

## Italian in Toronto: A preliminary comparative study on language use and language maintenance\*

PETER AUER

### Abstract

*The article compares the Italian migrant communities in Canada and in the Federal Republic of Germany, focussing on structure and use of Italian in the linguistic repertoire. Special importance is given to language use and language maintenance in the second and third generation of migrants, particularly in the Canadian context. Among the linguistic differences noted between the Old World (Germany) and the New World (America) (e)migration types are the following: (a) the structural influence of the contact language English on the Italian part of the repertoire is stronger than that of German both in the first and in subsequent generations; and (b) post-adolescent Italo-Canadians have a determined linguistic preference for English regardless of their attitudes, whereas Italian adolescents and post-adolescents in Germany with a positive attitude towards Italy and Italian often revive this language (or a regional variety of it) as their preferred language.*

The massive migration of work forces out of Southern Italy, beginning in the last century and continuing throughout this century, has brought into existence a number of Italian communities outside Italy which have grown to a considerable size. The largest of these communities have developed in countries traditionally adhering to a policy of open encouragement towards immigration; Italian has therefore come into contact above all with English, in classical immigration countries such as the U.S.A., Australia and Canada. In addition, large-scale migration has channelled the Italian labor force into some central and north European countries, above all into England and Germany. It is evident that the two types of migration created, and had to deal with different environments for the cultural and linguistic development of the Italian communities abroad.

The purpose of the present paper is to give a preliminary description and analysis of a particular sector of one Italian community in an immigration



country, that is, Italians living in Toronto, Ontario. This will be done against the background of a previous investigation of a sector of an Italian community following the Old World, non-immigration pattern, that is, Italians in Germany (and particularly in the city of Constance). In this way, it will be possible to highlight the main differences between the two environments from a linguistic point of view. As the latter investigation has been the focus of a number of previous publications,<sup>1</sup> primary attention will be given to the Canadian case. The main focus is on the linguistic and sociolinguistic situation of second and third generation speakers in Toronto. In contrast to a number of other migratory contexts, such as England (Tosi 1982), the U.S.A. (Biondi 1975) and Australia (Bettoni 1981, 1987; Rubino 1987), for which publications are available on second and third generation Italian, little is known about the Canadian case.<sup>2</sup>

The following overview is based on field observations in public places carried out in Toronto in February/March 1989,<sup>3</sup> on observations and video recordings in three Italian families, involving ten children and youngsters of various ages,<sup>4</sup> an audiorecording of five Italo-Canadian first-year students at York University, Toronto,<sup>5</sup> and on 70 formal interviews with Italian children from Italian National Heritage Classes, carried out by A. Tosi, S. Fiorucci and others in 1985.<sup>6</sup>

### 1. The Italian community in Toronto at large

The Italian population of Canada, totalling around 1,000,000 (compared to approximately 500,000-600,000 in Germany) resides to more than 40% in the greater Toronto area, with other large communities in Montreal and Vancouver. Immigration started in the nineteenth century, but it reached its peak in the sixties of this century, sharply declining in the seventies. The climax of the migration wave therefore occurred somewhat earlier than it did in Germany, where Italians continued to move in during the first half of the seventies. As a consequence, there is now a third generation of Italo-Canadians growing up, whereas only a small minority of the German-born second generation Italians have reached the family founding age. In both cases, the majority of migrants are from Southern Italy (around 80% in Canada).

The local basis of migration in the *paese* of origin often resulted in the re-enactment of the close ties of the old village with its traditional societal structure in the new environment of the host country, with the typical settlement structure of first generation Italians from the same *paese* in the same neighborhood and often even in the same street of the host city, and with *paese*-based social clubs and occasional feasts (usually for the Saint of the

*paese*). It is not unusual to find *paese*-based communities in Toronto comprising more people than those now living in the *paese* of origin in Southern Italy. The attempt to replicate Italian regional networks and affiliations (first of all to the *paese*, but then also to the larger region, such as Calabria, is responsible for the clustering of Italians from Calabria) in Toronto.

According to official census data, the number of people living in Toronto who claim to speak Italian as their mother tongue has been decreasing ever since 1971.<sup>7</sup> Thus, out of a total population of 2,192,720 in 1986, only 139,086, or 6.34%, claimed to speak Italian as a first language, whereas 176,450 persons or 8.26% out of 2,137,395 had done so in 1981; compared with the figure for 1971 this was already a decrease of approximately 15%. The decrease in absolute numbers and percentages is partly explained by the tendency of the Italian population to move into the adjacent townships north of Metropolitan Toronto; more than that, however, it is due to the fact that many second generation Italo-Canadians no longer think of Italian as their mother tongue (although most of them have been brought up by parents speaking a Southern Italian dialect with each other and with the child). No data for ethnic affiliation are available for the 1986 census yet, but by comparing the 1981 census data for mother tongue claims (8.3% of the total population Italian) and ethnic origin (11% of the total population Italian), it becomes obvious that many of those who consider themselves to be Italian did not give Italian as their first language. The estimated number of inhabitants of Italian descent in the larger Toronto area is certainly much higher than the census suggests, presumably around 400,000. In any case, the Italian population is by far the largest non-anglophone group in the city.

The first generation of Italians<sup>8</sup> came to Toronto with hardly any education and mostly without any knowledge of English, and into a society which showed more hostility than hospitality. Given the fact that they were also determined to stay and to 'make it' nonetheless, the only way that seemed to guarantee success under these circumstances was to build up an Italian network, which provided the kind of help that was needed to get along. This implied setting up Italian-dominated business (in Toronto, Italians have established themselves mainly in construction work), where Italians could work together with Italians, as well as an Italian infrastructure, from shops and cafés to social clubs and churches.

Based on the experience of the sixties, Allodi stated 'that the Italians (with the exception of Indians and Eskimos) have the lowest position in the class system and that their lot is not changing' (1971: 253). This latter prediction was wrong. Today, the Italian community in Toronto has long delegated the role of the social 'underdog' to subsequent groups of immigrants (Portuguese, Indians and Pakistanis, West Indians); Italians have been successful in small and large scale business and have achieved an economic status which is occa-



sionally envied even in the anglophone Canadian society. There is remarkable upward mobility; Italians play an important role, not only in their traditional domain, that is, that of real estate and construction, but also in academic professions (doctors, lawyers).<sup>9</sup> Italians are an established part of metropolitan life. However, the achieved status and success, although the basis of today's pride and self-confidence, has not loosened the network structures based on regional and family affiliation in the first generation of immigrants. Housing is still largely selected on the basis of the 'right' Italian neighborhood, although the traditional areas of Italian settlement (around College Street – 'Little Italy' – in an area bounded by Weston Road to the West, Bathurst Street to the East, and Bloor to the North) have gradually been given up – with the Portuguese moving in – for the sake of more prestigious areas in the North (first around St. Clair Avenue, then, again moving north, in the whole area between Weston, Bathurst and north of Freeway 401, and now north of that area again, outside the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, above all in Woodbridge).<sup>10</sup> In addition to the traditional low-level infrastructure (such as provided by clubs and by the 35 churches offering services in Italian), other types of Italian infrastructure have been established; on the cultural level, there are Italian TV and radio programs, an Italo-Canadian newspaper (*Il Corriere Canadese*, in fact founded as early as 1954),<sup>11</sup> a center for Italian culture ('Columbus Center') and an Italian Cultural Institute, a chair for Italian studies sponsored at York University, an Italian-dominated University College (St Michael's College), etc.

In certain parts of the city which are densely populated with Italians whole street sections have been 'italianized' and are marked by little Italian flags on the street signs; following a recent usage in Toronto (which also allows Greek and Chinese street signs in other areas of the city), these streets are now officially called 'Little Italy' (College Street) and 'Corso Italia' (St. Clair Street West).

In both areas shops and restaurants, barber shops and cafés cater not only to Italians (as already suggested by the misnomer 'Little Italy' instead of an Italian name). Above all, the area on and around College Street ('Little Italy') is no longer a purely Italian affair. A large number of the shops are run by Portuguese (in fact one street marked as belonging to 'Little Italy' is named after the Portuguese poet Camões and adorned by his monument), by occasional Spaniards, Arabs and Anglo-Canadians. English advertisements such as 'The best Italian sandwiches in the world' are common. Grocery shops, sandwich shops, junk shops selling italo-kitsch, cafés with billiard back-rooms, travel agencies and barber shops are mainly oriented towards a lower class Italian taste, whereas fast-food shops and pizzerias/restaurants are more oriented towards a general public.

The Italian part of St. Clair Street West ('Corso Italia') is much larger and

much more diversified; it provides more or less all goods and services, from banks and chemists' shops, lawyers' offices and barber shops, to Woolworth's and chic boutiques selling Italian fashion, a large number of cafés and restaurants mostly set up according to Canadian taste, as well as shops of all kinds. Although most of the customers are Italian, the use of Italian or Italian dialect varies from 100% to almost none, depending on the kind of environment. It is for this reason that the Corso Italia never looks like a shopping area in (North or South) Italy; it always has something distinctively bicultural and bilingual. In addition, it is never as totally Italian as, for instance, parts of Kreuzberg in West Berlin are Turkish. The particular kind of cultural mixture is reflected in the public use of written Italian. On the one hand, there are purely Italian shop signs – inscriptions such as *Farmacia, Banca Nazionale, Scarpe Tiziano, Abiti Milano, Bianca Neve – tutto per il bambino*, and even Woolworth's had a note on the entrance door reading *Qui si vendono carte di pasqua italiane*. On the other hand, there are many bilingual signs, that is, those with a translation into the other language – for instance, *Barristers and solicitors – avvocati e notari*, or, at the bank entrance, *Parking at rear entrance – Parcheggio sul retro*; and occasionally purely English signs which only suggest an Italian proprietor because of the proper name they contain, such as *Adriatic Fashions, Verdi Florist, Supermarket Amici*. Most interesting, however, is a third group of inscriptions showing orientation towards both Italy and Canada by mixing elements of the two cultures and languages, such as *Italbook Libreria Italiana; Carlo Variety & Gifts – Riviste Italiane; Paul's Jewellers – Riparazioni di orologi e gioielli or Dino's Shoes – Italian & Canadian Shoes – Scarpe importate*. Occasionally, the Italian used in these contexts is clearly influenced by English patterns or even 'Italiense' (cf. below, section 2); cf. *Gino Mens [sic] and Boys Fashions – Disegnatore* (modelled after the English *designer*) or *Solo Donne – Mode* (English *fashions*).

