A preliminary investigation on 21st-century attitudes towards regional languages in Italy

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0. Introduction: The languages of Italy in context

Italy is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in Europe. Close to 20 Romance languages are native to Italy, with the greatest variety being concentrated in Northern Italy. Near the northeastern border, varieties of German and South Slavic languages are spoken. Southern Italy is characterized by small pockets of communities speaking Arbëresh and Griko. These are varieties of Albanian and Greek, respectively, which have been spoken in Italy for centuries. Lastly, Romani speakers can be found across the country. Thus, languages from six different branches of the Indo-European family are spoken in Italy. But like about half of the languages spoken on earth today, most of the regional languages of Italy are endangered (Bronham et al. 2022; Moseley 2010).

To Italy's northwest, France once had a level of linguistic diversity in its Romance languages perhaps comparable to that of Italy. However, Paris dominated culturally and demographically from early on in French history, and due to the post-revolutionary centralization of the state, Parisian French has effectively ousted all other Romance varieties. These, along with other regional languages of France, were deliberately targeted by authorities for elimination (Bell 1995). Though regional languages have also been marginalized in Spain since political unification in the early 18th century, most of its Romance varieties[1] besides Castilian Spanish have regional co-official status today (Burgen 2022). But Italy only became a unified state in 1861, and the widespread adoption of the national language by the Italian population did not happen until a century later (Thomas 2015). During the Fascist period (1922–1943), a single "ideal" Italian language was promoted at the expense of regional languages. However, the main targets for assimilation were German and Slavic speakers, who were seen as a threat to a unified Italian identity (Di Michele 2023). By the end of the Fascist period, regional languages remained the preferred spoken medium for most of the population. The Italian Republic, founded in 1946, aimed

[1] The varieties with regional co-official status are Aranese, Catalan, Valencian, and Galician. The varieties without co-official status are Aragonese and Asturian-Leonese. Basque, a language isolate, also has regional co-official status.

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to distance itself from the Fascist linguistic policy, but regional languages saw an unprecedented decline in the following decades due to Italian-language education and media, industrialization, and internal mobility (Robustelli 2018). With these changes, regional languages were increasingly seen as markers of rural, uneducated, and backward people.

In sum, the regional languages of Italy are in a precarious situation today. Most of them, especially the Romance ones, remain without official recognition. Yet, today's youth do not have memories of the Fascist era and its linguistic policy, nor of the following decades in which speaking a regional language was highly stigmatized and considered a social handicap. As such, there has been a new wave of interest in these languages among younger people in recent years. Some of this interest is superficial: local languages may more frequently be a topic of casual conversation without having a negative connotation, but in these contexts they are not necessarily seen as pieces of cultural heritage in danger of dying out. Others, though, have taken the initiative to reclaim the local language that they were denied in their youth by becoming L2 speakers as adults (Coluzzi 2019). Doing so has become easier in recent years thanks to social media and classes specifically for native Italian-speaking adults.

Evidently, the future is uncertain: will Italy soon look like France, with the sole national language dominating in nearly all communities and contexts? Or will increased easy access to information and declining stigma be enough to ensure that many regional languages remain spoken for more than a couple more generations? The investigation prompted by this survey aims to gauge attitudes of average Italians in order to begin to determine what the future might look like.

1. The survey: background

The survey was created in September 2022 and spread in the form of a Microsoft Forms questionnaire from early October to early December 2022. Two academic settings in the city of Padua, namely the Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies at the University of Padua and the Boston University Padua Center, served as the main starting points for spreading the survey. In the survey instructions, linguistic students and others with experience studying linguistics were explicitly asked not to participate, so as not to skew the results. Otherwise, any Italian person 19 years or older was encouraged to participate. All survey instructions and questions were written in Italian.

1.1. Participant data

The participants were anonymous, but they were asked for basic socio-demographic information, including age, gender, and level of education. They were also asked what type of environment they grew up in (urban, suburban, or rural) and if they spoke at least one regional Romance variety.[2] Finally, they were asked whether or not they had a non-Italian parent who was born outside of Italy. This last question was asked in order to see if Italians from multilingual immigrant backgrounds would display a different level of sensitivity to regional languages with respect to other Italians, but in the end only 7/108 participants (~6.5%) came from such a background. Therefore, I was unable to explore this question.

