants after Lombardy (23% of the national total), Latium (13%) and Emilia Romagna (10.5%) (Istat 2017). Until 2006, non-European Union (EU) citizens made up the majority, but since 2007, when Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU, the number of Central and Eastern European citizens has grown to a quarter of the total immigrant population. Table 1 lists foreign residents of Veneto by nationality and gender.

Table 1. Foreign citizens residing in Veneto on 31 December 2016, by citizenship and gender

	Men	Women	Total	
Romania	52,798	66,421	119,219	24,6%
Morocco	24,290	22,370	46,660	9,6%
Moldova	11,884	23,303	35,187	7,2%
Albania	17,440	17,318	34,758	7,2%
China	16,833	16,904	33,737	6,9%
Ukraine	3,239	13,356	16,595	3,4%
Bangladesh	9,602	6,250	15,852	3,3%
India	8,522	6,432	14,954	3,1%
Serbia	7,332	7,233	14,565	3,0%
Nigeria	7,149	6,049	13,198	2,7%
Macedonia	6,239	6,159	12,398	2,6%
Sri Lanka	6,282	5,537	11,819	2,4%
Kosovo	5,904	5,086	10,990	2,3%
Ghana	5,162	3,832	8,994	1,9%
Senegal	5,526	2,654	8,180	1,7%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	3,964	3,212	7,176	1,5%
Philippines	2,922	3,619	6,541	1,3%
Other citizenships	33,088	41,566	74,654	15,4%
TOTAL	**228,176**	**257,301**	**485,477**	100,0%

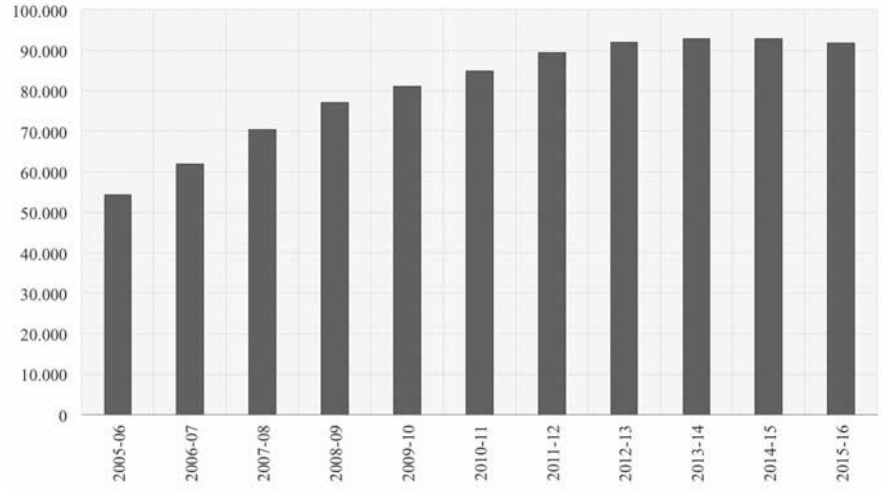
Source: based on Istat (2017)

Five immigrant communities represent 55% of the total: Romanians, Moroccans, Albanians, Moldovans and Chinese. The remaining immigrants come from 170 countries, making the picture of immigration in the Veneto

highly varied and variable. The highest concentration of immigrants is in the urban areas in the central belt of the region: Verona, Padua, Treviso, and Vicenza. Immigrants have been attracted by job opportunities in Veneto's factories, at least until the recent economic crisis. For historical, economic and social reasons, the composition of immigrant communities in some areas and cities can be very different from others. Some immigrant groups are particularly strongly represented in the Veneto. This is the case of the following Eastern European immigrant communities: Serbians (36% of the national total), Bosnians (27%), Kosovars (27%), Croats (26%) and Moldovans (26%) (Istat 2017).

Graph 1 shows the presence of foreign pupils in the schools of the region. In the school year 2015-16, there were 91,853 foreign pupils in the schools of the Veneto region (11% of the national total, the third highest concentration after Lombardy (25%) and Emilia Romagna (12%) (MIUR 2017). The number of pupils of immigrant origin is constantly rising in all school levels. In the school year 2015-16, pupils of the second generation represented 66% of all pupils enrolled in the schools of the region.