Despite the economic and cultural importance of the Italian community for Toronto and the province of Ontario in general, this largest minority group has no effective schooling in the Italian mother tongue at its disposal. Canada decided on a policy of multiculturalism as early as in 1971. However, in the province of Ontario, mother tongue classes in the so-called Heritage Language Program were only established on a noncredit basis outside the school curriculum and for approximately two and a half hours per week (cf. Danesi 1988; Kuitunen 1980). Although these classes are not obligatory for the students, it is generally understood that most Italian children living in Italian neighborhoods attend them. Little is known about the quality of instruction. As the demand for qualified teachers could not be met at the time of the initiation of the program, teacher training is generally low. Only recently have bicultural teaching materials been developed.<sup>12</sup>



Compared to the Italian communities in Canada's big cities (Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver), the Italians in Germany live in loosely structured Italian networks, less densely organized and scattered all over the country. (Although there is a large community in Frankfurt, the great majority of Italians live in smaller communities throughout Germany.) There is less upward mobility, and although the Italians in Germany consider themselves to have been economically successful as well, there is less social stratification. Up to today, relatively few second generation Italians go to 'Gymnasium' (grammar/secondary school) or university. Italian language programs do exist in German schools, but on a similarly small scale as in Ontario.

The most important difference results from the fact that first generation Italians in Germany have never ceased to orient themselves towards the country of origin. Although many of them have stayed on for most of their lives, there has always been a strong feeling of not living in emigration, but only temporarily away from home, a feeling that has been supported and even necessitated by the official German ideology, which, despite a non-German population of roughly 8%, considers the FRG to be a monocultural and monolingual country. (Whereas in Canada it is easy to become a Canadian, and every child born on Canadian soil is automatically considered a Canadian citizen, almost all of the first and second generation Italians living in the FRG have retained their Italian citizenship.) As a consequence, and because of the closeness of Italy, and as EC regulations permit it, there has always been an exchange between Italy and the Italian communities in Germany which goes considerably beyond the occasional holidays Italo-Canadians would possibly spend in Italy. For instance, it was quite usual for Italian couples migrating to Germany to leave their children behind with the grandparents for some years before having them follow, and even to send children back to Italy for some time. Many Italian families regularly spend the summer in their *paese* of origin, where they have houses and where the parents want to live after retirement, or in a place in Northern Italy. Multiple migration is not exceptional. In short, whereas the Italians leaving Southern Italy for Toronto had a distinct feeling of leaving their homeland for good, and consequently quickly developed an Italo-Canadian identity, Italians in Germany continued to foster a perspective on returning, although they may have lived in Germany as long as their compatriots in Canada. It is for this reason that it seems to be more appropriate to use the term 'migration' in the German context, whereas 'emigration' (or 'immigration', depending on one's point of view) is the adequate term in the Canadian context.

## 2. Language contact and language acquisition in the first generation

It will be useful for the following discussion to introduce some linguistic terminology at this point. Our starting point is the linguistic repertoire, comprising the totality of linguistic structures at the disposition of an individual speaker, or, more interestingly, of a speech community. It is essential to the approach chosen here that the internal make-up of this repertoire is reconstructed from the perspective of the individuals using it for their communicative purposes, and to avoid rash conclusions based upon linguistic judgements exterior to this perspective.

Repertoires may differ, not only with regard to the number of 'varieties' (languages, dialects, sociolects, registers) they contain, but also with regard to the 'focussedness' or 'diffusion' of these varieties.<sup>13</sup> A focussed variety is one which is defined by clear norms and set off against the other varieties in the repertoire by rigid cooccurrence restrictions between the structures by which it is defined. More diffuse varieties may center around a well-defined nucleus, but have ill-defined peripheries that cannot be separated for sure and without artificiality from neighboring varieties. It may be the case that boundaries between the two or more varieties in a repertoire are so vague that it is more adequate to speak of a continuum of structures between two nuclei (or, in a somewhat imprecise way of speaking, 'poles'). In particular, this state of affairs may obtain between structurally similar H(igh) and L(ow) 'varieties', such as a dialect and a standard, in certain sociolinguistic contexts. It may also be the case that a variety belongs to the repertoire of a speech community but has only limited functional value; for instance, it may be understood but not actively used. In such a case, the degree of focussing will usually be low, as there is little normative awareness regarding this variety. Obviously, focussing depends on a large number of external factors.

The structural consequence of the coexistence of more than one variety in a repertoire is language contact. The term 'borrowing' will be used here for any kind of transference from one variety into another so that, from the language user's point of view, the borrowed item is part of the variety which it is brought into. Such borrowing may affect all layers of linguistic structure,<sup>14</sup> but it is most frequent on the level of vocabulary, where borrowed items may be integrated into the receiving language to varying degrees. However, integration is not a decisive criterion for borrowing: any item that can be classified by the linguist as belonging to the 'other' variety, but is not being marked and made use of by the language user as such, has become an item of the variety presently spoken.

Alternatively, the varieties of a repertoire may be juxtaposed by the speaker, who is, in this case, switching between language systems. We will



use the term 'language alternation' for this type of bilingual behavior; it may refer to units (such as individual words) and is then called 'transfer',<sup>15</sup> or, alternatively, to larger, principally unbounded units; in this case, we speak of 'code-switching'.<sup>16</sup>

Language alternation does not imply a conscious act; it may in fact occur quite automatically. However, it has a function, that is, it can be interpreted by participants; for instance, it may 'contextualize' speech in a specific way (marking, for example, citations, addressee selection, side-remarks, topic/comment structures, emphasis), it may establish cohesion, or overcome a speaker's incompetence in one of the two varieties in question; single instances of borrowing can never be interpreted in such a way.

In addition to borrowing and language alternation, there is a third type of language contact, which tends to defocus the internal structure of the repertoire and may therefore be called 'code-mixing'.<sup>17</sup> From the point of view of the language user, mixing is clearly conceived as the use of more than one variety at one time (setting this type of language contact off against borrowing), but without local function (unlike language alternation). The term 'mixing' must not be taken to imply any lack of structure; quite on the contrary, it is usually the case in sociolinguistic contexts in which mixing is a socially established mode of interaction, that there are grammatical restrictions of a more or less strict kind (depending on the degree of diffusion permitted in the repertoire).<sup>18</sup> But obviously, the mere existence of code-mixing implies a weakening of cooccurrence restrictions compared to those valid in monovarietal speech. Code-mixing must be distinguished from frequent code alternation (which has discourse related functions in every case). There may be intermediate cases, however, in which both types can be observed at the same time, or cases in which it is difficult to decide if we are dealing with code-mixing or code-switching, with transfer or borrowing, with code-mixing or borrowing. The dynamics of language contact even allow transitions from one type to another in the course of development of a complex repertoire.

Learning or acquiring a new language means adding a variety to the repertoire. This new variety is necessarily very unfocussed in the beginning, that is, it shows high internal variation. If and to what degree language acquisition is successful depends on the cognitive abilities of the learner, the availability of a clearly defined and accessible target variety, and on the perceived need or desirability of acquiring the new language, including the opportunity or even necessity to use it. For the first generation of Italians in Toronto (and also in Germany), the repertoire used in Italy consisted of a Southern Italian dialect of the *paese*, as well as a more regional dialect of the somewhat larger area and a usually limited and diffuse active knowledge of a Regional Italian. The addition of English (or German) into this repertoire took on a number of forms, from 'survival English' (or German) for those who lived in the house

(housewives, grandparents) or exclusively worked together with other Italians, to a reasonable command of colloquial English (or German) for those more immersed in the host society for professional or private reasons. In both cases, the newly acquired variety was characterized by borrowing from the Italian side of the repertoire ('interference') and by simplifications which have been described in several studies on the acquisition of German by so-called guest-workers (cf. Clahsen, Meisel and Pienemann 1983; Klein and Dittmar 1979). As these 'learner varieties' tended to fossilize into a particular variety of the host language, the processes of language acquisition in the first generation have long come to a standstill. In both contexts, Italians complain about their low proficiency in the language of the host country; in both contexts, fluency in this language is regarded as prestigious and is admired, as long as a variety of Italian is (also) used in intra-network communication.

Whereas the migration (Germany) and the immigration (Canada) environment do not seem to have resulted in noticeably different processes of second language acquisition in the first generation, the inverse influence of the language of the host society on the Italian part of the repertoire has been quite different in the two cases. In Germany, the Italian varieties used by the Italians show some tendencies of koiné formation (convergence) between the original dialect regions, but they have hardly been influenced by German apart from occasional borrowings from German vocabulary carried out by individual speakers on individual occasions. These are integrated phonologically, and seldom morphologically, but on the whole, do not play a very important role.<sup>19</sup> In Toronto, on the other hand, the different attitude towards immigration made itself immediately felt in the language and led to the establishment of a typical Canadian form of Italian, characterized first by extensive lexical borrowing from English, and second by the nativization of these borrowings into the phonological and morphological system of the respective dialect or regional dialect of Italian. This 'Italiense' – to use the term coined by Clivio (1975) – has been described in some detail in a number of studies.<sup>20</sup> Examples for lexical borrowings from English include loanwords such as *trokko* 'truck', *basamento* 'basement', *morgeggio* 'mortgage', *storo* 'store', *checca* 'cake', *cieccare* 'to check', *smarto* 'smart', but also loanshifts such as *ammissione* 'admission', ital. *ingresso*, *carro* 'car', ital. *macchina*, *grado* 'grade', ital. *classe* (*scolastica*). (Of course, there may also be unintegrated borrowings.) Although not all of the borrowings listed, for example, in Danesi (1985b) are used by all Italo-Canadians of the first generation, there is a core group of these new words that has become an integral part of Canadian Italian; they may even be used in written Italian, such as in classified ads in the *Corriere Canadese* (where loan shifts such as *licenza* 'driving license' instead of *patente*, or *forname* 'furnace' instead of *caldaia* may be found), or in the speech of those who are courageous enough



to call in to the local Italian radio to have a chat with the DJ:

(1) (Radio CHIN 5/3/89)

DJ: Come mai non s'è andata a Maple Leafs Gardens

C: ooo le *tichette* sono [endute]

DJ: [aaa ho capito era tutto –

sold out quando si è andata a comperarli [eh!

C: [yeah!

The standard Italian for 'tickets' word would of course be *biglietti*. (Note, by contrast, the transfer of *sold out* as used by the DJ in his response; it is clearly marked as an other language item by the preceding hesitation.)

The new, borrowed words cognitively integrate the relevant and most salient aspects of the newly encountered world of the host country into the culture symbolically represented by the Italian lexicon acquired and used in Italy, just as, on the level of form, they are integrated into the phonological and morphological shape of a variety of Italian. Borrowing from English in the Italian of the first generation is most noticeable on the lexical level; however, there are also a number of syntactic borrowings (Pietropaolo 1974: 239 cites examples such as *fa senso* 'makes sense', *guarda bene* 'looks (very) nice', *aspettare per* 'wait for').

### 3. The acquisition of Italian in the second generation

The acquisition of a near-standard although regional variety of Italian by the second or third generation child is one of the most decisive factors (if not the most decisive factor) contributing to language maintenance beyond the first generation. Only if such a variety, in addition to a dialectal one, is at the speaker's disposal can it be expected that the Italian part of the repertoire will survive at all. It is therefore of the utmost importance to know if, and under what conditions, such acquisition takes place.