1.1 Language or dialect?

The first main section of the survey asked participants to categorize each of the 18 following regional languages spoken in Italy as either a dialect of Italian (*un dialetto di italiano*) or as a distinct language (*una lingua distinta*). Note that a) in Italy, there are more regional languages in addition to these 18 and b) the grouping used in this paper is for analysis purposes and was not a part of the survey. The languages were not listed in the following order, either.

	Italian	**English**
Group A	*Ligure*	Ligurian
	Piemontese	Piedmontese
	Lombardo	Lombard
	Veneto	Venetian
	Emiliano	Emilian
	Romagnolo	Romagnol
	Napoletano	Neapolitan
	Siciliano	Sicilian
Group B	*Occitano*	Occitan

[2] I listed varieties traditionally considered *dialetti* 'dialects' (not including Tuscan), plus the regional Romance languages recognized by Italian law (see section 2.2). Despite their recognition, the respective sociolinguistic situations of these languages are, in some ways, more similar to those of the *dialetti* than to those of the non-Romance regional languages.

	Francoprovenzale	Francoprovençal
	Ladino	Ladin
	Friulano	Friulian
	Sardo	Sardinian
Group C	*Sudtirolese*	South Tyrolean
	Arbëresh	Arbëresh
	Grico	Griko
	Sloveno	Slovene
	Croato	Croatian

The languages in Group A are typically referred to as *dialetti* 'dialects' in Italian, even by their speakers and in scholarly practice. Ligurian, Piedmontese, Lombard, Emilian, and Romagnol are part of the Gallo-Italic branch of Romance languages, which are seen as transitional between languages spoken to the west, including French and Occitan, and Italo-Dalmatian languages to the south, which includes Tuscan (including Standard Italian), Neapolitan, and Sicilian. Venetian is sometimes grouped with the Gallo-Italic branch (e.g., by Glottolog). However, certain linguists emphasize that Venetian shares more similarities with the Italo-Dalmatian languages than the Gallo-Italic languages do, and believe that it should be classified separately from either group (Ursini 2011).

The speakers of Romance languages belonging to Group B are linguistic minorities officially recognized by the Italian Constitution. The languages belonging to Group C are also protected but are not Romance languages. The fact that Group B languages are protected but Group A languages (*dialetti*) are not stems from the outcome of a late 20th-century debate on the matter. The distinction between *dialetti* and Romance minority languages is not linguistic, but was based on the idea that speakers of the latter have distinct cultural identities shaped by history that are "less Italian" than those of speakers of *dialetti*. Occitan, for instance, is spoken along the Italian border with France, but the large bulk of traditionally Occitan-speaking territory is in France. Friulian and Sardinian, on the other hand, are only spoken in Italy, but were recognized nevertheless because their speakers were considered to have been historically detached, both geopolitically and culturally, from "Italy proper." In the end, the *dialetti* were not included as

recognized languages, as it was thought that the inclusion of every single language would render the law ineffective and meaningless, especially since it was an attempt to make amends for the Fascist Italianization policies that largely targeted speakers of non-Romance languages decades prior (La Sala 2004).

It is clear that in Italy, like in many other countries, the practical distinction between languages and dialects is a social construct and is not based on linguistic truth. From a linguistic point of view, the *dialetti* are by no means dialects of Italian. Calling these languages *dialetti* in Italian or "dialects" in English is not necessarily inaccurate, in that any variety of any language on earth can be considered a dialect. However, they are not local varieties of the national language, Italian, as term "dialect" tends to imply. Standard Italian was based on Tuscan, one of the regional languages of Italy. The other *dialetti* are not daughters of Tuscan, but rather are its sisters that have been spoken long before "Italy" or an "Italian language" existed as concepts.

As previously stated, one of the choices in this section of the survey used the term *dialetto di italiano* 'dialect of Italian,' not *dialetto italiano* 'Italian dialect.' While the former term cannot accurately apply to the *dialetti* because it assumes that *italiano*, the Italian language, forms an umbrella with "dialects" beneath it, the latter term is ambiguous and not necessarily incorrect. This stems from the fact that the adjective *italiano*, like English "Italian," can refer generically to anything related to the country of Italy (e.g., *cibi italiani* 'Italian foods') or specifically to something related to the Italian language (e.g., *aggettivi italiani* 'Italian adjectives,' i.e., adjectives in the Italian language). The unambiguous term *dialetto di italiano* was used in the survey to see how readily participants would take it to mean the same thing as simply *dialetto* in its colloquial usage, despite that this is not the case. A few perceptive and well-informed participants may have made the logical conclusion that since Group A languages are not dialects of Italian, they must be languages in their own right, despite being called *dialetti*.