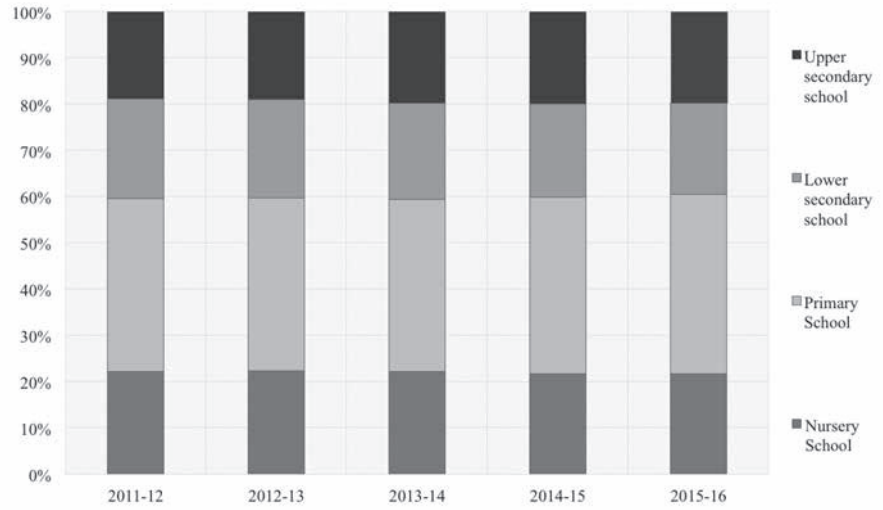
Graph 1. Foreign pupils in Veneto schools by school year



Source: based on MIUR (2017)

In recent years, second generation pupils have been evenly distributed in the school levels, with the majority in nursery and primary schools. As graph 2 shows, in the school year 2015-16, 39% of pupils of immigrant origin were enrolled in primary schools while 20% were enrolled in each of the other levels (nursery school, lower and upper secondary school).

Graph 2. Foreign pupils in Veneto schools by school level and year



Source: based on MIUR (2017)

4. Data collection and informants

As noted above, around 60% of pupils of immigrant origin are concentrated in primary and lower secondary schools. For our study, we opted to work with the lower secondary school level (11-14 years) because at this stage pupils have a more established linguistic and cultural awareness of their environment.[6] The questionnaires were aimed at all pupils of immigrant origin in three state secondary schools in the Veneto region. Two of the schools are in small towns in the province of Treviso and the third is in the city of Padua.[7] All necessary steps were taken to meet ethical requirements, particularly asking for parental consent. However, some parents chose not to sign consent forms because they did not want their children to take part in the study. We gained parental consent for 149 pupils and all filled in the questionnaires[8]. Three research assistants (one in each school) were in charge of contacting the head teachers and teachers in the schools and distributing the questionnaires[9]. Pupils filled in the questionnaires in the presence of the research assistants who introduced the questionnaires and responded to requests for clarification from the pupils.

The questionnaire, on the use and choice of Italian, the Veneto dialect and immigrant languages, was similar to the one used by Chini (2004), with

both open-ended and closed-ended questions in Italian. It was in five sections: 'Your life in Italy', 'Languages and dialects you can speak and use', 'School and free time', 'Your parents', and 'Maintenance of your languages and dialects'. We also included overt questions on the use of the Veneto dialect as well as Italian and immigrant languages. We used the term 'dialetto veneto', which was widely used and understood by pupils. In order to trigger their interest, the questionnaire was distributed as part of an activity on the languages spoken in school, and it was written in a 'pupil-friendly' way to make the questions relevant and accessible.

5. Analysis

As table 2 shows, the majority (95) of the 149 respondents were born abroad, and more than half of them arrived in Italy when aged between 6 and 12, having already received formal education in another school system.

Table 2. Respondents' nationality and place of birth

	Where were you born?			
	Abroad	*Italy*	*Total*	
Morocco	6	18	24	16%
Albania	10	11	21	14%
China	17	3	20	13%
Romania	17	2	19	13%
Moldova	11	-	11	7%
Kosovo	7	2	9	6%
Macedonia	5	3	8	5%
Brazil	6	-	6	4%
Ghana	3	3	6	4%
Italy	-	5	5	3%
Dominican Republic	4	-	4	3%
Ukraine	3	-	3	2%
Bosnia	1	1	2	1%
Vietnam	-	2	2	1%
Bangladesh	1	-	1	1%
Burkina Faso	-	1	1	1%
Cameroon	-	1	1	1%
Croatia	-	1	1	1%
Iraq	-	1	1	1%
Russia	1	-	1	1%
USA	1	-	1	1%
Tunisia	1	-	1	1%
Hungary	1		1	1%
Total	95	54	149	100%

The remaining 54 respondents were born in Italy of parents born elsewhere. Among these, 5 have the Italian citizenship because they have at least one Italian parent. Twenty-three nationalities were represented in the sample. Over half of the respondents were Moroccan (24), Albanian (21), Chinese (20), Romanian (19) or Moldovan (11). This distribution is consistent with the five most numerous immigrant nationalities in the Veneto region as listed in table 1.

