

Roger Schöntag / Laura Linzmeier (Hrsg.)

Neue Ansätze und Perspektiven zur sprachlichen Raumkonzeption und Geolinguistik

Der Band versammelt Beiträge der im Jahr 2021 veranstalteten Online-Tagung *Neue Ansätze und Perspektiven zur sprachlichen Raumkonzeption und Geolinguistik*.

Der Fokus liegt auf Fallstudien aus der Romania und Germania, die sich mit der Verteilung, Ausgestaltung und Wahrnehmung sprachlicher Formen und ihrer Variation im Raum beschäftigten. Der Sammelband legt hierbei eine Definition des Konzepts „Sprachraum“ im weiteren Sinne zugrunde, der zunächst als durch physische (d.h. geographische und humane) Faktoren geprägt verstanden wird, der allerdings auch durch multimediale Sprachverwendung und moderne Darstellungsformen und Erforschungsmethoden eine Erweiterung ins Digitale und Virtuelle erfahren kann. Die germanistischen und romanistischen Beiträge eröffnen neue Perspektiven für die Erforschung und die multimediale Darstellung der Sprachdynamiken realer und virtueller Räume und liefern in diesem Sinne neue Ansätze zur Geolinguistik.

Die Herausgeber

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Fallstudien aus der Romania und der Germania



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Vorwort

Der vorliegende Sammelband basiert auf der gleichnamigen Tagung, die vom 12. bis 13. November 2021 nominell in Regensburg stattgefunden hat, aufgrund der Umstände jedoch als digitale Zoom-Veranstaltung durchgeführt wurde. In diesem Sinne gilt der Dank zunächst allen Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmern dieser Tagung für die angenehme Atmosphäre, die interessanten Beiträge und die anregenden Diskussionen sowie allen weiteren Gästen, die ebenso zum Gelingen dieser Veranstaltung beigetragen haben. Ergänzt wurde der Tagungsband durch noch ein paar weitere Beiträge, die sich thematisch gut eingefügt und somit ebenfalls das gesamte Projekt erfreulich bereichert haben.

Im Weiteren sind wir auch den großzügigen Förderern der genannten Tagung zu Dank verpflichtet, und zwar der *Universitätsstiftung Hans Vielberth*, die uns von Beginn an unterstützt hat, ebenso wie dem *Center for International and Transnational Area Studies* (CITAS), beide an der Universität Regensburg angesiedelt. Für die Drucklegung konnten wir dankenswerter Weise auch auf eine umfängliche finanzielle Unterstützung der *Dr. German Schweiger-Stiftung* aus Erlangen (FAU) zurückgreifen und für die digitale Version auf einen Sonderzuschuss des *Deutschen Romanistenverbandes* (DRV) im Rahmen einer *open-access*-Förderung.

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Roger Schöntag & Laura Linzmeier,
Erlangen/Regensburg im Mai 2023



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Chiara Meluzzi

(Milan)

Sociolinguistic features of internal migrations in an Alpine valley: the CoLIMBi project

Abstract: The paper presents the first results of the *Corpus of Language, Identity and Multilingualism in Biellese area* (CoLIMBi) dedicated to sociolinguistic features of internal and external migrations in the Alpine valley of Biella (Piedmont, Italy). In particular, the paper explores the narrative and phonetic variability in the production of Venetian and Sardinian immigrants. The results show a loss of the original Venetian language, whereas Sardinian is preserved for within-family communication. Furthermore, a certain variability in vowel realizations between different Sardinian varieties is also preserved in migrants. These results are discussed in light of the nature of the migrations of Sardinian speakers in Biella as opposed to Venetian ones: the firsts have built a community of practice in the new area, thus reinforcing the maintenance of a Sardinian identity. Conversely, the lack of a Venetian community in the new valley has led to the almost complete loss of those traits linked to their language and culture of origin.

Keywords: Linguistics Migrations, phonetic variability, Piedmontese, Venetian, Sardinian

1. Introduction

Biellese is a small province in the North-West Alpine valley of Italy in Piedmont region, right under Aosta Valley. It is an area of 913,18 km², for about 169,560 inhabitants, according to the data of the last census of the population in 2021. Biellese is surrounded on three sides by mountains, and it is internally divided in sub-valleys according to the main streams: from east to west, Strona, Cervo, Oropa, Sessera and Elvo. Historically, this area is characterized by an early industrialization, essentially based on wool and textile factories. As many other areas in Italy, many Biellese people emigrated to North America in-between the two World Wars, by creating small emigrant communities abroad (cf. Grassi/Pautasso 1989). Conversely, after WWII, Biellese was a land of immigration, and, in particular, internal migration from rural areas of Italy towards the more industrialized North-Western regions.