Both in Canada and in Germany, the exposure of the Italian child to Italian is not sufficient to provide enough 'input' for language acquisition; however, it is even scarcer in Canada. As most first generation parents have only limited proficiency in Italian, the home language is usually the dialect. As soon as the child has English- or German-speaking peers (in kindergarten, or at the latest, in primary school), a massive acquisition process in this language sets in; as a result, the English or German of most of the second and third generation children of Italian background is not, or only marginally, distinct from that of their monolingual peers.<sup>21</sup> The children's dominance in English or German may even have repercussions on language use in the

family and establish English/German as a second language there. For third generation Italians in Toronto, English is almost unavoidably one of the family languages, although an Italian dialect or Standard Italian may also play a role.<sup>22</sup> With the exception of those cases where the parents not only know, but also use Regional Italian with their children, this language is only heard in the Italian media (which are notoriously disliked by children and youngsters both in Germany and in Toronto, but switched on by the parents), and in the few hours of Italian at school. For the Italian children living in Germany, there are, however, two advantages: one is that they can spend more time in Italy; the other is that some of them are brought to Germany at a later age, after having had the opportunity to acquire a near-standard variety in the Italian school system. Even if these 'late-comers' do not make up the majority, they are important, as they may give the other children born or brought up in Germany a chance to speak Italian.<sup>23</sup>

The acquisition strategies employed by the children in such an extremely unfavourable context of scarce availability of Italian are not fundamentally different from those encountered in other, more usual contexts; however, they are taken, in a sense, to their extremes. As the target variety is only diffusely perceived, the child has to rely to an extraordinarily high degree on structures from the two varieties accessible to him or her, that is, English/German and, mostly, an Italian dialect – and on natural processes of simplification. If there were any additional proof needed for the thesis that adding a new variety to one's repertoire is not a matter of imitating linguistic structures in a ready-made version from some target variety outside the repertoire, but that it is instead a very active process, in which new (learner) varieties are created, it could be found here.

In a study on the acquisition of Italian by children living in Germany, Di Luzio (in press) shows that there are two basic sets of strategies employed, and accordingly two types of learner. The first starts from the dialect and attempts to construe Italian out of it. Phonological lenitions as well as morphological, syntactic and lexical simplifications are taken over from the 'under-coding', oral Southern Italian dialect; although German transfers or unassimilated borrowings occur, there is no use of German grammatical structures on a deeper level (syntactic borrowing, loanblends, etc.). Co-occurrence restrictions between standard and dialect features are lax, but although there is considerable variation between dialect and standard, transitions are comparatively smooth. The speech of these children is fluent; however, it is extremely context-dependent, as many grammatical and lexical distinctions are neutralized. The second group of children use German in a much more pervasive way to construct Italian speech. Co-occurrence restrictions between dialect, standard and German are dissolved completely. The phonology of these children's speech is characterized by fortitions, their grammar and



lexicon by hypercorrections, contaminations and grammatical borrowing. An unsuccessful attempt is made to avoid the dialect, resulting in a hesitant, non-fluent way of speaking termed *italiano stentato* elsewhere.<sup>24</sup>

In the Canadian context, the same continuum of reliance on the dialect on the one hand, and reliance on English (and dialect) on the other hand can be observed. However, even those children who try to approach Italian from the basis of the dialect are rarely capable of producing fluent speech and often disregard cooccurrence restrictions; and at the other extreme, the admixture of English into Italian takes on forms that would be hard to find in German-Italian children. In almost all cases there is language mixing. Contrary to language mixing as a socially accepted and established way of interlocking structures from various sources inside the repertoire (as it occurs in other sociolinguistic contexts), language mixing by Italo-Canadian children in the course of acquiring Italian is highly unpredictable and – in the extreme case – almost without restrictions. In addition to mixing, there are various simplification strategies at work, which are neither due to the target language, nor to the source varieties (English and dialect). The degree to which they are being exploited is only comparable to simplification in pidginization contexts. Both mixing and simplification create a high degree of variation. In both cases, but particularly in the second (English as the starting point), speakers may switch into English for reasons of (in-)competence in order to prevent interaction from breaking down completely.

The following examples illustrate children proceeding more according to the first (dialect-based) than to the second (English-based) type. (To give a rough indication of the kind of mixing between dialect and 'standard' involved, important dialectal structures are in boldface.)

(2) (9 years old, Pugliese background)

I: e poi? che cosa fate?

Ch: mangiá e – e guárdə a televisione poché e dopə a leggere

I: e poi?

Ch: e dopə – sulə leggere – e – dopo (quando) la mammá – viene – e il papá – fa la – mammá fa la mangiare – mangiə dopo – va dórme

(3) (8 years, Calabrian background)

I: cosa hai fatto quando eri lì al tuo paese, con i tuoi amici, i tuoi parenti

Ch: ah – – a **mo** – – **ij** andato – a mangiare – e – e – quando **ijə** andato de Ita – in Italijə – **ijə** andato – alla casa, **doppo** – tutti stavəno **chian-  
genno**

(4) (7 years, Sicilian/Calabrian background)

I: quando sei ritornata a casa che cosa hai fatto, ti ricordi?

Ch: yeah io **tegnu/-** – **iu** no finíu u lavoru au hospitále e **iu lu fiscíu** alla casa e dopo guardava (l)a televisione e dopo tutti quanti ahm la quale – – mi cugini e u nonnə e a nonni chi no **viníu u hu/ u hos/ hospitáli veníru a vidiri** alla casa

In addition to rampant dialect/standard-mixing, at least a third of the children cited here also make use of English in some cases (cf. the phonological influence of English in *televisione* and in *hospitale*, as well as the initial *yeah*).

It seems a relatively natural way to approach the target variety (standard Italian) via a dialectal version of the same language; there are a lot of structural similarities that can be made use of, and as boundaries between dialect and standard are permeable in the parents' Italian repertoire as well, a gradual approximation of the target is possible.

The following extracts give a rough idea of the kind of disruptive flow of speech associated with the second type of learner, typified by Italian/(dialect)/English mixing:

(5) (9 years)

[The child is about to explain how to cook *gnocchi*.]

Ch: ee ti fa farina e cu co la forgotta – **turn them around and then – you put the sugo**

I: cosa? cosa? cosa? si prende la farina, quello l'ho [capito, poi?]

Ch: **and then I don't know** che mette più **and then** – prende la forcotta e – **twist it**

I: oo li gira con la [forchetta]

Ch: [yeah così yeah]

I: si e poi

Ch: e poi culcinare e poi **put sugo**

I: oo col sugo

Ch: **and then mangia**

(6) (6 years)

I: che ti piace a scuola?

Ch: **ahm what I do?**

I: yeah, che fai

Ch: ahm parla – – **ahhm – paper – and I do** – la penna



- I: la penna.  
 Ch: and=**eh** **rodo** – make the road.  
 I: disegni?  
 Ch: **yeah**, and I make the words **what I do**  
 I: che disegni?  
 Ch: **rada**, you know the one there [points out of window]  
 I: la strada?  
 Ch: **yeah**  
 I: e poi, scrivi?  
 Ch: **yeah**  
 I: sì.  
 Ch: **yeah then I** – finisce **and I go play**  
 (7) (ca. 11 years)  
 I: come era il mare, ti piaceva?  
 Ch: sì  
 I: come era  
 Ch: sta tanti – waves – and the splash and – e e io **jumb** [dʒumb]  
 dentr – sopra – sta ehm I don't know to say boat – it was lot  
 of boats – tanti – ehm – boat.  
 (8) (8 years) [looking at a picture]  
 I: e dov'è questo posto?  
 Ch: sta (guardə) ru beach  
 I: e come lo sai?  
 Ch: perchè – ci sta tutt/ – sta a fa – (na sta) tutt sta sa/ **sandə** – e – sta  
 l'acqua e – – nu **person has a bathing suit**  
 I: e quest' uomo cosa sta facendo?  
 Ch: oh – – sta pijà na **fishing rod** – – sta ində ll'acqua  
 I: e questi cosa sono?  
 Ch: ehh na **umbrella** – e nu **boat**  
 (9) (8 years)  
 I: e prima di andare a dormire che cosa fai?  
 Ch: io dormə – **and** – io ver/ – io veds ali – alle unə, no alle – sei – no le  
 sette – **thirty**? – sette – **thirty** – no – le unə e mezze I **think**  
 le sei mezz.  
 I: sì?  
 Ch: and ij mangiə il **breakfast** ( ) me lavà la faccia – e iə va a scola

It is easy to see that to varying degrees, the children make use of their dia-

lect competence as well.<sup>25</sup> Also, the use of English in the extracts cited here is not always due to language mixing. Occasionally, we find code alternation, such as in the preference related switches in (6), or the time-out, call-for-help transfer in (7), marked by *I don't know to say* ...

It is necessary to distinguish various types of language mixing which dissolve cooccurrence restrictions between the two varieties to a larger or lesser extent. The mixing strategy that, although being a mixing strategy, keeps the varieties in question apart more than the others, consists in the frequent 'insertion' of English content words – mostly nouns, seldom adjectives or verbs – into an otherwise Italian discourse. Examples are *put* in (5), *beach*, *fishing rod*, *umbrella*, *boat* in (8), and *breakfast* in (9). The words in question are certainly not stabilized parts of the Italo-Canadian lexicon, that is, they are used for local, *ad hoc* purposes in the construction of Italian speech.<sup>26</sup> Note that these 'insertions' are not marked as competence-related transfers, as for instance *waves* and, even more clearly, *boats* in (7) are.

The use of individual English words may trigger continuation in English, as can be observed in (8) (cf. *nu person has a bathing suit*: other examples would be *piglia* – *il medicine* [English phonetics] *for him*, *compra* – *ah* – *la bike for me*).