The first questionnaire item on the use of languages (question 13) was an open question: 'Which language do you speak most often?' The responses are grouped in table 3 into three categories: 'Only Italian' for those who answered Italian, 'Only immigrant language' for those who answered with the name of an immigrant language, and 'Italian and immigrant language' for those who answered with Italian and the name of an immigrant language or vice versa.

The majority of pupils (128 of 149) reported speaking mainly one language. They fell into two groups of almost equal size: 44% answered 'only Italian', while 42% answered 'only immigrant language'. A further 13% answered 'Italian and immigrant language'. The declared use of Italian only was higher among pupils born in Italy, whereas the use of an immigrant language only was almost equally divided between respondents born in Italy and those born elsewhere. The use of Italian and an immigrant language was three times more common among pupils born abroad than among those born in Italy, indicating that the presence of the immigrant language is often still strong in the linguistic repertoires of children born abroad. It is worth noting that in response to this open question, no pupils mentioned the Veneto dialect.

Table 3. Answers to the question 'Which language do you use most often?'

Which language do you use most often?	**Where were you born?**		
	Abroad	*Italy*	*Total*
1. Only Italian	39%	52%	44%
2. Only immigrant language	41%	43%	42%
3. Italian and immigrant language	17%	6%	13%
N/A	3%	0%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%
	95	54	149

If we look at the answers to the question 'Which language do you use most often?' by nationality (summarised in table 4), there are some clear differences. Moroccan, Romanian and Moldovan pupils were equally likely to answer 'only Italian' or 'only immigrant language', with a lower percentage replying 'Italian and immigrant language'. It is worth noting

that among children of Chinese origin, only 10% answered 'only Italian', while 75% answered 'only immigrant language'. This may be a sign of a tendency towards language maintenance among the Chinese community in Italy. Valentini (2009) also found that Chinese pupils tended to use mostly the immigrant language with their parents, of necessity, because the latter had limited proficiency in Italian. Clearly, the low proficiency in Italian and the general tendency of Chinese people in Italy to maintain close contacts with other members of the community are factors favouring language maintenance. However, they are not the only explanations, and some studies in Australia have shown that despite low English proficiency ratings, second generation Australians from Cantonese, Mandarin and Italian speaking families recorded high language shift rates in the home (Clyne & Kipp 2006: 15). Chini (2004: 320) also stressed that her Chinese informants in Pavia did not maintain Chinese with non-Italian Chinese speaking friends, while half of the informants in Turin did so as there was a stable Chinese community.

Table 4. Responses to 'Which language do you use most often?' by nationality

Nationality	**Which language do you use most often?**				
	1. Only Italian	*2. Only immigrant language*	*3. Italian and immigrant language*	*N/A*	*Total number*
Moroccan	46%	46%	8%	0%	24
Albanian	52%	38%	10%	0%	21
Chinese	10%	75%	10%	5%	20
Romanian	42%	42%	16%	0%	19
Moldovan	36%	36%	27%	0%	11
Kosovar	44%	33%	11%	11%	9
Macedonian	50%	38%	0%	13%	8
Brazilian	33%	50%	17%	0%	6
Ghanaian	33%	17%	50%	0%	6
Italian	100%	0%	0%	0%	5
Dominican	25%	50%	25%	0%	4
Ukrainian	100%	0%	0%	0%	3
Bosnian	0%	100%	0%	0%	2
Vietnamese	100%	0%	0%	0%	2
Nationalities with one answer only	67%	22%	11%	0%	9
Total	44%	42%	13%	2%	149

As can be seen from table 4, a higher percentage of Albanians, Kosovars and Macedonians replied 'only Italian'. This could be due to greater proficiency in Italian among such communities and a lower tendency towards mixing the languages, but also to a strong tendency among Eastern European immigrants to undergo language shift, as observed by Chini (2004:

320) and Valentini (2009: 100).[10] These very broad observations need to be further investigated with more in-depth empirical research in individual communities. In Monterotondo and Mentana, in the periphery of Rome, the two most spoken immigrant languages, Romanian and Albanian, appear to be maintained in different ways. While Romanian is both used more in daily interactions and positively regarded as the preferred language, Albanian is less well maintained and not as preferred (Bagni & Barni 2005: 244).