Another consideration is that even though Group B languages are considered languages under the law, they may also be colloquially referred to as *dialetti* because of their Romance affiliation. Therefore, whether a participant chose *un dialetto di italiano* or *una lingua distinta* depended partially on their awareness of regional populations and the law protecting minority languages of Italy. Given this fact, it is entirely possible that a participant believed that all languages from Group A and Group B were *dialetti di italiano.* Non-Romance languages of Group C were included in the survey because it is common knowledge that at least some of them (e.g.

Slovene) can only be accurately classified as *una lingua distinta*. Thus, these non-Romance languages served as a kind of control: answering correctly that they were distinct languages indicated that a) the participant did not merely choose *un dialetto di italiano* for every single language without reading each one and b) the participant likely did not answer haphazardly.

Lastly, given that many of the languages listed have few speakers living in limited geographic ranges, participants were given the third option *non so* 'I don't know' for each language. It was also indicated in the instructions that if they had no idea or had never heard of a variety, they should not look it up online but simply choose this third option.

1.2. Likert scale statements

The second main section consisted of 17 statements with which participants were asked to assess using a Likert scale. The number of statements that expressed a positive attitude and the number of statements that expressed a negative attitude toward regional languages and the expansion of their use were equal (6), and the order of these statements was mixed, so that participants would not feel that the survey had a specific position or ideology on the matter. The participants were encouraged to read the statements carefully, to respond honestly and instinctively, and to avoid choosing the option 0 (I don't know/No opinion) when possible.

In addition to gauging opinions on each of the statements across all participants, a score was calculated for each participant based on their responses to the positive and negative statements. This score indicates how positive or negative a given participant's responses were overall with regards to regional languages. Given that there were 12 of these statements and participants could gain or lose up to 3 points for each of their responses, the possible scores range from –36 to 36, with negative and positive scores corresponding to negative and positive attitudes, respectively. The Likert scale, the method of assigning points, and the complete list of statements are shown below (for the original statements in Italian, see the Appendix).

Likert scale		**Points assigned**	
Choice	**Meaning**	**Positive statements**	**Negative statements**
– – –	I strongly disagree	–3	3
– –	I disagree	–2	2
–	I disagree somewhat	–1	1

0	I don't know/No opinion	0	0
+	I agree somewhat	1	–1
+ +	I agree	2	–2
+ + +	I strongly agree	3	–3

Positive statements:

1) The (dialectal varieties of Italy[3]) should be protected by the law
2) Teaching ( ) in primary schools is a good idea
3) A person who speaks Italian and one of the ( ) is bilingual
4) The ( ) are an important part of culture
5) If parents speak one of the ( ), they should try to use it when speaking with their kids
6) The ( ) are undervalued in Italian society

Negative statements:

7) The decrease in the use of (dialectal varieties of Italy) is not a problem
8) The ( ) should not be used in the public sphere (at school, in announcements/ advertisements, etc.)
9) The ( ) are obsolete
10) If the ( ) were taught in primary schools, they would interfere in the acquisition of Italian
11) It's too late to increase the use of ( )
12) The ( ) are corrupted versions of Italian

Other:

13) The ( ) will be spoken even in 100 years
14) Immigrants in Italy tend to only learn Italian and not the ( )
15) Young people don't care about the ( )
16) People who want the ( ) to be spoken more tend to be political separatists
17) It's only worth learning a language if I can use it at work or abroad/with foreigners

[3] This specific but neutral phrasing (Italian: *varietà dialettali d'Italia*) was used so that the survey did not appear to take a position as to whether these varieties should be called *dialetti* 'dialects' or *lingue* 'languages.'