Four different migratory waves could be recognized: a first wave involved a movement from North-East to North-West, with the migration of entire families

of farmers from Veneto and Emilia-Romagna; a second wave took place during the 1960s and 1970s, and mainly involved single workers from the Southern areas of Italy (e.g., Naples, Sicily, Calabria); a third wave started to involve migration from outside Italy, in particular Arabian-speaking countries like Morocco and Algeria, starting from the 1980s and 1990s; finally, at the beginning of the new millennium, Biellese was interested by an intensive migration from Eastern Europe (e.g., Ukraine, Moldova) and also from China, although in this last case the numbers of Chinese speakers were not as high as in other parts of Italy (e.g., in Tuscany; Paciocco 2021). As pointed out in Meluzzi (2019), these migratory waves, and, in particular, the internal ones, have involved people with very different sociolinguistic profiles. Indeed, if in case of East Italian areas the migrants were basically dialect-speaking farmers, with low or null level of education prior to the migration, the migrants from Southern Italy quite often held a degree, in particular in case of single women moving to Biella as teachers or nurses. Another consideration arose regarding the social characteristics of the migrants and their settlings in the new area. Venetian and Emilian workers moved with their whole families, and scattered in the different mountain villages, where the old fabrics were placed. In the majority of the cases, they did not maintain any contact with their home villages, and they did not create common associations of, for instance, Venetian migrants. Conversely, Southern migrants were often single young adults, either men or women, who may have been lately joined by a former partner before finally settling in the new area. They maintain strong contacts with their home regions, with frequent and long trips but also phone calls. Furthermore, they reunited around stores or clubs to maintain their identity as, for instance, Calabrese or Sicilian people.

In this respect, a peculiar case is represented by the Sardinian immigrants. This migration did not have a real peak, but it could be said to be a constant in the area after WWII, maybe also for historical reasons and commercial roots, other than for already existing migratory networks (cf. Piras 2020). Sardinian immigrants have maintained a strong sentiment of identity, evidently remarked by the creation of the social club *Su Nuraghe*, which is responsible for the Museum of Migrations (it. *Museo delle Migrazioni*), settled in the small Alpine village of Pettinengo, above Biella.

The interest for studying the internal migrations in Biellese area (dialect: Biellese/Piedmontese)¹ and their sociolinguistic correlates grew from a

1 The local dialect of Biella, the Biellese (it. *dialetto biellese*), is a north-eastern variety of the Piedmontese (it. *dialetto piemontese*) with its dominant center Turin (it. *Torino*); see Cerruti/Regis (2020: 653–656).

collaboration between the author and *Su Nuraghe*. In general, the project aimed at describing the different migratory waves towards Biellese, and the sociolinguistic repertoires of the migrants, by initially focusing only on internal migrations. In particular, the following research questions guided the data collection and analysis:

- 1) Which different linguistic correlates may characterize the two internal migratory waves that have interested the Biellese area?
- 2) To what extent are heritage languages (or heritage dialects) still maintained in the linguistic repertoires of internal migrants in Biella?
- 3) Do children with migratory background show a different language attitude towards the different varieties of regional Italian?

The present paper will present the first results of the project devoted to internal migrations in Biella, by focusing on the Venetian vs. Sardinian migration, while living aside children's perception and linguistic stereotypes, which have already been explored in other works (cf. Meluzzi/Masullo 2023). The paper is organized as follows: after a section containing some basic theoretical remarks, the methodological section presents the research protocol of the whole project; three sections of analysis will be dedicated to the linguistic repertoires of Venetian and Sardinian speakers, and to children's perception. A general discussion will try to ascertain the peculiarities and/or similarities of the migrations in Biella, as compared to other settings. Finally, in the conclusion we will give a preliminary answer to our general research questions and open the path to further investigations on this area.

2. Theoretical remarks

The complex phenomenon of migration involves socio-historical and geographical factors as well as its linguistic outcomes.² Among the extra-linguistic factors, one should include the origins of the migrant and his/her final destination, but also his/her migratory project other than other more classic sociolinguistic variables like age, gender, level of education, and job prior the migration and after it. Another important factor at play involves the migratory project, which determines the length of staying in the new area or country, the possible

2 For different types of migration (e.g., economic, political, religious) and related factors, which determine language contact scenarios (e.g., duration, spatial distance, social background, linguistic dissimilarity), cf. Schöntag (2019:18, 27–28).

creation of networks of migrants from the same or similar areas of origins, other than the typology of the settlement. In Italy, an interesting study by Riccioni (2012) has pointed out the impact on the city structure of the different migratory waves that have involved the town of Bolzano since after WWI. The impact of migrants, both internal and external, is visible also in the linguistic landscape (cf. Barni/Bagna 2010), and it is also reflected in the language used both at home and in the public domains.³

From a linguistic perspective, migration involves both a process of language acquisition (i.e., the language of the new country) and of language attrition and, potentially, loss (cf. Prescher 2007; Schmid et al. 2013) of the language(s) of origin of the migrant. Since the second generation of migration, the language of origin constituted a heritage language (cf. Montrul 2016): it could be still learned at home as a L1 (cf. Polinsky 2018), but its use is generally limited within family or in the migrated community, if there is any (cf. Rothman 2009:156), thus resulting in an unbalanced bilingual repertoire. A major feature pointing towards an initial process of language attrition is the loss of phonological oppositions in the L1 as it turns into a heritage language (cf. De Leeuw et al. 2011). For instance, in a study on the Italian Calabrese community in Toronto (Canada), Nodari et al. (2019) have shown how heritage young speakers have lost the aspiration of voiceless occlusives; however, aspiration is still present as a sociophonetic marker by their peers in Calabria. The results of Nodari et al. (2019) could be explained as internally-induced language change (cf. Keijzer 2008), whereas other external factors could lead to language attrition and, ultimately, language change. At present, these externally-induced language change phenomena seem not to involve the phonetic-phonological level but upper ones like morphology and syntax (cf. e.g. Keijzer 2007; Schmid 2002).