Table 4 also shows that children of Brazilian and Dominican origin reported a higher use of 'only immigrant language' and a very low use of Italian and immigrant languages together. Children of Ghanaian origin on the other hand provided a different picture, with 50% replying 'Italian and immigrant language'. The use of both languages by these children could be due to habits formed at home with their parents, who often speak in a bilingual mode, replicating code-switching behaviours within the new enriched linguistic repertoire in Italy (Guerini 2006; Goglia 2011, 2017). Chini (2004: 150) also points out the following:

> nelle famiglie dell'Africa occidentale […] è più frequente trovare usi linguistici alternativi alla L1 (soprattutto misti) che non nelle famiglie provenienti dall'America centro-meridionale.

We are aware that a language questionnaire can only hint at mixed use of languages and only further empirical qualitative research can reveal if children alternate languages or actually use code-switching.

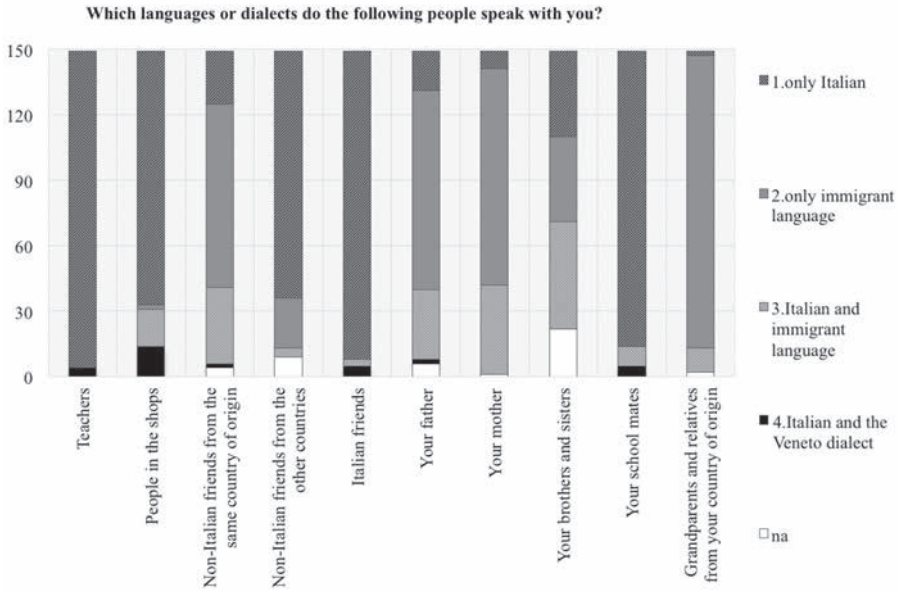
Question 14 gave pupils the opportunity to list any other languages they spoke: 'What other languages do you speak?' The answers revealed the knowledge of immigrant languages among those who did not state this in response to the previous open question. Many informants gave the same answers as to question 13. Excluding repetitions, we can quantify the number of languages that pupils reported speaking. The majority (60%) named only one other language, 17% named two and 14% three or four (see table 5). There no major differences between children born in Italy and those born abroad.

Table 5. Answers to the question 'What other languages do you speak?'

What other languages do you speak?	**Where were you born?**		
Number of languages	*Abroad*	*Italy*	*Total*
1	59%	61%	60%
2	19%	13%	17%
3-4	14%	15%	14%
n/a	8%	11%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Pupils were also asked about the languages people spoke with them (question 17) and the languages they spoke with different interlocutors, such as family members, teachers and classmates, and people in shops (question 18). The answers varied widely and included dialects of immigrant languages and combinations of more than one language. We have subdivided all answers into the following groups: 'only Italian', 'only immigrant language' (including names of dialects of languages mentioned by the pupils), 'Italian and immigrant language' and 'Italian and the Veneto dialect' (including answers with only the Veneto dialect). Graphs 3 and 4 give a general overview of the answers, and percentages are very similar in both tables. The use of immigrant languages (on their own or with Italian) was prevalent with non-Italian friends from the same country of origin and with parents and grandparents (cf. Chini 2004: 153; Massariello Merzangora 2004: 365). Respondents reported using immigrant languages mainly with non-Italian friends from the same country of origin (83%), father (59%), mother (64%) and grandparents and relatives from the country of origin (87%) (graph 4).