A much more complicated kind of lexical mixture is exemplified by the word *rada* or *roda* in (6), based of course on English *road*, but rendered in Italian morphology and phonology. This sounds like a perfect example of 'Italiése', that is, an assimilated loanword. If this was the case, there would be no reason to speak of language mixing here: instead, we would have to conclude that the child has learned *roda* from his parents as part of their variety of Italian. In fact, Italian children at the age in question use 'Italiése' words quite often, such as *trocco*, *storo*, *checca*, *gingerèlla*, *sanguicce*, *pusciare*, *cingomma*, *ghemma* and *boxa* (*le ghenne che sono dentro le boxe*), *busso*, *bega*, *tosto* (meaning 'truck', 'store', 'cheque', 'ginger ale', 'sandwich', 'to push', 'chewing gum', 'game', 'box', 'bus', 'bag', 'toast'), and it is reasonable to assume that these have been taken over from the parents. Even more interesting, there seems to be a stock of Italiése words only used among children; words such as *i frendi* (or *le frendi/frende*), *la ticera* (also *ticiare*), *la ghella*, *televisione* (with penultimate or antepenultimate stress), *fanni*, *giusto* ('the friends', 'the teacher/to teach', 'the girl', 'TV', 'funny', 'just') are frequently found in the interviews, although they are not in the adults' Italiése (cf. Danesi 1985b). However, these words, which are properly speaking part of the children's repertoire and no indication of language mixture, are only part of the issue. There is strong evidence that the Italiése-type use of English words in Italian is employed by the children as a strategy for overcoming vocabulary problems in a productive way; that is, it is not (only) the individual Italiése words that are learned through the parents' Italian, but



the Italianese strategy of word formation as such is taken over and used, by some of the children extensively. This applies to *rodo*, just as well as to the following extract, in which the interviewee is most surprised that the interviewer cannot understand the unassimilated borrowing *paint*, and tries to redo it in a more Italian-looking shape, relying on an Italianese-type italianization of the English word (he also uses *pantare* for 'to paint' in one of his next utterances):

(10) [following the interviewer's question about what his father does]

- Ch: fa paint  
 I: cos'è?  
 Ch: ah – ah – paint – fa paint  
 .  
 .  
 .  
 I: e che fanno?  
 Ch: *pantə* – paint – just that  
 I: non capisco  
 Ch: paint – tu sta così – la paint

Note that there is in fact an Italianese word *pinta* for 'paint' (according to Danesi 1986b), which obviously is not known to the boy: he makes up a new version.

Other items produced by this Italianese-strategy in *loco* are *la stera* ('stairs'), *scarfo* ('scarf'), *giumpare* ('to jump'; cf. *mu lave=n buttun, mu puscitə uno buttuni=e giumpfə]*, *punciare* ('to punch'), *greendi* ('green', possibly influenced by Italian *verde*), *icci* ('it itches'), *lu presente* ('the present'), *lu sonni* ('the son'), *runa* ('room'), *nidlo* ('needle' = 'injection'), *placia* ('plaza'), *lu guardu* ('the guard'), *ira* ('year') or *la nette* ('net', for playing volley-ball).

Another mixing phenomenon is the free insertion of unassimilated and assimilated (quasi-Italianese) words and phrases into Italian syntax (or indeed, the other way round). Thus the head noun in a noun phrase (or prepositional phrase) may be English, but its modifiers Italian, or the article Italian and the noun English (cf. *tantə room* 'so much room', *tutto thunder* 'all this thunder', *lo brother mio* 'my brother', *nda morning* 'in the morning'), or the other way round (*una big macchina* 'a big car', *my other sorella* 'my other sister', *my sorella* 'my sister', *the gamba* 'the leg', *on the lettino* 'on the little bed'); there may be mixing at the subject NP/predicate boundary (as in *sono the real ones* 'they are the real ones', *I'm otto* 'I'm eight', *dopo tu swim* 'then you swim'), at the boundary between verb and objects (as in *guardo Italian movies* 'I watch Italian movies', *sta ii – across the road* 'she is going across the road', *io like gatti* 'I like cats', *iu vo gioca with uno gatto* 'I want

to play with a cat', *around the corner – i – io sto* 'around the corner is where I live'), between verb and adverb or preposition (as in *picché taste ugly* 'because it tastes ugly', *mi sorella e mia mamma va – va – a out* 'my sister and my mom go out') or adverb and adjective (*troppə strong* 'too strong'), between a preposition and a noun phrase within a prepositional phrase (as in *dentrə Miss Benoit's class* 'in Miss Benoit's class'), inside the verbal complex between auxiliary and verb (as in *sta sticking out her/ la lenghə* 'she is sticking out her tongue'), or between complementizer or sentence adverbial and the rest of the sentence (as in *perchè we're gonna move* 'because...', *maybe quando sono nella grado cinque* 'maybe when I am in grade five', *e poi next year pure lo fa (...)* *o quandə (è) l'estate pure lo fa maybe* 'and then next year he will do it too (...) or when it is summer he will do it maybe', *I go back up and – dorno* 'I go back up and sleep', *mi c'hai uno but (a)desso è rotto* 'I had one but now it is broken').

Mixing can also take place on a deeper level, when syntactic structures are taken over from English into Italian. Such deep level mixing may result in 'Italian' sentences partly modelled after English patterns such as *po volte mi mi sono il primo – the first – e po volte mi sono no* 'sometimes I am the first – and sometimes I am not', instead of *a volte sono il primo a volte no; è venuto a prendere noi* 'he came to take us', instead of *prenderci*, that is, an enclitic pronoun; *grande uno* 'a big one', instead of *uno grande*; or even the Saxon genitive as in *va dentr – mia sorella's – letto o mia mamma's letto* 'I go in – my sister's – bed or in my mother's bed'. The influence of English syntax seems to be particularly strong in embedded sentential constructions such as in *non hannə nessunə – (pen) nu gioco con* 'I have nobody I can play with' or *chesto bambino che che io mi piace giocare e ho andare a sua casa ieri* 'this child I like to play (with) and I went to his house yesterday'. It also extends to a number of expressions, for example, *io sogno cinqu anni* 'I am five years old' (*avere* is frequently replaced by *essere* in age statements) or *ho fatto un po di amici là* 'I made some friends there'. Very often, the English filler *like* is used, but occasionally it is translated into Italian *come*, without any change in usage.

On the phonological level, mixing may introduce syllable-initial [h] in Italian (for example, [ha] 'has'). There are also effects on English phonology, when English vocabulary is occasionally given Italian pronunciation in an attempt to make speech sound more Italian; thus, one can hear phrases like *she battidəz (...)* *she battaized me* or (as an answer to the interviewer's question *com' era questo maiale* 'what was this pig like') [vazə vayləd] 'it was wild', which one would expect from the parents, but certainly not from second or third generation children with a good knowledge of English, and in particular perfect English phonology and phonetics. As in the case of the Italianese strat-



egy, the children seem to use first generation structures in order to construe Italian *in loco*, as the parents are the only source for Italian they have.

Of the numerous simplifications and hypercorrections found in the speech of both types of learners (dialect- and English-dependent ones), only a few can be mentioned, mainly on the morphological level. Often, there is a certain ambiguity as to the question of a possible dialectal influence (for the dialect itself frequently simplifies as compared to the Italian standard). Both factors may collaborate in certain cases.

The Italian noun is marked for gender, but although the feminine or the masculine singular is marked unambiguously by the suffixes *-a* and *-o*, the nouns ending in *-e* can be either. In many Southern Italian dialects, all unstressed vowel desinences are reduced to schwa. The children therefore face the problem of replacing schwa by any of the possible (singular) desinences when trying to speak Italian. There is a tendency to avoid *-e* in this task, and thereby simplifying the Italian gender marking to a one-to-one correspondence between form and function. Examples are *dal maro* (standard Italian *mare*, 'sea'), *vesta* (for standard Italian *veste* 'sweater'), *carna* (for standard Italian *carne* 'meat'). By hesitations and reformulations, these forms are introduced as possibly problematic; and in fact it is not exceptional for the correct form to be replaced by the hyper-standard form in such a repair, which is phonologically more distinct from the dialectal schwa.

The standard Italian definite article system with its phonologically conditioned variants and gender/number distinctions is reduced in many Southern Italian dialects to *i* for plural (both genders), (*n*)*u* for the masculine and (*n*)*a* for the feminine singular. Although these reduced dialectal systems are also observed in many children, there is, in addition, a widely used simplified system, which has no such dialect basis. In this simplified system, *le* (in standard Italian the feminine plural article) takes over some or even all functions. *Le* as a generalized plural article for both masculine and feminine nouns is the most frequent simplification<sup>27</sup> (cf. *le spaghetti*, *le trees*, *le mie nonne* 'my grandparents', *le miei vestiti* 'my clothes', *le sorelli* 'the sisters', *le pesc* 'the fish', *le compiti* 'the homework', *le scoli* 'the schools', *le scarpi* 'the shoes', *le piedi* 'the feet', *alle altri bambini* 'to the other children'), but many children go even further and even use *le* with singular nouns (cf. *le mia nonna* 'my grandmother', *dintr le - ehm - le summer* 'in the summer', *le televisione*, *le program di taliano*, *le wrestling*, *le gattè* 'the cat'). There is of course variation in the speech of all children, and dialectal, simplified and standard forms may stand one beside the other. Thus, the same child may use *le car*, *u car*, *la carro* and other forms for standard Italian *la macchina* (Italiane *il carro* 'the car'), and one can find passages like the following:

- (11) 'il la mammì' – *la il la mamma del il mio papà abita in Sicilia*  
(= 'the mother of my father lives in Sicily').

Another widespread simplification concerns agreement by gender and number in the noun phrase and between subject and verb. The redundancy implied by the standard Italian system of agreement is regularly reduced by the juxtaposition of non-agreeing forms in the children's speech. In some cases, the gender system seems to be lost altogether, and the endings are chosen in a haphazard fashion; cf. noun phrases such as *uno nonna* (standard Italian *una nonna* 'a grandmother') *le mie zia* (standard Italian *le mie zie* 'my aunts' or *la mia zia* 'my aunt'), *tutti più grande* (standard Italian *tutti più grandi* 'all taller'), *tutti le volte* (standard Italian *tutte le volte* 'every time'), *le cose giusti* (standard Italian *le cose giuste* 'the right things'), *la mie amici* (standard Italian *i miei amici* 'my friends'), *alla case* (standard Italian *alle case* 'to the houses'), or verbal forms such as *hanno lasciati* 'they left' (standard Italian no agreement after *avere*), (*io e mia mamma*) *sono andati* [female speaker] 'me and my mother went' (standard Italian *andate*), *io non ricordo cosa quelli ha detto* (standard Italian *hanno*) 'I don't remember what these people said'.

In single nouns, there is a tendency corresponding to the gender-neutralized plural article *le*, that is, to use a generalized suffix *-i* for all plural nouns (independent of gender and even sex); cf. *tutti i seri* 'every evening' (standard Italian *tutte le sere*), *le sorelli* 'the sisters' (standard Italian *le sorelle*), *le scoli* 'the schools' (standard Italian *le scuole*), *le casi* 'the houses' (standard Italian *le case*), *le scarpi* 'the shoes' (standard Italian *le scarpe*), *cattivi personi* 'bad people' (standard Italian *cattive persone*), *tanti volti* 'so many times' (standard Italian *tante volte*) *miei amici* [sic] 'my girl friends' (standard Italian *mie amiche*) etcetera. Rarely, this *i* is used even as a singular desinence for nouns ending in *-e* in the standard language. (cf. *la televisioni*).