Obviously, the topic of migration is strongly related to the identity of the migrant, which is expressed through language use both in terms of selections of different linguistic codes and of linguistic features in the discourse. In the complex process of integration of the migrant in the new community, the language plays indeed a central role (cf. Calvi 2014), but this could lead to the emergence of different linguistic identities during the narration. Indeed, Calabrese (2010:15) highlights how the migrant could mark his/her personal identity through the selections, for instance, of personal pronouns, thus opposing a “we-migrant” to a “they” referring to the new community; however, during

3 Cf., for instance, Chini/Andorno (2018) on immigrant children’s language uses in the area of Pavia and in Piedmont.

the interview, the extension and nature of this “we” could be negotiated and it could end up including the migrant him/herself (cf. also Deppermann 2007). This process of language negotiation is visible at the level of discourse strategies as well as lexical choices (cf. De Fina 2003), but could have also phonetic correlates, as it has been highlighted by research on linguistic attrition (cf. De Leeuw et al. 2011).

3. The CoLIMBi project

Given the absence of previous work specifically dedicated to the Biellese area and its linguistic complexity, left alone the migratory waves that have affected this Alpine area, we have designed a project to collect an oral archive of different migrants that have settled in this area. The archive will be summed up in the *Corpus of Language, Identity and Migration in Biella* (CoLIMBi) as part of the cultural heritage preserved at the Museum of Migrations in Pettinengo (Biella). The general aim of the project is to collect and preserve the memories of migration and of the individual migrants, and also to analyse whether and to what extent some linguistic features of the languages of origin have been preserved and transmitted to the youngest generations of migration.

Since the general purpose of our research project was to document the immigrants’ languages in the Alpine region of Biella, it was decided to mix qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Among the first methodologies we have an in-depth ethnographic interview (cf. Heigham/Croker 2009), that focuses on the migrant as an individual, his/her experience during the migration and with the language(s) of the community of arrival. The method adopted reminds the discursive approaches during which the negotiation and maintenance of a social identity is constructed by the speaker during the interaction (cf. e.g., De Fina 2003; Ayometzi 2007). As Ochs (1997:166–168) emphasizes in her analysis of discourse features and structure, through the narration of the migration, the migrant reconstructs his/her experience, by also selecting the most salient events in his/her past, and by elaborating his/her private experience as a collective fact: linguistically, this is marked by the use of 1st person plural pronouns or verb forms, but also through selection of adjectives and expressions used by the migrant community to define itself as opposed to the (often derogatory) comments used by the “others”, the non-member of the migrant community that usually corresponds to the community of arrival of the migration (cf. e.g., Calvi 2014 with the members of the South American migrants in Italy, or De Fina 2012 on the Mexican migrants in the United States).

We selected adult former migrants that wished to recall their migratory experiences and that came from the two main internal migratory groups in Biella, that is the Venetian and the Sardinian ones. Those groups are characterized by a similar time of migration, and speakers were also around the same age and level of education at the time of migration. A short overview of our selected speakers is provided in Table 1.⁴

Table 1: *Social information of the interviewed migratory subjects*

Migratory Group	Name	Sex	Age	Place of origin
VENETIAN	Aurora	F	68	Rovigo
	Almerino	M	67	Pozzonuovo (Padua)
	Teresa	F	67	Pianezze (Vicenza)
	Loris	M	71	Roverbella (Mantua)
	Lorenzo	M	74	Valdagno (Vicenza)
	Giovanni	M	68	Arquà Petrarca (Padua)
SARDINIAN	Aldo	M	73	Carbonia (South Sardinia)
	Alia	F	73	Nulvi (Sassari)
	Mario	M	77	Guspini (South Sardinia)
	Caterina	F	73	Gonnosfanadiga (South Sardinia)
	Adriana	F	78	Narcao (South Sardinia)
	Mario S.	M	73	Cagliari
	Maria Teresa	F	72	Alghero (Sassari)
	Salvatore	M	87	Mamoiada (Nuoro)
	Maria Antonia	F	79	Orani (Nuoro)
	Govino	M	70	Sassari
	Umberto	M	67	Teulada (South Sardinia)
	Maria Costanza	F	67	Cagliari
	Luca	M	84	Ales (Oristano)
	Maria Grazia	F	81	Orani (Orani)

4 Among the Venetian migrants we have also included a speaker, Loris, originally from Roverbella, in the province of Mantua, which is administratively in Lombardy. However, it is well known that geographical boundaries do not correspond to linguistic ones. The Mantua area lies between the dialectal Venetian and Emilian areas. Furthermore, Roverbella is only 6 km from the beginning of the Venetian administrative region, and in the literature it is recognized as the area with the stronger influence of the Veronese dialects over the Mantua ones (cf. Loporcaro 2009:130).