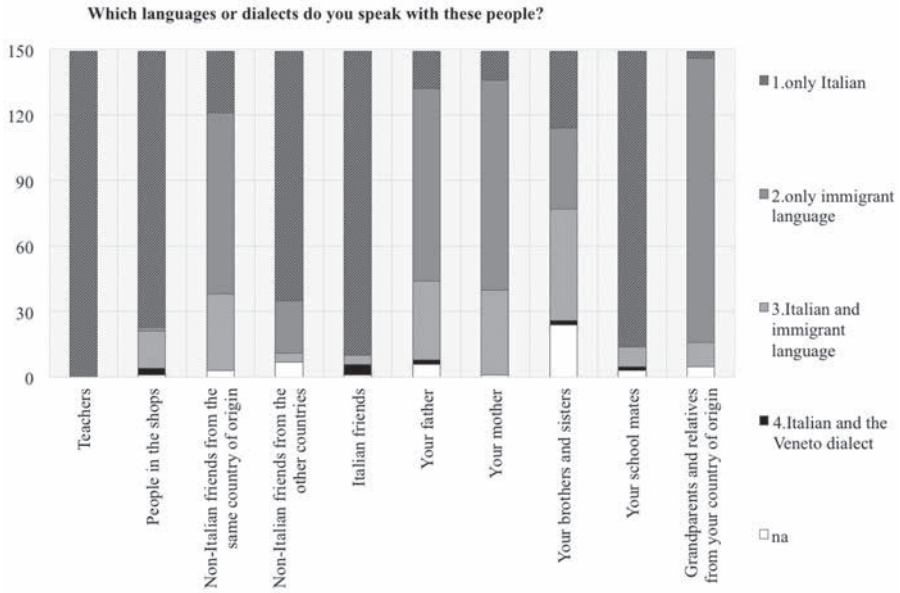
Graph 3. Answers to the question 'Which languages or dialects do the following people *speak with you?'*



Within the family, 'only Italian' was used among siblings as much as the 'only immigrant language' (around 25% each) and a little less than 'Italian and immigrant language' (30%). The use of Italian (either on its own

or mixed with an immigrant language) was higher with siblings and shows incipient language shift (cf. Chini 2004; Pala 2005; Gallina 2007; Bagna 2011; Scaglione 2013). The results for 'Italian and immigrant language' reveal the use of these languages in shops (11%), presumably run by people from the same country of origin, and the mixed use of both languages by friends from the same country of origin (23%), father (21%), mother (28%), siblings (33%) and classmates (6%) from the same country of origin (graph 3).

Graph 4. Answers to the question 'Which languages or dialects do you speak with these people?'



It is worth noting that respondents mentioned that 'Italian and the Veneto dialect' were used by the following interlocutors: teachers (3%), Italian friends (3%) and classmates (3%), and a higher 9% for people in shops (graph 3). This reflects the fact that in the Veneto region the dialect is still widely used in public places and shops. The reported use of the Veneto dialect with Italian in communication with teachers reveals the presence of the dialect even in the school context, where it would be least expected. If we compare graph 4 to graph 3, we can see that respondents reported lower use of the Veneto dialect themselves with local adults (teachers and people in shops). This contrasts to the use of dialect with Italian friends, where pupils

both use and are spoken to in dialect at a similar rate (3%). Respondents appear to have been aware that in communication with peers the use of dialect is allowed as part of a peer in-group code. In her research in upper secondary schools in Treviso, Gallina (2010: 133) found that the Veneto dialect was considered a key factor in integration and socialising inside and outside school among peers, as noted earlier.

We also asked overtly about the Veneto dialect and pupils' awareness of it in the linguistic repertoire of the region: 'Do you know the Veneto dialect?' (question 35). As table 6 shows, half of respondents answered that they did know the Veneto dialect (63% of 54 pupils born in Italy, 42% of 95 pupils born abroad).

Table 6. Answers to the question 'Do you know the Veneto dialect?'