A typical simplification in the verbal morphology is the use of the third person form (ending in *-e* or *-a*) for the first person singular (*-o*), for example, *io vole* (standard Italian *io voglio* 'I want'), *io lava* (standard Italian *io lavo* 'I wash'), (*io*) *va a letto* 'I go to bed' (standard Italian *vado*),<sup>28</sup> *mi mangia breakfast* 'I eat breakfast' (standard Italian *mangio*), *io ha nove anni* 'I'm nine' (standard Italian *ho*), *io ha fatto oggi* 'I did today' (standard Italian *ho*), (*io*) *vede la televisioni* 'I watch television' (standard Italian *vedo*). The distinction between *essere* and *avere* as auxiliaries in the *passato prossimo* is partly lost, as in *sonə fattə lo lavoro* 'I did the work' (standard Italian *ho*), *sono giocato* 'I played' (standard Italian *ho*), *quando siamo finiti* 'after we had finished' (standard Italian *abbiamo*), *hanno vati - a Sicilia* 'they went to Sicily' (standard Italian *sono andati*...), *ha vedeto* 'I saw' (standard Italian *ho visto*),



*ha andato* 'I went' (standard Italian *sono*), etc. (The generalized use may be influenced by English; the general insecurity is influenced by the use of *essere* and *avere* in the dialects, which is partly different from that of the standard language.) Again, there is a lot of variation in and between children. The overall insecurity is evidenced by the fact that interviewer speech, containing second person verbal morphology for questions, is often imitated by children in their answers, as in (12):

- (12) I: viene March Break – state pure qua o andate in qualche posto  
Ch: oo – state qua

Although the loss of the distinction between first and third person verbal morphology may appear highly detrimental for communication, its practical consequences are limited by another feature of Italian speech, mainly of those children who start to build their language from English.<sup>29</sup> There is a tendency among these children to avoid weak forms in morphology, morphonology and syntax; among other things, this leads to the usage of full subject pronouns (instead of dropped/zero pronouns). Hence, there is often an *io* that goes with the verb and secures identification of the agent. (Of course, this tendency to mark person not by morphological suffixes but by pronouns is typical for English and may be a case of borrowing as well.) This ties in with a number of other features observed in the same children, such as the use of full, postverbal instead of preverbal, clitic pronouns (*hannu ticiato a me* 'they taught me', *dicevano è buono per vedere – te* 'they said it is good to see you', *sempre idde dice a tiè* 'he always says to you...'), the avoidance of elision in masculine adjectives (*io sogno nu buono ragazzo* 'I am a good boy', cf. standard Italian *buon ragazzo*), and in the indefinite masculine article *uno* (*uno giorno* 'one day', *uno gatto* 'a cat', *uno cane* 'a dog' etc., standard Italian *un*), and the avoidance of clitic articles (*con – la – ore* for *con l'ora* 'with the hour', cf. also double articles such as *uno l'uovo* 'an egg' (standard Italian *un uovo*) and resegmentations such as *i celli* = standard Italian *gli uccelli* 'the birds', *la recchia* = standard Italian *l'orecchio* 'the ear', which, however, may be taken from a dialectal source).

The influence of Italian tuition in the National Heritage Classes on the acquisition of Standard Italian cannot be judged on the basis of the data available at the present time. It seems, however, that it is relatively minor when compared to the influence of the family. If English is the language spoken overwhelmingly at home (which is, for obvious reasons, more often the case in second than in first generation families, cf. footnote 22), the child will either speak no (standard approximating variety of) Italian at all or rely on English-based strategies in his or her variety of it. If, on the other hand, dialect is spoken, there is a chance that the child will use dialect-based strategies, which are more likely to secure progress on the way to a regional variety of

Italian. (The children who were able to speak fluent regional Italian in the interviews often came from families in which Italian was one language of interaction, at least in addition to a dialect or English.)

After many years of attending National Heritage Classes, and after four years of Italian tuition at a college, Italo-Canadian students of Italian at the university level still speak this language with difficulty. Observations and recordings made in formal settings among first year students of Italian at York University, Toronto (which has a large percentage of Italo-Canadians) show that even in this highly motivated group Italian is heavily influenced by English and contains many simplifications and hypercorrections. Dialectal features in morphology and syntax (*ho nu cugina* 'I have a cousin') and Italianese words (*insicurezza* 'insurance', standard Italian *assicurazione*) are rare, however. Many of the simplification strategies observed in the children are still present, although to a much lesser degree (cf. wrong article forms like *i italiani*, standard Italian *gli*; *uno misto* 'a mixture' = standard Italian *un*; *l'accento di l'Inghilterra* 'the accent of England' = standard Italian *dell'Inghilterra*; lack of agreement as in *parole dialetti* 'dialect words' = standard Italian *parole dialettali*; problems with the auxiliary in the *passato prossimo* as in *sono imparato* 'I learned' = standard Italian *ho*; *ha andato* 'he went' = standard Italian *è*; no subjunctive in subordinated sentences or irreal constructions, wrong *consecutio temporum*, etc.). More striking are the frequent syntactic constructions built according to the English pattern, for example, *andare* + infinitive in the sense of the English 'going to' (*la gente vanno parlare dialetto* 'people are going to speak dialect'), age expressions with *essere* instead of *avere* (*e quindici anni* 'he is 15'). Lexical loan-shifts (*dependente su qualcuno* 'dependent on someone', *crescere* 'to grow (vegetables)', *guardare su* 'look after') and idiomatic loan-constructions are also frequent (cf. *prendere assai della responsabilità* 'take much of the responsibility').

There is also an important amount of pragmatic borrowing. Viz Müller-Zocco (1987) notes, among other things, that *ciao* has, on the basis of English *hello*, replaced the other Italian greetings and neutralized Italian politeness distinctions, which render a salutation like *ciao signora* inappropriate; *tu/voi/Lei* and the corresponding verbal morphology are no longer distinguished systematically and correctly. She also notes a tendency to 'over-apologize' by extending the uses of *scusa* to pragmatic contexts in which an apology is required in English, but not in Italian, such as when touching another person inadvertently or when sneezing. We may add here the borrowing of the English routine of exchanging *how are you* at the beginning of an interactional episode (without more of an answer than *fine* being either expected or appropriate). This routine exchange can be observed again and again in first and second generation Italians; cf. (13):



(13) (Radio CHIN 5/3/89; caller in his twenties, DJ first generation)

- DJ: buona sera come va  
 → C: bene grazie e lei  
 → DJ: allora l'ha ascoltato alla radio o era a Maple Leafs Garden (etc.)

In particular, it will be noted that the DJ does not respond to the caller's 'question' *e lei*; in fact, *e lei* is not treated as a question at all, which corresponds to an (American) English, but not to the (European) Italian way of organizing a conversational opening.

We may conclude that the acquisition of a near-standard form of Italian proceeds extremely slowly in the Canadian context; many children grow up without a knowledge of this variety that would enable them to carry on a conversation. The Italian spoken by second and third generation Italo-Canadians is influenced more by English than the Italian spoken by second generation Italians in Germany is influenced by German; on the average, the Italo-German children rely more on the dialect and are more successful in the acquisition of Italian, particularly in adolescence, although their Italian is far from that of comparable youngsters brought up in (Southern) Italy.<sup>30</sup>

#### 4. Language choice and language alternation

##### 4.1 Language choice

The acquisition of a language, of course, cannot be separated from the contexts of its usage. We therefore have to ask what role (if any) the Italian part of the second and third generation's linguistic repertoire takes on in the emigration context. The usual answer given both by Italo-Canadians and linguists is that second and third generation Italians exclusively speak English with each other, and that therefore the Italian part of the repertoire (dialect, 'standard' and possible intermediate forms) is bound to disappear, as it has become useless. Although it is basically correct that all second and third generation Italo-Canadians have a strong preference for English today, the conclusion is premature that Italian plays no role at all for their everyday life.<sup>31</sup> In particular, there are exceptions to the rule, and there is a considerable amount of Italian (dialect) spoken in inter-generation interaction.

Given the clash between the preference of the first generation of Italo-Canadians for Italian, and that of the second generation for English, language choice in inter-generation interaction is a matter of negotiation. Second generation Italo-Canadians before adolescence almost invariably, and those after adolescence mostly, insist on their language of preference in the family; this often leads to patterns where language choice is habitually divergent, that is,

where each participant insists on 'his' or 'her' language. The tension inherent in such language divergence is reduced by its routine character. The following extract exemplifies this:

(14)..(SC=female relative, F1=daughter 16, F2=daughter 15, F3=son 10)

- SC: allora dove siete andati oggi – dove sei andata Stefa/ eh Sabrina –  
 F2: ehm: [ (...) ]  
 F3: [St. Patrick's – ]  
 SC: e dove è?  
 → F2: St Patrick's – I donno whereabout –  
 SC: what i/ e che cosa è St. Patricks – è un [ (...)eh ]  
 → F2: [church ]  
 → SC: [una festa di Saint Patrick ]  
 F3: no it's a church  
 SC: ah  
 F3: it's a church ehm – near this – mass

Of course, the English speaking child may actively participate in an Italian interaction and thereby display passive competence. Compare (15):

(15) (M=mother, P=father, F3=son, 10, F1 =daughter, 16)

- M: lo ricordo a casa mia eravamə cinque femmine e uno maschiə h h  
 la primə era femmina [e  
 → F3: [and him [that is, P] – different – totally  
 different – seven boys and one girl!  
 M: not seven!  
 P: sì!  
 F1: five!  
 (...) ]  
 P: eh! five

Exchanges such as these, which are so frequent in Toronto, not only demonstrate that in the family context, Italian (dialect) is the 'we code' of the parents, but the 'they code' for the children; it is also on the basis of the same exchanges that this status of the varieties in question is established again and again. By ostensibly displaying their preference for English, and by insisting on it, the children identify with a world that isn't their parents'. And every divergence from this pattern of language choices is an act of identity, too. The use of Italian in intra-generation talk among children constitutes a 'repairable' and may be 'sanctioned' by the other child, even if s/he (most



probably) understood what has been said:

(16) (SC=female relative, F3=son 10, F1=daughter 16)

SC-F3: Quale tipo di pasta ti piace

F3-SC: eh.: [s/

F1-F3: [(le) raviole alla panna? -

→ F3-F1: what?

→ F1-F3: the ravioli with the cream?

((laughter))

On the other hand, switching into English, as some adults do, could be an attempt to establish an in-group relationship with the child or 'taking sides'.

(16) Fieldnote: In a grocery shop on Corso Italia, only Italian customers, mostly women; some younger men as personnel. Everybody speaks dialect. A middle-aged woman with a roughly five-year-old boy comes in; he is greeted by one of the men in Italian; he then bows down to the little boy and addresses him with 'Hi Gino, how are you?'

However, it is important to underline that we are dealing with a certain role relationship here, that is, that between 'adult' and 'child'; we are not dealing with language choice in first and second generation Italo-Canadians in general. In fact, many post-adolescent second generation Italo-Canadians will insist less on their preference for English; instead, they may use both Italian (in a usually less dialectal variety than their parents) and English in the family. There is even evidence that some second generation speakers will return to the language usage patterns of their parents when bringing up their own children, that is, speak Italian to them (with them answering back in English). The following observation nicely shows how adult-child role relations are reflected in and symbolized by patterns of divergent language choice independent of biological generation status:

(17) Fieldnote: Another grocery store, mixed customers. Two cashiers' counters, on one of them the mother of the family who runs the shop (about 55), on the other the daughter (about 25). The daughter is serving an Italian family, including a small boy. There is the usual interaction with divergent language choice between daughter and mother ('How much are the lettuce?' - followed by an Italian answer by the mother). At one point, the daughter turns to the little boy: 'Se non stai tranquillo ti ammazzo!' He laughs and answers: 'If you kill me, I'll kill you!'