Interviews took place in two different moments, corresponding to two steps during the data collection of the project. A first recording session was conducted in December 2018 at the primary school *Aglietti di Cossato*, as part of an educational activity involving the whole local community: pupils' grandparents with migratory origins were asked to come to class and share their experience with the pupils and the researchers as part of the project *Language, Identity and Migration – 1*. The interviews were recorded through a Sony Alpha 3000 webcam and a Tascam DR40 recorder, with audio settled at 44.1 KHz, 16 bit recording sample. The six interviews have a total duration of 1h 34', and they have been lately transcribed in ELAN by following textual annotation of the CLIPS protocol (cf. Savy 2005) integrated with some typical features of migratory discourse as in De Fina (2003:20–22), and a multimodal annotation by following McNeill's (1992:377) hand-gestures classification. Pause duration was automatically calculated in ELAN, and it is labelled in the textual excerpts as "SP" (short pause) or "LP" (long pause). Finally, in a different tier it was signalled whether expressions or sentences were pronounced in a language (thus including Italo-Romance dialects) different from Italian.

Sardinian migrants have been recorded in October–November 2021 as part of a follow-up of the previous project *Language, Identity and Migration – 2*, founded by Fondazione *Casa Sardegna* through the collaboration of the cultural association *Su Nuraghe* of Biella. The equipment used was as in the previous interviews, but recordings took place in the private houses of the speakers, due to Covid 19 restrictions. We recorded 14 speakers (7M, 7F) of Sardinian origins (cf. Tab. 1). Since there weren't other speakers from the same community during the recordings, as in the previous experiment with Venetian migrants, the local leader of the Sardinian community agreed to be present and to facilitate the use of Sardinian language⁵ through the interview, albeit in specific moments

5 In this paper we will generically refer to Sardinian language (as well as to Venetian) in a very general sense. The reason is two-fold: on the one hand, we wanted to respect the name assigned to their own language by members of the linguistic (migrant) community (cf. also Vedovelli 2005; Mattiello/Della Putta 2017); on the other hand, the focus was primarily on the geographical origin of the speaker, not (yet) specifically on the precise linguistic variety spoken before the migration, also because the speaker him/herself was not able to label it or to define it in precise terms. This is particularly evident in case of Sardinian community, in which the distinguishing feature is being 'Sardinian', in general. Obviously, the scholar knows very well the great inner differentiation of both Venetian and Sardinian varieties, for which a good reference is represented by, respectively, Canepari (1984), Viridis (1988), and Linzmeier (2019).

previously planned with the researcher. The interviews were also transcribed and annotated in ELAN, as it has been previously explained.

Apart from a textual analysis of the context of migration, the research has also focused on the terms and expressions of the original language that have been maintained by the migrants. Furthermore, we wanted to see if the different narrations corresponding to a different projected identity of the migrant (i.e., as a migrant or as part of the new community) were also phonetically somehow remarked in a sociophonetic perspective. We selected vowels since they are continuous sounds and up to variation also across Italian Regional varieties and dialects (cf. Loporcaro 2009). Stressed vowels have been isolated on PRAAT and formants values automatically extracted through a PRAAT script. In case of both male and female speakers, Hertz values have been normalized in Bark. Statistical analysis has been conducted in IBM SPSS 20, while vowel space graphic visualization has been provided through the online tool Visible Vowels (cf. Heeringa/Van der Velde 2018).

For Venetian speakers, we opposed those parts of the interview in Italian there was a different realization of vowels when speaker's projected identity was more linked to his/her past as a migrant (labelled as "VENETO") or his/her new life in the new community (labelled as "PIEMONTESE"). For Sardinian community, we selected only three male speakers coming from three different linguistic areas in Sardinia (cf. Viridis 2019), that is Campidanese (CAMP), Nuorese (NUOR) and Sassarese (SASS). The main interest was to ascertain whether the speakers, when projecting their migratory identity, maintained a phonetic marker of origin, or they show a more uniform pattern, that is without differentiating among Sardinian varieties.

4. The Venetian migration

4.1 Interviews

The analysis of Venetian heritage speakers has shown a substantial lack of transmission of Venetian dialects even in first generation migrants (cf. also Meluzzi et al. 2021:102–104). This language loss is visible also in those migrants who came in Biella as teens, thus having attended schools in their home village. In the example (1), Lorenzo, who emigrated in Biella when he was 15. Despite the memories of old games played as children, the verbal form used at line 47 *disuma* 'we say' presents a typical ending *-uma*, which is characteristics of the Piedmontese rather than Venetian varieties, where the same form is more commonly attested in *-emo* (cf. Rohlfs 1968:250–251). It is also evident

the presence of many hesitations and reformulations (lines 48–50) to finally manage to remember the name of the game. Finally, the verbal form *diciavamo* ‘we said’ (line 48), which is a sort of mix between Piedmontese and Italian.