Do you know the Veneto dialect?	**Where were you born?**			
	Abroad	*Italy*	*Total*	
Yes	42%	63%	50%	74
No	56%	35%	48%	72
N/A	2%	2%	2%	3
Total	100%	100%	100%	149

Children born in Italy may have been more aware of the local linguistic repertoire. However, this difference disappeared in their answers to the following question, which further investigated their use of the dialect: 'Do you speak the Veneto dialect?' (question 36). Thirty-six per cent of respondents (53 in total) answered positively (table 7), and the percentage was the same among children born abroad as in Italy.

Table 7. Answers to the question 'Do you speak the Veneto dialect?'

Do you speak the Veneto dialect?	**Where were you born?**			
	Abroad	*Italy*	*Total*	
Yes	36%	35%	36%	53
No	58%	50%	55%	82
N/A	6%	15%	9%	14
Total	100%	100%	100%	149

Two additional questions explored who pupils spoke the Veneto dialect with. The first was a open question for those respondents who claimed to speak the Veneto dialect: 'Who do you speak it with?' (question 36). The majority (29) reported speaking the dialect with friends. Of these, 21 were born abroad and eight in Italy (table 8). This reveals that the dialect is present in the domain of communication with peers, mirroring its use among

the young generation of native Italians. A greater proportion of children born abroad reported speaking it with friends than those born in Italy, which could be due to a greater pressure to integrate among the peer group, but also to a sole identification of the dialect as in-group code. Five pupils, who were all born in Italy, used the dialect with brothers and sisters. This shows that the dialect is present in the domain of communication with siblings in immigrant families.

Table 8. Answers to the question 'Who do you speak the Veneto dialect with?'

Who do you speak it with?	**Where were you born?**		
	Abroad	*Italy*	*Total*
With friends	21	8	29
With my father	4	2	6
With my brothers and sisters	-	5	5
With my parents	2	1	3
With my neighbours	2	1	3
Yes-N/A	5	2	7
Total	34	19	53

The second question was addressed to all respondents: 'Which of the following people do you speak the Veneto dialect with?' (question 37). It is worth noting that six of the 53 children (10%) who reported speaking the Veneto dialect in response to question 36 did not specify who they spoke it with in answer to question 37 and that conversely, 22 of the 96 (23%) claiming not to speak the Veneto dialect or who did not answer question 36 nevertheless answered question 37 by stating that they did speak the dialect with some of the listed interlocutors. A total of 149 respondents answered question 37 and more than one interlocutor could be ticked. Responses are set out in table 9, and percentages refer to the number of children who ticked a particular interlocutor. According to the answers to question 37, the use of dialect appears to be relevant in the linguistic repertoire of our respondents not only in communication with peers (28% claiming to speak the dialect with Italian friends and 24% with classmates), but also within the family domain (14% with brothers and sisters, 12% with father and 8% with mother). The use of the Veneto dialect is also mentioned in communication with native Italians: 21% with neighbours and 9% with people in shops.

Children born in Italy reported using dialect more than those born abroad, in communication with Italian friends (35% vs 23%) and brothers and sisters (20% vs 11%). Children born in Italy seem to be more prone to speak the dialect, which can be explained by their greater exposure to the linguistic repertoire of the region. However, contrary to what we would have

expected, a higher percentage of children born abroad reported speaking the dialect with their fathers (14% vs 9%).

Table 9. Answers to the question 'Which of the following people do you speak the Veneto dialect with?'

Which of the following people do you speak the Veneto dialect with?	Where were you born?		
	Abroad	*Italy*	*Total*
Teachers	3%	6%	4%
People in shops	9%	7%	9%
Non-Italian friends from the same country of origin	3%	6%	4%
Non-Italian friends from another country	7%	6%	7%
Italian friends	23%	35%	28%
Father	14%	9%	12%
Mother	7%	9%	8%
Brothers and sisters	11%	20%	14%
Classmates	22%	28%	24%
Neighbours	20%	22%	21%
Total	**95**	**54**	**149**

We are aware of the limitations of these questions on use of the dialect, and again, empirical qualitative data is needed to clarify the nature of dialect use. The dialect is generally assigned the lowest status in the school context and it is often the case that even native Italians may not reveal their knowledge of the dialect or may completely avoid admitting its use in language surveys completed in the school context. Nevertheless, the answers to questions 36 and 37 do show some awareness of the presence of the Veneto dialect and even evidence of its use in the linguistic repertoire of children of immigrant origin.