Italian youngsters dealing with Italian customers in some way or other cannot afford not to speak Italian. Bar-keepers or salespersons therefore always try to adapt to the language preferences of their (older) customers.

Among themselves, and with younger customers, they use English, of course:

(18) Fieldnote: Bar with billiard parlor in Little Italy. Two young men behind the bar. They speak English among themselves, Italian with the old men in the billiard room. An older man and a younger man, obviously father and son, come in. Father to the barkeeper: 'Due espresso!'. The son repeats: 'Two espresso', with a marked American-English accent in 'espresso'.

The simple pattern 'parents speak Italian, children speak English' may therefore become quite complicated when both adolescent children and parents switch to, or use, the 'other' language for some reason. Compare the following:

(19) Fieldnote: Pasticceria and café on Corso Italia. The whole family is engaged in running the shop, including father and mother (about 45) and a son (about 15) behind the counter of the pasticceria, and two daughters (about 16, 17) running the café from a different counter. The boy speaks a rudimentary Italian with his Italian customers. The girls speak English among themselves and with the customers, but Italian with the mother. At one point, the father shouts over to the bar: 'Could you girls help me over here?' A command is turned into a request by convergence with the girls' language preference.

A comparison with the situation in Germany shows a parallel up to adolescence. The children grow up with the home dialect of the family but quickly learn German and develop a strong preference for it as soon as they go to kindergarten and on to school. The same split of language preferences observed in the Italo-Canadian family will also occur in many Italian families in Germany. However, around and after adolescence a different picture emerges. Many Italian youngsters in Germany (though not all) gradually return to a preference for (dialectal) Italian, beginning at the age 14-16. This language is not only used with first generation migrants, but also in many peer groups. The shift in language preference constitutes one of the most important differences between the German and the Canadian situation. Peer interaction among second generation Italo-Germans is often Italian (dialect), whereas it is almost always English among second and third generation Italo-Canadians.



#### 4.2 Language alternation

If we define language alternation as the use of more than one language or variety in the same interactive episode by the same or by more than one speaker, it follows that we cannot deal with language choice without taking into account language alternation, and vice versa. Through the analysis of language alternation, language preferences may emerge which are also relevant for the description of patterns of language choice. And patterns of language choice lead to code-switching in the kind of language negotiation mentioned above.

Contrary to a number of other situations in which language alternation has been described (cf., for example, Scotton 1988), codeswitching and transfer in migratory contexts such as the ones we are dealing here cannot be investigated properly if only the 'social' aspect is taken into account, that is, the social relationships 'indexed' by code-switching against the background of a fixed, unmarked pattern of language choice. Language choice is associated with certain role relationships in Canada (such as first generation and second generation), but the established patterns are open enough to allow and even necessitate processes of negotiation of language choice. These processes do not metaphorically exploit a preexisting allocation of languages to 'situations' (as implied in the distinction between 'metaphorical' and 'situational' switching)<sup>32</sup>; on the contrary, they establish such an allocation in the first place (or fail to). Preference-related codeswitching in the course of negotiating a language of interaction therefore evades the distinction between marked and unmarked language choice.

In addition, language alternation in the Italo-Canadian or Italo-German may be related to questions of language competence which do not play such an important role in older multilingual speech communities. Competence-related switching or transfer is not socially meaningful (in the way the term 'social' is used by authors such as Scotton 1988), either.

Finally, it must not be forgotten that the mere juxtaposition of two languages always has a contrastive potential that can be exploited for purposes of contextualizing language independent of any social meanings attached to the languages in question. Many of the discourse-related functions that may be ascribed to individual instances of language alternation exist, not because the languages are, for example, the 'we code' and the 'they code' of the participants, but simply because a contrast of languages can index a contrast on another level of linguistic coherence, for instance, a change in participant constellation, of topic or key, of role relationship, etc. And in fact, in the sociolinguistic contexts we are dealing with here, these functions may partly be served by switching in either direction.

This, of course, should not be taken to imply that the languages in a mul-

tilingual repertoire are all of equal status; it is natural for each of them to become associated with specific values, which are both established and made use of in language alternation. It must be noted, however, that in addition to 'social' meanings of code-switching and transfer, preference-, competence- and discourse-related meanings also have to be taken into account.<sup>33</sup>

Preference-related code-switching, that is, insisting on one's own language choice against that of another person, is most frequent in interaction between children and adults in Canada, and occurs throughout inter-generation interaction, where language choice is more unpredictable than in intra-generation interaction.

Divergence from and convergence with the other's language choice can partly be attributed social meaning, as shown in the discussion of the examples above.<sup>34</sup> Competence-related code-switching or transfer, in which the use of the other language is displayed as being occasioned by the (momentary) lack of competence in the language presently spoken by various forms of hesitation phenomena, by prosodic marking of the other language item (for example, by emphasis) or by explicit formulae ('I don't know how to say it in Italian')<sup>35</sup> is less frequent. Among the younger children, those who rely heavily on language mixing between Italian and English alternate freely between the two languages, without any marking (apart from the overall non-fluency typical for their speech). The two languages are not juxtaposed, but their elements are used as if they belonged to one variety. Marked transfers and competence-related switching into (pure) English occur, however, above all when even a mixture of Italian and English will not allow the child to communicate what s/he wants to say. Compare the following extracts:

(20) (age unknown, about 7 [talk about his experiences on a trip to Italy])

I: Ti ricordi qualche cosa?

Ch: una - miglia/- pig!

I: come si dice? un ma - maia - maia - maia - maiale

Ch: maiale

(21) [same interview, talk about going to the doctor]

I: e poi sai stato altre volte dal dottore?

Ch: sì

I: perchè

Ch: [silence]

I: perchè

Ch: [silence]

I: per che cosa

Ch: pure là [points] - che (...) - needle

I: ti ha fatto una puntura? ehi!

Ch: yeah



- I: dove li?  
 Ch: eh  
 I: ti faceva male?  
 Ch: no  
 I: e perchè ti ha fatto una puntura  
 Ch: to make me feel better – io non so come tu non sai come come dic’

In older second and third generation Italians competence-related language alternation is rare; these speakers would more often tend to camouflage a switch into English rather than exposing it as competence- or preference-related.

It is in discourse-related language alternation that the varieties in a multilingual repertoire are exploited for communicative purposes. Unlike preference- and competence-related language alternation, discourse-related forms of codeswitching can be taken as an indicator of a stabilized individual and/or social bilingualism, presupposing and depending on a sufficient competence in both languages. Discourse-related language alternation is, in a way, antagonistic to preference- and competence-related alternation; the more of the one, the less of the other will be found in an individual. In Canada, it is observed in adolescent and post-adolescent second and third generation Italians, but also in those (comparatively few) first generation immigrants who have developed a good competence in English over the years. It seems to be rare in Italo-Canadian children.

As discourse-related code-switching always implies an element of creative language use, it is impossible to give an exhaustive list of the discourse functions served by it. The list is potentially open. Some of the uses of code-switching for the organization of discourse are the following:

a) *Evaluation*. Assessment turns or evaluating phrases may be formulated in the ‘other’ language and thereby set off against the surrounding talk providing the information to be assessed.

(22) (Radio CHIN, first generation caller, after the San Remo Festival Concert)

- DJ: quale è la canzone che ha preferito  
 C: oh my go::d! è Toto Cotugno  
 DJ: anche a lei Toto Cotugno

(23) (C=male relative, F1=daughter 16, V=visitor [talk about the Benetton sweater F1 is wearing])

- F1: tutti se lo mettono ma – specialmente gli italiani; questo è canadese [points to her sister’s sweater]  
 V: questo è can(h)ad(h)ese

- C: a(h)ll(h)ora è – seconda categoria  
 all: si/yeah/laughter  
 F1: I don’t know – it’s just cheap stuff – questə è cotone – questə è polyester

Occasional switching into Italian for short stereotyped evaluative phrases such as *madonna!* can also be observed in the intra-generation English speech of adult second generation Italians. In the same group of speakers, Italian (dialect) is reported to be used for joking, puns or innuendo.

b) *Addressee selection*. Speaker may keep types of participant constellations (defined by a system of allocations of speaker-, hearer- and addressee-roles) apart by switching between languages. Compare the following:

(24) (Radio CHIN, DJ=first generation speaker)

- DJ: Passiamo a un'altra chiamata – pronto pronto vediamo un po' se:  
 ah – number five – hey let's try number five – hello hello hello  
 buona se::ra – number five doesn't work – I don't know why  
 eh let's let's go to number one – pronto buona sera  
 C: buona sera Signor Umberto...

From the second line on, the DJ directs his speech partly towards a (potential) caller, speaking (with the exception of the initial *hello*) Italian, partly towards the radio audience (plus perhaps a studio technician), speaking English. In addition to addressee selection, the DJ distinguishes between two types of activities, which happen to go with different addressees: the activity of taking incoming calls, and the activity of organizing the studio.

Code-switching in order to define the participant constellation is also involved when Italian is used as a ‘secret language’ in public in order to avoid unwanted overhearers, which older second generation Italo-Canadians occasionally do.

c) *Reported speech* is often set off against its context by language alternation. The language chosen is not necessarily that which the reported speaker would most probably have used, although it is in the following extract; the important thing is contrast, not imitation:

(25) (F1=daughter, 16 [following the question if she thinks she is Canadian])

- F1: no: siamo italiani – for noi – eh/ si dice/ eh/ prima si domanda  
 what are you – e si dice italiano – poi – si dice – poi si dice (...)  
 what are you – oh calabrese you know – non si dice canadese – eh perchè se se tu dici canadese sei considerata mangiachecche



d) *Side remarks.* In the following extract, the side remark is contextualized by switching into English; the same switching also marks transition from 'displaced' into 'situated speech'.<sup>36</sup>

(26) (8 years old)

I: tu sei mai stato al dottore?

Ch: yeah stato ma [drops something]

oops – non si – non si prende che che era – il dottore

Language alternation among Italians in Germany follows essentially the same lines. However, competence-related switching and transfer is more frequent in children, who tend to mix languages less than those in Canada. Discourse-related switching occurs more frequently in older, adolescent and post-adolescent second generation Italians than it does in Canada.

## 5. Language attitudes

By many researchers, the development of bilingual linguistic competence and of bilingual communities in general is seen as a consequence of language attitudes. It is argued that the motivation underlying language acquisition and also language use is governed by the way in which the ethnic minority group perceives itself and the language of the minority group. Given the fact that the Italian part of the repertoire is used very little in the Canadian context by second and third generation speakers, and their competence is limited, one should expect rather negative attitudes towards their own ethnicity and language. The opposite, however, is true in the present situation.