- (1) Lorenzo (74 y.o., Valdagno)
- 046 si giocava
we played
- 047 allora noi in veneto <LP> [PIEM] *disuma* [PIEM] <LP>
well, we in Venetian we say
- 048 si gioca a a cicce eh <LP>
we play at at “cicce” eh
- 049 a <LP>
at
- 050 Cecchete
“Cecchete”⁶
- 051 Cecchete sarebbero le palline che ci sono adesso le biglie
“Cecchete” is like the little balls that now are marbles
- [...]
- 063 e se no si giocava: <LP>
and if not, we played
- 064 a Chiodi <SP>
to Nails
- 065 Chiodi cosa si faceva
Nails what we did
- 066 c’era un pezzo di legno alto così
there a was a stick this high
- [...]
- 074 e se no poi si giocava: <SP> noi diciavamo Spegna Spegna
and if not then we played we said “Spegna spegna”
- 075 è una: <LP> è un gioco che si:
it is a – it is a game that it
- 076 giocava in gruppo
it’s played in group

6 The name refers to an old popular Venetian game, of the Veronese area, but no translation in Italian is available. The same could be said for the other mentioned game *Spegna spegna*, which, from the description provided by the speaker, seemed a sort of chasing game similar to tag.

The struggle at learning both the local variety and the local language (Piedmontese/Biellese) is evident in examples like (2), in which two extracts from Teresa's interview are reported, and the lines showing dialect sentences or words are marked in italics.

- (2) Teresa (67 y.o., Vicenza; English translation in italics below)
- 020 boh comunque: poi <SP> mio papà dopo un anno si è trasferito un anno a Mottalciata
well anyway, then my father after a year moved one year to Mottalciata
- 021 e poi da lì: ha conosciuto gente <SP> siam al terzo anno <SP> siamo andati capitare sempre a Castellengo <SP> nella chiesa della parrocchia
and then from here he knew people. We're at the third year. We ended up always in Castellengo in the church of the parish
- 022 io ho cominciato le scuole lì
I've started schools there
- 023 le difficoltà più grandi: finché si è piccoli è la scuola il parlare in piemontese conoscere <LP>
 the major difficulties, since you're a kid is the school, to talk in Piedmontese to know
- 024 però io::
but I
- 025 insomma: / ci siamo inseriti bene
well we integrated well
- 026 perché c'eravamo: <SP> ragazzini lì i vicini di casa che:
because we were – boys there the neighbours that
- 027 andavamo a scuola insieme <SP> poi dopo pranzo: si tornava a casa
we went to school together – then after lunch we went back home
- 028 si ritornava a scuola / si giocava insieme si faceva tutto insieme
we went back to school we played together we did everything together
- [...]
- 270 finché si è piccoli per dire::
 since when you're young just to say
- 271 era il dialetto che bisognava imparare <SP> fin che ce n'è
it was the dialect that you must learn until there is
- 272 però io l'ho imparato!
but I've learnt it!
- 273 io l'ho imparato anche:: <SP> [PIEM] parlè piemuntèis [PIEM]
I've learnt to speak Piedmontese too
- 274 [PIEM] i sòn bòna e l'è nen ch'a [PIEM] fa male
I'm good and it's not like it hurts

- 275 [PIEM] m'an tròv nen èn [PIEM] difficoltà⁷ insieme [PIEM] a j'àucc⁸ a parlé
in piemuntèis [PIEM]
*I don't find myself in difficulties together with the others at speaking
Piedmontese*
- 276 ma già da sempre
but since always
- 277 ho imparato quasi subito a [PIEM] parlé el piemuntèis [PIEM]
I've learnt to speak Piedmontese almost immediately

In the example, it is evident how learning the local language was indispensable for Venetian immigrant children also at school, even because the other children all spoke Piedmontese. It is worth noting that the speaker refers to the local language with this label “Piedmontese” rather than a more specific “Biellese” or even local one. The speaker is also very proud of having quickly grasped the basic of the local language (line 272) and she also produced some sentences in Piedmontese (lines 273–277). However, in line 275 the forms *difficoltà insieme* ‘difficulties together’ are realized in plain Italian, as demonstrated by the geminated labiodental fricative [f:] and the lexical form *insieme* as opposed to Piedmontese *ansem/ansema*. Conversely, the speaker uses a very local variant for the word *altri* ‘others’ with the post-alveolar voiceless affricate, thus resulting in a code-mixing between Italian and Piedmontese, with local features.

4.2 Vowel Space

Although not visibly preserved, we wanted to investigate if more subtle phonetic cues could still point out a more Venetian identity, especially as emerging in the different moments of the narration. To do so, we isolated those moments in the narratives that could be related to the memory of Veneto, such as childhood

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- 7 The Piedmontese form here should have been <dificoltà> [difikul'ta], but our speaker pronounced this word in an Italian way as [dif:ikol'ta], thus making a code-mixing with the following word <insieme>.
- 8 Despite the Piedmontese form [ʼawtr] or also [ʼawt], the speaker realized the word “(the) others” with a final post-alveolar voiceless affricate, thus resulting in the form [ʼawtʃ]. This form is a typical non-standard Biellese variant, as also signalled by De Stefano (2017) who proposes the graphic realization as <àucc> or <àuce>. We have preferred the first transcription since our speaker did not pronounce the final [e] or [ə], a form that, to my knowledge, is very well attested in the Strona river valley, which seems to be more conservative than others in Biellese area.