6. Conclusion

Despite the lack of official statistics on emergent multilingualism, including immigrant languages, thanks to quantitative studies conducted in schools among pupils of immigrant origin we now have several datasets to compare. The present study has reported initial findings on multilingualism among pupils of immigrant origin in three schools in the Veneto region. In contrast to previous studies, we have investigated both the use of immigrant languages and the Veneto dialect. Among the various immigrant nationalities, it was found that children of Chinese origin tended to use their parents' language more, while children of Albanian, Kosovar and Macedonian origin tended to use Italian more often. Ghanaian children reported a higher use of

both Italian and immigrant languages, which can be explained by the habit among West Africans of speaking in a bilingual mode. The use of immigrant languages appears prevalent with non-Italian friends from the same country of origin, with parents and with grandparents. Within the family, Italian was used as much as immigrant languages among siblings.

The study also found that half of the respondents were aware of the presence of the Veneto dialect in the local linguistic repertoire and more than a third even reported speaking it. The majority of informants stated that they spoke the Veneto dialect with Italian friends and classmates. These initial results seem to indicate that the dialect mainly mixed with Italian belongs to the linguistic repertoire of the second generation. Some pupils may even perceive it as the code to learn and use in the domain of communication with peers, where it loses the negative associations of its use in the school context or by adults (whether native or immigrant). Other studies have touched upon the use of dialects and also seem to support this (Massariello Merzangora 2004: Gallina 2010). More in-depth empirical research is needed to shed light on the actual use of the dialect among the second generation, particularly in a region like the Veneto where the dialect is still widely spoken.

NOTES

[1] More refined definitions use the term 'generation 1.5' to refer to children who started their socialisation process and primary education in the country of origin, then completed their education in the host country. 'Generation 1.75' refers to children who migrated in the pre-school years (Rumhaut 1997, *cit.* in Ambrosini 2004: 6).

[2] For the purposes of this study, we use the term 'immigrant languages' in the most general way as the first languages of immigrants. Bagna *et al.* (2004) have suggested a distinction between *migrant languages,* languages with a high rate of mobility and less likely to root in the host country, and *immigrant languages*, languages of immigrant groups settled in the territory and likely to become new linguistic minorities.

[3] In 2012, in the northeast of Italy, the use of dialects was the following: only Italian (42.5% within the family, 46.5% with friends) only dialect (12.6% within the family, 13.0% with friends) and both Italian and dialect (35.1% within the family, 32.3% with friends) (Istat 2014).

[4] For a discussion on Italo-Romance dialects in the linguistic repertoires of immigrants and code-switching involving Italo-Romance dialects see Goglia (2017)

[5] Other quantitative studies collected data in schools and their focus was solely on Italian and immigrant languages. Valentini (2009) investigated multilingualism and language choice among pupils of immigrant origin in primary and secondary schools in Bergamo. Bagna & Barni (2005) explored multilingualism and language use among students (both Italian and of immigrant origin) in primary and secondary schools in Monterotondo and Mentana, on the periphery of Rome. Scaglione (2013) examined language use and perception among pupils of 17 Italian primary schools in the regions of Lombardy, Veneto, Umbria and Marche. Chiaramonte & Mariottini (2013) studied language practices of second-generation students from Latin America in Rome.

[6] This article results from research conducted as part of a British Academy funded project entitled "Emerging multilingualism in Italy" (Small Grant SG110908, September 2011-September 2012). We gratefully acknowledge the support of the British Academy**.**

[7] The three schools are: scuola secondaria di primo grado "Giorgione" (Castelfranco Veneto, province of Treviso), scuola secondaria di primo grado "Papa Giovanni" (Montebelluna,

province of Treviso), scuola secondaria di primo grado "Moroni" (Vigodarzare, province of Padua).

[8] 14 respondents in Vigodarzare, 43 in Castelfranco Veneto, 92 in Montebelluna.

[9] We would like to thank Ms Emilia Colucciello for data collection in Montebelluna and Ms Elena Katnich for data collection in Castelfranco Veneto. Ms Veronica Fincati, co-author of this article, collected the data in Vigodarzare.

[10] We do not have enough informants of Macedonian origin, but it would be worthwhile to investigate language maintenance ratings among this community, since in the Australian context Macedonian is one of the few community languages which has been maintained into the third generation (Clyne and Kipp, 2006).

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