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Dialect of Italian or distinct language

As expected, Group A languages were overwhelmingly seen as dialects of Italian. Interestingly, despite being linguistically closer to Italian, the Southern Italian languages Neapolitan and Sicilian were more often seen as distinct languages than their Northern Italian counterparts. This is likely because most participants grew up in Northern Italy and were thus more familiar with the nearby regional languages. Only 7.4% of participants said Venetian was a distinct language, though most participants were Venetian speakers (87/108 (80.6%) said they spoke a regional Romance variety, and the survey was spread almost exclusively in the region of Veneto). The Gallo-Italic languages Lombard, Piedmontese, and Emilian had the smallest number of participants saying they were distinct languages.

Group B languages showed more variation. Friulian was the language in this group with the largest number of participants saying it was a dialect of Italian (74.1%), followed by Sardinian (61.1%). These high percentages are likely due to the fact that, like many *dialetti*, both language names are connected to the name of an Italian region: Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Sardegna 'Sardinia,' respectively. Like Friulian and Sardinian, Ladin is only spoken in Italy, but only 3.7% of participants said it was a dialect of Italian. This is likely due to cultural factors that render Ladins, and by extension, their language, as more foreign in the eyes of most Italians. The percentages of participants saying that Occitan (8.3%) and Francoprovençal (9.3%) were dialects of Italian were not high in absolute terms, but were somewhat high considering that both languages are or were spoken in much larger areas outside of Italy.

			Responses (%)		
	Italian	**English**	**D. Italian**	**Language**	**Unsure**
Group A	*Ligure*	Ligurian	83.3	4.6	12
	Piemontese	Piedmontese	91.7	2.8	5.6
	Lombardo	Lombard	92.6	2.8	4.6
	Veneto	Venetian	88	7.4	4.6
	Emiliano	Emilian	91.7	3.7	4.6
	Romagnolo	Romagnol	88.9	4.6	6.5

	Napoletano	Neapolitan	81.5	13.9	4.6
	Siciliano	Sicilian	84.3	12	3.7
Group B	*Occitano*	Occitan	8.3	42.6	49.1
	Francoprovenzale	Francoprovençal	9.3	52.8	38
	Ladino	Ladin	3.7	58.3	38
	Friulano	Friulian	74.1	15.7	10.2
	Sardo	Sardinian	61.1	34.3	4.6
Group C	*Sudtirolese*	South Tyrolean	25	53.7	21.3
	Arbëresh	Arbëresh	1.9	48.1	50
	Grico	Griko	3.7	24.1	72.2
	Sloveno	Slovene	0	95.4	4.6
	Croato	Croatian	0	94.4	5.6

As expected, the familiar Group C languages were seen as distinct languages: no one said Slovene or Croatian were dialects of Italian. One quarter of participants said that the Bavarian German variety South Tyrolean was a dialect of Italian, either because they were not familiar with the local language of the corresponding province (South Tyrol, known locally as Südtirol), or, more likely, because they were only used to referring to that language as simply *tedesco* 'German.' Arbëresh and especially Griko were more unfamiliar to participants. These two languages probably would not have been as unfamiliar to participants from Southern Italy.

3.2. Likert scale statements

The responses to the Likert scale statements (for detailed responses to all statements, see the Appendix) reveal that participants generally had positive attitudes towards the regional languages of Italy, believing that they are an important and present part of life and should remain so. 93.5% of participants agreed[4] that regional languages are an important part of culture, with 62% strongly agreeing, and 80.5% disagreed with the idea that they are obsolete. 64.8% agreed that regional languages are undervalued in Italian society. Similarly, the negative attitudes towards

[4] "Agree" includes participants who chose "I agree somewhat," "I agree," and "I strongly agree." Likewise, "disagree" includes participants who chose "I disagree somewhat," "I disagree," and "I strongly disagree."

regional languages that were typical in the 20th century were not widely held by participants: 81.5% disagreed with the idea that regional languages were corrupted versions of Italian. 75% disagreed with the idea that the decrease in their use was not a problem. However, participants disagreed to a greater extent on how or if their use should be protected, promoted, or expanded. 72.3% agreed that regional languages should not be spoken in the public sphere, and 61.1% thought that teaching them in primary schools was not a good idea. On the other hand, 71.3% agreed that they should be protected by the law, and 60.2% agreed that parents who speak a regional language should try to speak it with their children. That teaching regional languages in primary schools would interfere in the acquisition of Italian was the most contentious statement, with 44.5% disagreeing and 48.1% agreeing. Only 38% agreed that regional languages would be spoken in 100 years, while 43.5% disagreed. However, 56.5% disagreed with the idea that young people do not care about regional languages, and 58.3% disagreed with the idea that it is too late to increase their use.