games and tales in Veneto, Venetian food and language use with parents, and we oppose those moments to the narrations of the experience in Biella, many years after speakers' arrival in the new villages. Our purpose was to compare vowels as produced by the same speakers in these two moments, in order to ascertain a possible variability linked to the projection of a more "Venetian-like" vs. a "Piedmontese/Biellese-like" identity. We isolated 660 total tokens, balanced for vowel quality and in words comparable for duration, stress position and prosodic curve: 312 tokens belonged to those parts of narrations labelled as "Piedmontese" and 346 to the "Venetian" portions. Vowel annotation was manually conducted in PRAAT (cf. Boersma/Weenick 2019), by means of variations in the second formant; formant values of F1 and F2 at the midpoint of each vowel were then automatically extracted, and lately normalized in Bark for intra-speaker comparison. Vowel space was then visualized through the free online tool Visible Vowels (cf. Heeringa/Van de Velde 2018), whereas a statistical analysis with Anova was conducted on IBM SPSS 20.

Fig. 1 presents the general shape of vowel space of all the speakers in the two moments of their narrations ($p < .05$).

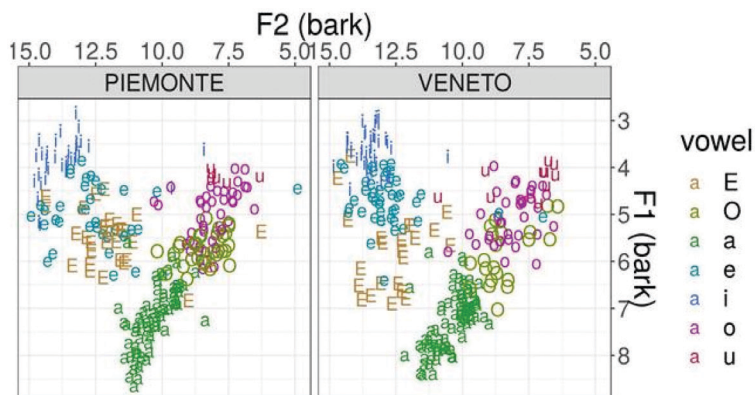


Figure 1: Vowel space variability between moments of migrants' narrations concerning the new Piedmontese/Biellese identity (on the left) and the Venetian identity (on the right); formants' values are normalized in Bark and visualized through Visible Vowels

The images show a difference especially in mid-vowels, that [e] and [ɛ] (labelled "E" in the picture). The central low vowel /a/ also seems to have more

dispersed realization in the Piedmontese narrative parts with respect to the Venetian ones, where it is articulated as more posterior.

We then tried a within-speaker analysis, by focusing on the difference between the two narrative moments in single speakers. Only in two cases was this difference statistically significant ($p < .05$), that is for speakers Loris and Lorenzo (fig. 2). Data have been normalized in Lobanov to preserve intra-speaker variability (cf. Van der Harst 2011: 65–90).

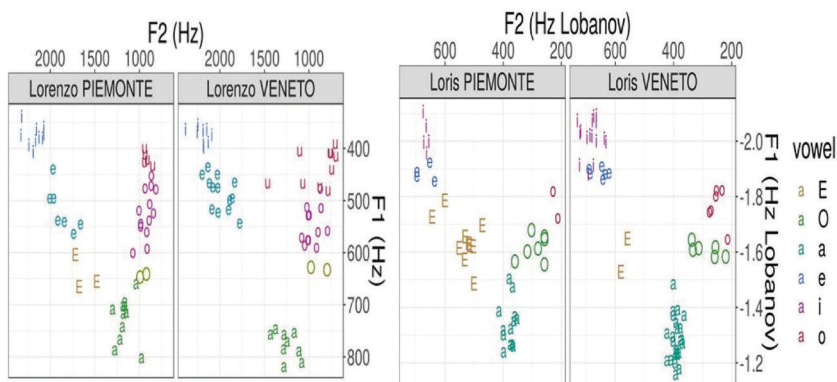


Figure 2: Vowel space of Lorenzo (on the left) and Loris (on the right) between narration on Piedmontese/Biellesse vs. Venetian life; formants' values are normalized in Lobanov and visualized through Visible Vowels

Albeit the relatively small dataset, it is possible to notice how the two speakers show some similarities but also a couple of differences. As it has been noted for the general sample, both speakers present a more back low vowel /a/ during their Venetian narrations. Loris also presents a higher vowel /e/, quite close to [i] in some cases, more in Venetian parts than in Piedmontese, although it seems to be a peculiar feature of this speaker. However, a raising of /e/ towards /i/ in the Venetian narration could also be noted for Lorenzo. Conversely, back middle vowels /o/ and /ɔ/ (labelled as “O” in the image) do not show a significative variation, especially in Loris’s speech.