One may distinguish three phases in the way in which the Italian community in Toronto has seen itself and has been seen by the 'receiving' Anglo-American society. The first phase is that of the early immigrants in the fifties and early sixties; it is characterized by a strong antagonism between the migratory and 'receiving' parts of Canadian society. The Italians were faced with a strongly monocultural, Anglocentric community which put strong pressure on them to hide their ethnicity and integrate at the risk of complete assimilation. However, given their educational background and lacking linguistic competence as well as their economic situation, the early immigrants were in no position to meet these demands, even if they had wanted to. The result seems to have been an ambiguous attitudinal situation. On the one hand, all the prestige lay with the Anglo-Canadian society and its values; this included English, which was important for economic success. (The negative attitudes towards one's own Italian dialect, which is not perceived as a proper 'language', was transferred from the Italian sociolinguistic context.) On the

other hand, the first generation of immigrants had grown up in a small-scale rural community in Italy which was replicated in Toronto. Affiliation with this community provided some 'hidden' prestige to be held against the Anglo-Canadian pressure to assimilate. The *mangia-checcà* (Italianese for 'cake-eaters', that is, the Anglo-Canadians) were, it seems, both envied and despised.

In the second phase, a new generation of Italo-Canadians brought up in Canada were in a position to do what their parents could not have done: assimilate to the Anglo-Canadian environment. They were able to do so on the basis of their parents' economic success and on the basis of their ability to speak English 'like the others'. The typical features of first generation 'Italianness' (such as the parents' Italian accent, their broken English, etc.) had been hated by the children and were now rejected; at the same time, the strong local affiliation to the *paese*-network was lost. The 'value struggle' between parents and children resulting from this rejection of everything related to Italy and Italian was well described by Allodi at the time (1971: 257):

Conflicts over identity and the anguish of identity diffusion are very frequently behind the presenting symptoms. Being Italian is associated in their, that is, the young Italians', mind with personal repression and, having assimilated some of the prevailing Canadian standards, also of being 'Wop', something basically undesirable. They reject their Italian self, they become reluctant to speak Italian at home and will create for the parents the untenable situation of being a foreigner in their own house.

Since then, the attitudinal constellation has changed again, both from the point of view of the Italians and that of the Anglo-Canadian society. Today, the young Italo-Canadians in Toronto have no problems in displaying their Italian identity – they are Italians in the first place, but at the same time Canadians. This almost ideal case of a bi-ethnic and bi-cultural identity is manifest in a heightened self-confidence of the Italian community, which has, once again, made economic progress and now includes a large affluent middle class; but it is also based on the new prestige Italy and Italian culture has gained independently among the Anglo-Canadians in Toronto. Italian food, Italian clothes, Italian music are 'hip', not only among the Italo-Canadians. The Italian community in Toronto has obviously profited from this general cultural development. As a consequence, resentments have disappeared on both sides – the term *mangia-checcà* is still widely used for demarcation, but not in a malicious sense any more, just as the Anglo-Canadian society has accepted the Italians (with very few exceptions among the old guard Anglo-Canadian elite against Italians in top-level political and economic positions).

The new pro-Italian attitudes prevalent today among the Italo-Canadians have corrected the almost complete cultural assimilation of the previous



phase. The times of a concealed identity have ceded to a more Italian style of appearance. Young Italo-Canadians dominantly look for partners of the same ethnicity, not in the least because they want their children to be brought up in an Italian context. This includes positive attitudes towards language (not dialect!). In practice, however, these attitudes result in little more than an occasional Italian phrase inserted into almost completely English speech. Italian is not spoken, although it is liked. Toronto is therefore the linguistically interesting case of a minority group which has a very positive self-image which nevertheless fails to transmit onto the linguistic level. It seems that there are easier ways to symbolize one's own ethnic identity than via language; Benetton and Armani clothes are enough to do the job, and they are less tiresome to acquire than competence in Italian.

In Germany, on the other hand, there is a definite correlation between the construction of an Italian identity distinct from the German culture, and the return to a linguistic preference for Italian (dialect) among adolescent Italians (cf. Di Luzio and Auer 1987).

## 6. Conclusion

This preliminary survey on language use and language maintenance in Toronto has confronted a New World emigration community of Italians with an Old World Italian migrant community in Germany. Although the two migratory contexts share many features (these are, roughly, age, Southern Italian source of migration, chain migration mode, modalities and the outcome of acquisition of English/German in the first and second generation), a number of differences were observed. These pertain, in the first place, to the structure and status of the Italian part of the bilingual repertoire. In the Canadian context, the influence of the contact language English on this part of the repertoire goes considerably beyond the influence of German on Italian in Germany. This applies both to the first generation *Italiene* in Toronto, which has no parallel in Germany, and to language use and language competence in the second generation. More than in Germany, the Italian spoken by the Italo-Canadian children is a highly unfocussed, unstable variety constructed out of the respective Southern Italian dialect and/or from structures directly or indirectly taken over from English. These are intermingled with Italian structures without any cooccurrence restrictions ('code-mixing' in *italiano stentato*-speech). On the level of usage, the most striking difference is the determined preference for English among post-adolescent Italo-Canadians, as compared to a distinct tendency of Italians living in Germany to speak (a variety of) Italian at that age, even among themselves. Second and third generation members of the Italian community

in Toronto show that positive attitudes towards one's own ethnicity can be irrelevant for language maintenance, a finding that may be of some relevance for sociolinguistic theory.

As an explanation for the differences between Old World and New World developments of bilingual migrant communities, it was pointed out a) that the overall political situation in Canada allows immigrant status and naturalization for the Italians whereas the situation in Germany denies it, b) that the geographical distance between Toronto and Italy prohibits tighter personal contacts with the source country, whereas these are common for Italians living in Germany, and c) that the perspective on emigration for good in Canada (after some time of living there) as compared to a perspective on returning to Italy among first generation migrants in Germany (even after thirty years in that country) favors the loss of the Italian part of the repertoire in the first context. More research is needed in order to make predictions about the fate of Italian in Toronto. At the moment, it looks as if the number of active speakers of Italian might decrease sharply in the next one or two generations, although (varieties of) Italian will still be around, at least for some time for use in the family context.

Universität Konstanz

## Notes

- \* The present study was made possible by a grant under the Canadian Faculty Research Program, 1988. I wish to thank Marcel Danesi, Gabriella Colussi, Sonia Fiorucci, Alberto di Giovanni and Iana Vizimüller for their help in carrying out the present research. Most of all, however, I am grateful to Gianrenzo and Mirella Clivio and to Monica Heller, who provided linguistic, personal and logistic support in many ways. Cf. Auer 1980, 1983/1984a, 1984b, 1987, 1988a; Auer and Di Luzio 1983a, 1983b, 1988a; Di Luzio 1982, 1984, in press; Di Luzio and Auer 1987; d'Angelo 1984, etc.
- 1. But cf. Danesi (1985c), who gives a brief list of 'errori interlinguistici' of second generation children in Toronto. For second generation Italians in Montreal, where the situation is complicated by French as a third important language in the repertoire, cf. Villata (1988a, 1988b).
- 2. Mainly on St. Clair and College Street and the surrounding areas. Cf. the description below.
- 3. Family A: parents from Abruzzi and Molise, respectively; two daughters (15 and 16 years) and a son (10). Family B: parents both Abruzzesi; two daughters (10 and 16) and a son (17); a further 17-year-old friend of the eldest son of the family was present at the recording session. Family C: parents both from Calabria; three daughters (3, 10, 16). All children were born in Toronto, all parents in Italy. Time of residence in Canada for the parents was around twenty years. Access was made possible through the mediation of friends or relatives of the family who were also present and helped to create an informal atmosphere.
- 5. All of them were female and born in Toronto, aged around 18 and studying Italian. York University is generally considered to be less prestigious than the University of Toronto because of lower entrance requirements. The recording was made after class in a cafeteria on the York University campus.