Though regional languages have been used as a rallying point by political separatists in Northern Italy, only 21% of participants had the association, weak or strong, that promoters of regional languages are typically political separatists (Perrino 2019). 54.6% disagreed with the idea that immigrants in Italy do not learn regional languages in addition to Italian. In fact, it is not unusual for immigrants in Veneto to learn Venetian. One of the seven survey participants with a foreign parent said they spoke a regional Romance variety. In a survey of 149 students at Veneto schools, Goglia & Fincati (2017) found that 36% of students with immigrant backgrounds said they could speak Venetian.

3.3. Responses based on socio-demographic information

Based on the calculated attitude scores ranging from –36 to 36, male-identifying and female-identifying participants had, on average, similar attitudes towards regional languages.

Gender	**Participants**	**Mean score**
M	37	7.621
F	71	7.465
Other	0	

Speakers of regional languages had, on average, noticeably more positive attitudes than non-speakers. However, speakers and non-speakers chose the option *un dialetto di italiano* for regional languages as opposed to *una lingua distinta* at similar rates.

Speaker	**Participants**	**Mean score**	***Un dialetto di italiano* (%)**
Yes	87	8.724	49.745
No	21	2.524	47.884

Participants who grew up in rural environments had, on average, more positive attitudes than participants who grew up in suburban or urban environments.

Environment	**Participants**	**Mean score**
Rural	28	10.571
Suburban	32	5.625
Urban	48	7

There were too few participants belonging to certain age groups to make meaningful comparisons across them: 71/108 participants (~65.7%) belonged to the age group 19–29.

4. Limitations of this study

It is important to note that the results of the survey, rather than reflecting the Italian sociolinguistic situation as a whole, are Veneto- and Venetian-skewed because of where the survey was spread. This is of key importance because Venetian is much more vital today than other Northern Italian *dialetti*. In fact, UNESCO considers Venetian to be vulnerable (i.e., not yet endangered), while all other Northern Italian *dialetti* are considered endangered (Moseley 2010). This is largely due to the fact that Venetian was the everyday language of the Republic of Venice, which was a key maritime power of the Mediterranean that existed for over a thousand years, falling in 1797 (Ferguson 2007). The generally positive attitudes expressed by survey participants reflects how Venetian has not faced the same degree of stigma that other Northern *dialetti* have faced. It would be worth spreading this survey on a much larger scale in all parts of Italy to see how attitudes vary by region. Just as Italy is not linguistically uniform, nor is the sociolinguistic

situation: with each region and language comes a unique set of historical and social factors to take into account.

Second, the survey was spread primarily in academic settings not because they were deemed the most suitable for gauging attitudes, but because they provided a large number of potential participants in a short period of time. Obviously, the attitudes of people in academic settings are not representative of the entire population, especially since the specific settings chosen are concerned with humanistic fields of study.

5. Conclusions

Despite the generally positive attitudes towards regional languages held by most participants, there seemed to be a general consensus that Venetian and other regional languages, particularly the *dialetti*, were not "languages" in the same way that Italian is. This was demonstrated not only by the fact that *dialetti* were not seen as distinct languages, but by the fact that participants were hesitant to support the expansion of their use. This is likely due to the fact that Venetian, for instance, is nowadays reserved for intimate relationships, both personal and professional. The idea of bringing this part of interpersonal life into the wider public sphere makes some speakers uncomfortable, even if these measures would help sustain the language in the long term. For instance, most participants did not think teaching regional languages in primary schools was a good idea, with speakers and non-speakers disagreeing at similar rates.[5] Minority and regional languages elsewhere in Europe have been introduced in schools, with varying approaches and varying degrees of success. In the case of Basque in Spain, schooling in Basque has reversed the decline of the language by increasing young people's proficiency (Gorter & Cenoz 2011). On the other hand, Irish, spoken fluently by a minority of the Irish population, continues to see a decline despite that the language is a required subject in primary and secondary public schools in Ireland (Ó Ceallaigh & Dhonnabháin 2015). Some Italians oppose teaching regional languages in schools because they worry that it would level dialectal variety and that it might become an artificial substitute for the more "natural" transmission that occurs in the home or on the streets. Another reason for opposing teaching regional languages in schools is the fear that doing so would interfere with childrens' acquisition of Italian, as the results of the survey showed. However, it has been demonstrated that young bilingual children face no difficulty differentiating between their