5. The Sardinian migration

5.1 The narratives

The interviews conducted with the Sardinian community have shown a great use of the language of origin within the family: many speakers, but especially men, have agreed to conduct the interview almost entirely in Sardinian, also thanks to the presence of the leader of their community. Sardinian is used to talk about food, songs or riddles told as children, or to communicate with the partner, even in case of bi-dialectal families. However, Sardinian has not been transmitted to the following generation, and in many cases female speakers have refused to talk Sardinian when the researcher was present: this constitutes a classical example of the well-known observer's paradox (cf. Labov 1972:209–210), but it's worth noting that those speakers didn't use their original language even when the researcher was not in the room. An example of dialect avoidance by female speakers could be seen in (3): the interview was performed with both speakers Aldo and Alia, husband and wife, with the presence of the researcher and of the Sardinian group leader in Biella. In order to encourage the use of Sardinian during the conversation, many questions were asked about typical food preparations and the names of aromatic plants, animals and so on. Conversely, Alia never switched to Sardinian, whereas her husband was quite proud of doing so. However, sometimes word retrieval is problematic and shows the difference between the two Sardinian varieties spoken by the couple.

- (3) *Aldo (73 y.o., Carbonia) and Alia (73 y.o., Nulvi)*
- | | | |
|-----|---------|--|
| 746 | 01M_ALD | una volta si faceva (0.1)
<i>once we made</i> |
| 747 | 01M_ALD | l'olio (0.3)
<i>the oil</i> |
| 748 | 01M_ALD | dalla dalla dal- #eh#
<i>from from eh</i> |
| 749 | 02F_ALI | #dal sincano#
<i>from sincano</i> |
| 750 | 01M_ALD | dalla da mh (0.6)
<i>from from eh</i> |
| 751 | 01M_ALD | sì aspe#tta#
<i>yes wait</i> |
| 752 | 02F_ALI | #il sin#cano
<i>the sincano</i> |
| 753 | 01M_ALD | eh il sinca- eh: sa modicci (0.6)
<i>eh il sinca- eh sa modicci</i> |
| 754 | 01M_ALD | il l- l- l- #eh# |

		<i>the t- t- t- eh</i>
755	02F_ALI	eh #sa modicci# è il sincano (0.4) <i>eh sa modicci is the sincano</i>
756	01M_ALD	aspetta in italiano com'è che si dice l- (1.2) <i>wait but how is it called in Italian?</i>
	[...]	
761	01M_ALD	lentischio! <i>lentisk</i>
762	02F_ALI	lentischio <i>lentisk</i>

While they were telling the receipt about the use of aromatic plants in preparing pork, Aldo looks for the name of a typical Sardinian aromatic plant, the lentisk (*pistacia lentiscus*, line 760). Alia suggests *sincano*, a form that may resemble *lestinkanu* attested in the town of Ploaghe in the Linguistic and Ethnographic Atlas of Italy and Southern Switzerland (available online, cf. Tisato 2010, s.v.; Tisato 2019). However the husband is not satisfied by this translation, since he may not recognize it as Italian, and it keeps repeating the word in his own variety (*sa moḍḍicci*), a variant that is attested in Carbonia. Finally, he remembered the Italian name *lentischio* (line 761).

That Alia openly refused to speak dialect is also evident in example (4) when the researcher asked her to explain the cooking of a typical Sardinian sweet, the *papassinu* or *papassina*,⁹ also called *pabassinas* in Sardinian Italian.

- (4) Alia (73 y.o., Nulvi)
- 350ALIA e invece le pappassine le faccio: <SP>
and then the pappassine I make them
- 351ALIA eh: prima metto le mandorle, noci, uva passa: <SP>
eh first I put the almonds, nuts, raisin
- 352ALIA eh: tutti i gusti arancia limone <SP> io quelli li metto sempre
eh all the flavors orange lemon I always put them

Despite it is a traditional Sardinian food, Alia explained its preparation in Italian, by also adopting an hypercorrect Italian pronunciation with the gemination of the bilabial plosive [p].

In another example, in (5), the female speaker Caterina declares to love to use Sardinian at home with her husband Mario, and to use it also at the cultural association *Su Nuraghe* (here referred to as 'the club').

9 Cf. <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papassinu>; last accessed 17 December 2022.

- (5) Caterina (73 y.o., Gonnosfanadiga)
- 542CAT Oh noi parliamo tanto in sardo a casa <SP>
Oh we talk a lot Sardinian at home
- 543CAT infatti: quando vado al Circolo faccio un minestrone io
indeed when I go to the club I mix up everything
- 544CAT <SP> sardo e italiano <LP>
Sardinian and Italian
- 545CAT perché a me piace <LP>
because I like it

However, when lately asked to tell something in Sardinian she couldn't produce a coherent sentence, not even a song or a prayer.

5.2 Vowel space

We selected three male speakers of similar age and migratory background (cf. Tab. 2) as representative of three different main varieties of Sardinian, that is Campidanese, Nuorese and Sassarese. We selected a total of 312 stressed vowels during their narrations in Sardinian and we extracted the formants values. An Anova test confirmed that the three speakers differ for all vowels but /i/, and that the Campidanese speaker was more different from the other two speakers (see Fig. 3). We excluded from the analysis the vowel /u/ because it was often difficult to automatically extract F1 and F2, due to their very close proximity; the realization of /u/ especially in word-final position is up to further investigation in a specifically sub-set of data.