6. Children aged 5 to 12 were taken out individually from the classroom and interviewed by a person pretending (more or less successfully) not to know any English. Tape-recordings and transcriptions of these interviews were kindly made available to me by Sonia Fiorucci. All the transcriptions were checked carefully and redone when necessary.
7. Cf. *Mother Tongue Atlas*, Vol. 2 (1981) and unpublished 1986 census data ('Population by Selected Mother Tongue, Toronto Metropolitan Municipality').
8. Cf. on the sociocultural situation of the first generation of immigrants, among others, Alodi 1971; Tomasi 1977; Polyphony 7/2 (1985).
9. Again, official census data hardly reflect this change, as they are based on language affiliation. According to the 1981 census, Italians hardly do any better than the Portuguese as far as education and type of labor is concerned (cf. *Mother Tongue Atlas* 1981, Tables 6A and 9A).
10. Re-settlement routes can be nicely followed on the census map of the areas populated by Italians to 19% or more (*Mother Tongue Atlas* 1981: 16); these are contiguous in the form of a wedge which has its pointed end in the traditional downtown housing areas and broadens to the NNW.
11. The motto of the *Corriere Canadese* is, curiously enough, rendered in English, although most of the paper, with the exception of some of the 'classifieds', is written in Italian: 'Fiercely Canadian - proudly Italian!'
12. Cf. the five volumes of *Echi del nostro mondo*, edited by the Centro Canadese Scuola e Cultura Italiana.
13. The terms 'focussed' and 'diffused' are borrowed from Le Page (cf. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985). 'Speech community' and 'repertoire' are of course central concepts in Gumperz's writings on linguistic anthropology.
14. Cf. the famous case discussed by Gumperz and Wilson (1971).
15. Clivio (1986: 133f) speaks of 'switchwords' here. It should, however, be taken into account that transferred items may be larger units than just words.
16. More on this terminology and its justification may be found in Auer (1984a and 1987).
17. Varieties in a repertoire may also defocus in the case of code-shifting, that is, gradual transitions from one variety into another. Contrary to code-mixing, code-shifting has local discourse functions and obeys relatively strict cooccurrence restrictions. Cf. Auer (1986).
18. See, for instance, Singh's description of Hindi-English language mixing (Singh 1985).
19. The language, style and rhetorics of first generation Italian adults are documented and analyzed in Müller (in press).
20. Cf. Pietropaolo 1974; Clivio 1975; Clivio 1986; and, with special reference to phonological integration, Danesi 1985b, whose book also includes a large corpus.
21. Bettini (1986) has suggested that exposure to Italian or to an Italian dialect is even less for the second and further children than for the first, as the oldest child 'import' the host language into the family context. This regularity seems to apply in the German and in the Canadian case as well.
22. Among the first and second generation parents whose children were interviewed by Tosi and colleagues, 31% stated that they use only dialect with the children, 19% only English, 18% Italian and English, 18% dialect and English, 6% Italian and English, 3% Italian only, 3% Italian, dialect and English. If one considers only second generation parents (that is, those who came to Canada when they were children themselves, or were born there), the percentages change considerably: only English 33%, English and dialect 21%, Italian and English 18%, dialect only 12%, Italian and dialect 9%,
23. Italian, dialect and English 6%, only Italian 0% (n=33). Thus, whereas English is spoken in 64% of the families taken together (exclusively or in alternation with other varieties), it is spoken by 78% of the second generation parents.
24. Cf. d'Angelo (1984:177ff).
25. Auer and Di Luzio (1983a, 1983b).
26. Cf., for example, *finisce* in the second extract, or *sta pijà na fishing rod*, *sta indè ll'acqua*, *nu boat* in the fourth, or the frequent final schwa in the last one.
27. There is, however, a frequent and habitual use of particles such as *you know*, which are not restricted to children.
28. Occasionally, the generalized plural article is *li*. *Le*, in fact, might be the phonologically strengthened and de-dialectalized variant of *lè*, which would be unmarked for gender, that is, not necessarily a feminine article form.
29. It is possible that third person *fa* and *va* are construed from dialectal (*i fajə, vajə*). In the examples mentioned here, as well as in a good number of additional cases, there is, however, no phonetic trace of these forms left, that is, the final *-a* is clearly monophthongal.
30. This tendency was also noted by Di Luzio (in press) for Italo-German children.
31. Cf. again Di Luzio (in press).
32. On the question of language choice in the family in Toronto, cf. the questionnaire study by Feuerverger (1982). In this study of 109 13-14 year old pupils in National Heritage Language classes, French immersion classes and English-only schools, language choice with a sibling or with a friend receives values of 1.08-1.71 and 1.00-1.65 respectively on a scale from 1 (English only) to 5 (Italian only), whereas the language chosen with the father and mother is judged 2.19-3.35 and 2.37-3.59, respectively. However, the language spoken by the father (3.07-4.19) and by the mother (2.89-4.00) is only slightly above that chosen by the child, a result that is certainly not typical for actual language use in the family but influenced by the questionnaire method.
33. Cf. the critical remarks on Gumperz's famous distinction in Auer (1984b).
34. In order to compare two communities in which language alternation occurs, it is necessary to relate the data collected in either context to a common model of language alternation serving as the tertium comparationis. The model for the description of language alternation used here is further explicated in Auer (1984a). (Other comparative studies of code-switching using different models can be found in Poplack 1988 and Gal 1987.) It distinguishes participant and discourse related language alternation on the one hand, and code-switching and transfer on the other hand.
35. Language choice in the Montréal Italo-Canadian families is the object of a study by Di Sciullo et al. (1976), who point out that processes of language negotiation between parents and children are influenced by the conversational structure of the exchange (cf. for the same argument Auer 1984a: 51f). According to these authors, convergent language choice by the child is more likely on turns not taking part in an adjacency pair sequence, or on second pair parts in adjacency pairs, than on first pair parts. In addition, syntactic cohesion (for example, in word questions) decreases the likelihood of divergent choice of language, and a change of participant constellation increases it.
36. Cf. on these strategies Kinder (1985, 1986).
37. Cf. Auer (1988b).



## References

- Allodi, F.  
1971 The Italians in Toronto. Mental health problems of an immigrant community. In Mann, W. E. (ed.), *Social Deviance in Canada*, Toronto, 250–263.
- Auer, Peter  
1980 Bilingualism as a members' concept. Language choice and language alternation in their relation to lay assessments of competence. *Schriftenreihe des Sonderforschungsbereichs (SFB) 99*, Konstanz, Nr. 54.  
1983/1984a Zweisprachige Konversationen. Code-switching und Transfer bei italienischen Migrantenkindern in Konstanz. *Schriftenreihe des Sonderforschungsbereichs (SFB) 99*, Konstanz, Nr. 79 (1983). Revised English translation as *Bilingual Conversation*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.  
1984b On the meaning of conversational code-switching. In Auer, Peter and Aldo Di Luzio (eds.), *Interpretive Sociolinguistics*, Tübingen: Narr, 87–112.  
1986 Phonologische und konversationelle Aspekte von Standard/Dialekt-Kontinua (Code-Shifting). *Deutsche Sprache*, Fasc. 1.  
1987 Le transfert comme stratégie conversationnelle dans le discours en 'L2'. In Lüdi, Georges (ed.), *Devenir bilingue – parler bilingue*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 57–75.  
1988a A conversational analytic approach to codeswitching and transfer. In Heller (ed.), 187–214.  
1988b On deixis and displacement. *Folia Linguistica* XXII, 3/4, 263–292.
- Auer, Peter and Aldo Di Luzio  
1983a Linguistic variation and its meaning among Italian migrant children in Germany. In Bäuerle, Rainer et al. (eds.), *Meaning, Use and Interpretation of Language*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1–21.  
1983b Three types of variation and their meaning. In Dabène, L. et al. (eds.), *Status of Migrants' Mother Tongues*. Strasbourg: European Science Foundation, 67–100.  
1988 Diskurssemantische Eigenschaften der Sprache italienischer Migrantenkinder. In Stechow, Armin von and Marie-Theres Scheppling (eds.), *Fortschritte in der Semantik*. Bonn: VCH Acta Humaniora, 159–199.
- Bettoni, Camilla  
1981 Italian in North Queensland. Changes in the speech of first and second generation bilinguals. Townsville: James Cook University.  
1986 Italian language attrition in Sydney: The role of birth order. In Bettoni (ed.), 61–85.  
1986 (ed.) *Altro Polo - Italian Abroad*. Sydney: F. May Foundation for Italian Studies.  
1987 Italian language attrition in Sydney: the role of dialect. Paper for the 8th AILA conference, Sydney. Unpublished manuscript.
- Biondi, L.  
1975 *The Italian-American Child: His Sociolinguistic Acculturation*. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press.  
Clahsen, Harald, Jürgen Meisel and Manfred Pienemann  
1983 *Deutsch als Zweitsprache. Der Spracherwerb ausländischer Arbeiter*. Tübingen: Narr.  
Clivio, Gianrenzo P.  
1975 The assimilation of English loanwords in Italo-Canadian. In Reich, P.A. (ed.), *The 2nd LACUS Forum. Columbia, S.C.*: Hornbeam Press, 584–589.  
Competing loanwords and loanshifts in Toronto's *italiese*. In Bettoni (ed.), 129–146.
- d'Angelo, Domenico  
1984 Interaktionsnetzwerke und soziokultureller Hintergrund italienischer Migranten und Migrantenkinder in Konstanz. *Schriftenreihe des Sonderforschungsbereichs (SFB) 99*, Konstanz, Nr. 98.
- Danesi, Marcel  
1985a Canadian Italian. *Polyphony* 7:2, 111–114.  
1985b *Loanwords and Phonological Methodology*. Ottawa: Didier.  
1985c L'insegnamento dell'italiano ai discendenti italo-canadesi. *Il veltro* 29:3/4, 447–455.  
1988 *Studies in Heritage Language Learning and Teaching*. Toronto: Centro Canadese Scuola e Cultura Italiana.
- Di Luzio, Aldo  
1982 Problemi linguistici dei figli dei lavoratori migranti. In Braga, G. (ed.), *Linguistic Problems and European Unity*. Trento.  
1984 On the meaning of language alternation for the sociocultural identity of Italian migrant children. In Auer, Peter and Aldo Di Luzio (eds.), *Interpretive Sociolinguistics*. Tübingen: Narr.  
(in press) On some (socio)linguistic properties of the Italian of foreign workers' children in contact with German. In *Papers from the Workshop on Maintenance and Loss of Ethnic Minority Languages*, Noordwijkerhout, August 1988.
- Di Luzio, Aldo and Peter Auer  
1987 Identitätskonstitution in der Migration. Konversationsanalytische und linguistische Aspekte ethnischer Stereotypisierungen. *Linguistische Berichte* 104, 327–351.
- Di Sciullo, Anne-Marie, Arie Van Ameringen, Henrietta Cedergren and Paul Pupier  
1976 Etude de l'interaction verbale chez des Montréalais d'origine italienne. *Cahiers de Linguistique* 6, 127–154, Université de Québec à Montréal.
- Feuerverger, Grace  
1982 An exploratory study of the ethnolinguistic vitality of Italo-Canadian students in Toronto. M.A. Thesis, University of Toronto.
- Gal, Susan  
1987 Codeswitching and consciousness in the European periphery. *American Ethnologist* 14, 637–653.
- Gumperz, John and R. Wilson  
1971 Convergence and Creolization: A case from the Indo-Aryan/Dravidian border in India. In Hymes, D. (ed.) *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Heller, Monica (ed.)  
1988 *Codeswitching. Anthropological and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kinder, John J.  
1985 The verbal marking of transference in New Zealand Italian. In Bettoni (ed.), 87–104.  
1986 Aspects of Italian-English bilingualism in New Zealand. Paper given at the 3rd International Conference on Italy and Italian Culture Today, Sydney



1986. Unpublished manuscript.

- Klein, Wolfgang and Dittmar, Norbert  
1979 *Developing Grammars: The Acquisition of German Syntax by Foreign Workers*. Berlin: Springer.
- Kuitunen, M.  
1980 L'italiano a Toronto: dallo Heritage Program all'università. *Rassegna italiana di linguistica applicata* 12, 11-21.
- Le Page, Robert and Andrée Tabouret-Keller  
1985 *Acts of Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Müller, Frank  
(in press) *Sprachgebrauch und Sicht der sozialen Welt von süditalienischen Arbeitsimmigranten*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture. (ed)  
1981 *Mother Tongue Atlas of Metropolitan Toronto*. Toronto.
- Pietropaolo, Domenico  
1974 Aspects of English interference on the Italian language in Toronto. *Canadian Modern Language Review* 30:3, 234-241.
- Polyphony* 1985 = Vol. 7:2 - Special Issue 'Italians in Ontario'.  
Poplack, Shana  
1988 Contrasting patterns of codeswitching in two communities. In Heller (ed.), 215-244.
- Rubino, Antonia  
1987 Codemixing and code control in Italo-Australian children. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* S-4, 128-153.
- Scotton, Carol M.  
1988 Codeswitching as indexical of social negotiations. In Heller (ed.), 151-186.
- Singh, Rajendra  
1985 Grammatical constraints on code-mixing. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 30/1, 33-46.
- Tomasi, Lydio F.  
1977 The Italian community in Toronto. *International Migration Review* 11:4, 486-513.
- Tosi, Arturo  
1982 *The Development of Italian in the Young Italo-Australian Child*. Melbourne: Catholic Educational Office of Victoria.
- 1984 *Immigration and Bilingual Education*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Viz Müller-Zocco, Iana  
1987 Politeness and languages in contact: Italians in Toronto. Paper presented at the 20th Annual conference of the American Italian Historical Association, Chicago, Nov. 12-15, 1987. Unpublished manuscript.