[5] The average speaker lost 1.961 points based on their response to this statement. The average non-speaker lost 1.8 points.

languages (Byers-Heinlein et al. 2017). In addition, there are undoubtedly cognitive benefits of being raised bilingual (Marian & Shook 2012). Compared to monolinguals, bilinguals acquire additional languages with more ease (Sanz 2000; Cenoz 2013). In the optional comments section of the survey, the experience of one participant reflects these points:

> *I miei nonni hanno parlato dialetto con me fino a quando ho iniziato ad andare a scuola, poi hanno smesso "altrimenti non impara l'italiano": che errore! Credo che farei meno fatica con le lingue se il mio cervello fosse stato abituato fin da allora*
>
> My grandparents spoke dialect with me until I started to go to school, then they stopped, [saying] "otherwise she won't learn Italian." What a mistake! I think that I would have less trouble with languages if my brain was used to them starting from then

Note that 52.7% of participants disagreed with the idea that a person who speaks Italian and a dialectal variety is bilingual. This further underscores that *dialetti* were not seen as "true" languages by a large portion of participants. This perspective likely motivates the idea that teaching regional languages in schools would interfere in the acquisition of Italian. Participants with these beliefs would probably answer differently if they were instead asked whether teaching English, a "true" language, in schools has prevented Italian children from learning Italian.[6]

It is clear that *dialetti* cannot thrive as long as they are viewed as such: "dialects" that are certainly more than what English speakers consider dialects to be, but are not "true" languages nevertheless. This mindset is precisely what has precipitated the dramatic decline of most *dialetti*. The fact that even many speakers of *dialetti* think this way demonstrates that, in the last century, the Italian population has internalized the idea propogated by Italian politics that *dialetti* are inferior to Italian, even though fewer people would probably say that outright today compared to fifty years ago. Then, the opposition to the expansion of the use of *dialetti* stems at least partly from the idea that, as less-than-languages, *dialetti* do not deserve the same recognition or support that Italian and other "true" languages receive. I argue that if Italians want *dialetti* to survive as living languages for more than a couple more generations, which many clearly do, a paradigm shift is necessary

[6] It is irrelevant that English is a Germanic language and linguistically further from Italian than the *dialetti* are. For instance, the distance between Italian and many *dialetti* is comparable to the distance between Spanish and Catalan, but Catalan immersion in schools has not prevented Catalan children from acquiring Spanish (Mouzo & Álvarez 2018).

across the board: *dialetti* should be seen as languages in their own right, at least by the people and particularly by their speakers, if not by the government. This starts with reconsidering how the term *dialetto* is used currently, and perhaps opting for *lingua regionale* 'regional language' or simply *lingua* in many cases. Although language activists have already started to encourage people to make this change in mindset, a widespread change could likely only be effectively achieved if a politically uncharged linguistic and sociolinguistic history of Italy was introduced as a part of the curriculum in Italian schools. But if such a change in mindset does not take place, whatever the methods, I fear that most *dialetti* will be doomed to obscurity in the near future. At that point, Venetian, and a few others, may be remaining but will likely be fighting for their survival.

To end on a more positive note, below I have included two of the more profound and insightful comments left by survey participants, both of whom belonged to the 19–29 age group. These comments illustrate that not all hope is lost, as linguistic awareness among Italians may be higher today than at any other point in the last century.

> *Credo che preservare i dialetti anche alle generazioni future sia di grande aiuto… per mantenere l'identità regionale. Avere la possibilità di capire e parlare 2 lingue (l'italiano e il proprio dialetto) arricchisce il proprio bagaglio culturale e avvicina il parlante alla storia del proprio territorio.*

I think that preserving the dialects for the future generations greatly helps… to maintain regional identity. Having the ability to understand and speak two languages (Italian and one's dialect) enriches one's cultural repertoire and moves the speaker closer to the history of their territory.

> *Le varietà dialettali d'Italia costituiscono un patrimonio storico culturale linguistico nazionale, da tutelare e promuovere come si promuove lo studio delle lingue straniere e della storia tradizionale.*

The dialectal varieties of Italy constitute a national linguistic, cultural, historical heritage, and should be guarded and promoted in the same way that the study of foreign languages and traditional history are.