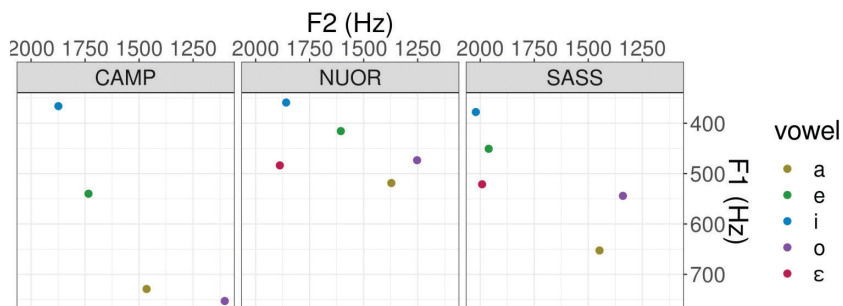


Figure 3: Vowel space three speakers representing the Sardinian varieties of Campidanese (CAMP), Nuorese (NUOR) and Sassarese (SASS) as plotted through Visible Vowels

The Sasserese speaker shows a pronunciation as extremely advanced pronunciation of front mid-vowels /e/ and /ɛ/, that are also particularly raised, especially if compared with the Campidanese speaker. Thus, the vowel space of the Sasserese speaker appeared more closed and advanced in comparison to the Campidanese one. However, Nuorese speaker show an extremely reduced vowel space, characterized by a general raising of F1 for all vowels, which is not encountered in other speakers. Finally, in the Campidanese speaker is possible to notice a centralization of the back middle-high vowel /o/.

6. Discussion

The two major internal migrations in Biellese show some peculiar differences in the way the language of origin has been maintained and used. Venetian speakers have almost lost all features of their native language, and even the spurious surviving items are strongly influenced by either Italian or Piedmontese phonology, as in the textual examples reported in this paper (but cf. also the considerations and the examples in Meluzzi et al. 2021:100–103). This process of language loss has been certainly influenced by the pressure of the local language, as in (2), with Piedmontese playing a central role for socialization since primary school. Cross-linguistic influences of Piedmontese over the language of origin were visible in the verbal morphology, as in the first person plural form *disuma* ‘we say’: clearly, the little exposure to the language of origin combined with the social importance of the language of arrival has determined a loss of grammatical competence in the former language, thus leading to language attrition and loss.¹⁰

Conversely, the Sardinian community has maintained its original language, even if it was evident a negative prejudice associated to its use outside the linguistic community. Indeed, female speakers refused to speak Sardinian in presence of the researcher, an outsider of the community, and even with the help of the leader of their community they declared to speak Sardinian only with family members of old age. Thus, the language of origin, when maintained, is the language of intimacy and it is spoken mainly if not exclusively within the family, but not overtly transmitted to the second generation of migration. Even for Sardinian migrants, despite the strong sense of community that unites the members in cultural activities and rituals, speakers have not educated their

10 Among many other works on the topic, see the overview in Schmid/Köpke (2019), also Keijzer (2007) for a similar example in another linguistic community.

children in their language of origin, which is coming back only seldom in the use with grand-children. This process of skipping one generation of migration in the overt transmission of the language of origins is well documented in the literature as part of the processes of reorganization of the linguistic repertoires after a migration (e.g., Nodari et al. 2019 on Calabrese speakers in Toronto, Canada, or Avesani et al. 2015 on Australian communities of former Venetian speakers).

7. Conclusion and further perspectives

The social and historical differences of the two main internal migrations in Biella have had important outcomes in the linguistic repertoires of the migrant community. As we have seen, while Venetian as heritage language is almost completely lost, Sardinian is well-maintained within the community, although it has assumed the characteristics of a *we-code*, and it is used only with family members. Furthermore, there doesn't seem to have happened a transmission of this language to the youngest generations, that is second and third generation of Sardinian speakers in Biella.

However, phonetically, it was possible to remark a difference in both migrants' group as for vowels' production. In particular, in the case of Venetian speakers it was detected a difference between the narrative moments more linked to the past (i.e., a Venetian identity) and the ones linked to the life in the new community (i.e., a Piedmontese/Biellese identity). This contrasted with a morpho-lexical level in which the shown code-switching was between Italian and Piedmontese, and there were no preserved examples in Venetian (cf. also Meluzzi et al. 2021:102). Furthermore, a difference between vowel space has been detected also in Sardinian speakers from different areas of Sardinia. This could indicate a maintenance of specific dialectal features of the language of origin, albeit all speakers refer to it with the more general label "Sardinian" and not with specific labels like "Campidanese", "Logudorese" etc.

These aspects of phonetic variability need to be further investigated not only with more data from the already recorded interviews, but also through the recording of new dialogical data in order to minimize the observer's paradox during face-to-face interviews. Furthermore, it would be necessary to perform perceptive experiments to verify whether Sardinian speakers still living in their area of origin are able at identifying different phonetic features of the immigrant speakers in Biella. More generally speaking, further steps of the CoLIMBi project will need to address other migratory types that have affected this Alpine area, starting with the Moroccan migration that has taken place

since the 1990s. Finally, the project data would soon be available for scholars through a website containing the materials and the data of the project itself.

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