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Appendix: Complete responses to Likert scale statements (Italian and English)

Statement (see below)	Responses (%)						
	– – –	– –	–	**0**	+	+ +	+ + +
1)	4.6	5.6	6.5	12	29.6	26.9	14.8
		16.7				71.3	
2)	19.4	17.6	24.1	10.2	13.9	8.3	6.5
		61.1				28.7	
3)	18.5	19.4	14.8	14.8	19.4	7.4	5.6
		52.7				32.4	
4)	3.7	0.9	0.9	0.9	6.5	25	62
		5.5				93.5	
5)	3.7	6.5	16.7	13	28.7	17.6	13.9
		26.9				60.2	
6)	1.9	5.6	19.4	8.3	21.3	25	18.5
		26.9				64.8	
7)	25	30.6	19.4	3.7	12	5.6	3.7
		75				21.3	
8)	4.6	4.6	13	5.6	20.4	25	26.9
		22.2				72.3	
9)	35.2	33.3	12	8.3	5.6	1.9	3.7
		80.5				11.2	
10)	16.7	10.2	17.6	7.4	22.2	12	13.9
		44.5				48.1	
11)	12	21.3	25	21.3	13.9	3.7	2.8
		58.3				20.4	

12)	28.7	34.3	18.5	8.3	3.7	2.8	3.7
		81.5				10.2	
13)	5.6	18.5	19.4	18.5	24.1	9.3	4.6
		43.5				38	
14)	9.3	19.4	25.9	7.4	16.7	14.8	6.5
		54.6				38	
15)	9.3	18.5	28.7	6.5	18.5	14.8	3.7
		56.5				37	
16)	14.8	18.5	16.7	28.7	10.2	7.4	3.7
		50				21.3	
17)	36.7	21.4	21.4	3.1	4.1	9.2	4.1
		79.5				17.4	

1) *Le (varietà dialettali d'Italia) devono essere protette dalla legge*
   The (dialectal varieties of Italy) should be protected by the law
2) *Insegnare le ( ) nelle scuole elementari è una buona idea*
   Teaching the ( ) in elementary schools is a good idea
3) *Una persona che parla l'italiano e uno delle ( ) è bilingue*
   A person who speaks Italian and one of the ( ) is bilingual
4) *Le ( ) sono una parte importante della cultura*
   The ( ) are an important part of culture
5) *Se i genitori parlano una delle ( ), devono provare a usarla quando parlano con i suoi bambini*
   If parents speak one of the ( ), they should try to use it when speaking with their kids
6) *Le ( ) sono sottovalutate nella società italiana*
   The ( ) are undervalued in Italian society
7) *La diminuzione dell'uso delle ( ) <u>non</u> è un problema*
   The decrease in the use of the ( ) is <u>not</u> a problem
8) *Le ( ) <u>non</u> dovrebbero essere parlate nella sfera pubblica (a scuola, negli annunci, etc.)*

The ( ) should not be spoken in the public sphere (at school, in announcements/advertisements, etc.)

9) *Le ( ) sono obsolete*
   The ( ) are obsolete
10) *Se le ( ) fossero insegnate nelle scuole elementari, interferirebbero nell'acquisizione di italiano*
   If the ( ) were taught in primary schools, they would interfere in the acquisition of Italian
11) *È troppo tardi aumentare l'uso delle ( )*
   It's too late to increase the use of the ( )
12) *Le ( ) sono versioni corrotte di italiano*
   The ( ) are corrupted versions of Italian
13) *Le ( ) saranno parlate anche tra 100 anni*
   The ( ) will be spoken even in 100 years
14) *Gli immigrati in Italia tendono ad imparare solo l'italiano e non le ( )*
   Immigrants in Italy tend to learn only Italian and not the ( )
15) *I giovani se ne fregano delle ( )*
   Young people don't care about the ( )
16) *Le persone che vogliono che le ( ) siano parlate di più tendono ad essere separatisti politici*
   People who want the ( ) to be spoken more tend to be political separatists
17) *Vale la pena imparare una lingua solo se posso usarla sul posto di lavoro o all'estero/con gli stranieri*
   It's only worth learning a language if I can use it at the workplace or abroad/with foreigners