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FROM TRILINGUALISM TO MONOLINGUALISM:

A CASE STUDY OF LANGUAGE SHIFT
IN A SICILIAN-AUSTRALIAN FAMILY

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses language shift in a Sicilian-Australian family, from the parents' use of three languages: Sicilian, Italian and English, to the children's almost exclusive use of English.

Language shift is here observed and investigated through an ethnographic approach, and a great deal of attention is paid to the role of the researcher in collecting linguistic data. Against those fieldwork methods that rely on only one contact with the informants, this thesis shows how the initial formality of the fieldwork situation was modified and reversed through a long process of contact with the informants. As a result of the friendship and intimacy that developed between researcher and informants, it was possible for the researcher to record a range of interactions in situations at varying levels of formality, and in particular everyday informal interactions among family members.

The linguistic analysis focuses on the mother's speech as recorded in three distinct situations. The main research objective is to examine the changes that take place in her speech with regard to patterns of use of the three languages and type and amount of contact among them. "Contact" in this study refers to the use of more than one language within the same interaction. Other research objectives are to explore the effect of some situational variables on linguistic patterns, and to compare patterns of contact between related languages (Italian and Sicilian) and unrelated ones (Italian or Sicilian, and English).

The results show major changes in the distribution of the three languages and in the patterns of contact: Italian is the language of the most formal situation, and elicits least contact; Sicilian and English are the languages of the more informal and domestic situations, and they occur with higher degrees of contact. Furthermore, contact occurs more

frequently at higher constituent level. These patterns were found in the whole corpus as well as in the speech specifically addressed to the children and to the researcher.

Regarding the other objectives, it was found that the overall situation is the factor that affects linguistic patterns more than single situational factors (e.g., interlocutor's identity, topic or tone). Furthermore, related languages showed higher degrees of mixing than unrelated languages.

The linguistic patterns observed are explained with the different collocation of the three languages in the speaker's repertoire and with the changes that occurred in it as a result of migration. The patterns are indicative of the shift taking place in the family, as English increasingly replaces Sicilian as the domestic language, while Italian is spoken mainly outside the domestic setting.

It is suggested that language shift needs to be seen as the result of various factors at the psychological, social and historical levels. Language attitudes, language functions and the specific socio-economic level of the family are all put forth as factors that contribute to explain the shift. Furthermore, it is maintained that the socio-cultural context also needs to be taken into account, as the sociolinguistic changes that have occurred in both the Italo-Australian and the broader Australian communities are major factors in explaining the shift.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Language and migration

The process of migration marks a moment of dramatic and drastic change in the life of individuals. It entails a total upheaval in all aspects of their social, cultural and economic life. Migration to another country frequently means suppressing many social and cultural practices that the individual has been brought up with, in order to function in the new community. It means having to create new practices, at best finding a compromise between one's own practices and those of the new place; at worst, completely suppressing the practices of the home country to become accepted in the new environment. The upheaval is more poignant when migration occurs in particular historical, socio-economic and geographical conditions, (for example, when migration is made necessary by poor economic conditions or when the migrant moves to a country distant from the home country during a period when communication networks are not well developed), and if the host country is culturally distant from the home one.

Of all aspects of life affected by the process of migration, language is certainly a crucial one. The speech repertoire, that is, the languages and language varieties that migrants bring with them to the new country, will be deeply affected and modified in at least two major ways. First, the speech repertoire will undergo a redistribution in terms of time and space, as the language of the host country will be used in a number of domains and situations. In order to function in the new context, in different degrees and at different levels, migrants will need to alternate their own languages with the host language.

Second, throughout the years, language use redistribution may occur not just in dealings with the broader society, but also within the migrant community: for example, interactions between the older and the younger generations, parents and children, may gradually take place in the host language rather than in the language(s) of the home country.

Such linguistic changes occurring in migrant contexts have been the focus of many studies dealing with the issue of "language shift". The term "shift" is used to indicate the process whereby a language ceases to function in a particular community. Shift has also been used with reference to situations other than contexts of migration, that is, in communities where language use is changing as a result of changing socio-political conditions (e.g., in Blom and Gumperz, 1972, or in Gal, 1979).

It must be noted, however, that "language shift" has been used to refer to a wide variety of phenomena. For instance, "shift" has been used to indicate either a contraction in use of the language(s) across a number of domains, or a contraction in the number of speakers across generations. Furthermore, the term can be found to refer to the process while it is still occurring (cf. Clyne, 1991a: 54), or, alternatively, to the actual result of the process, that is, to the fact that a language previously used is no longer spoken by a particular community or individual (Fasold, 1984: 213). Given these multiple uses, it is necessary to state how the term is used in this thesis: here it refers to the process whereby a language(s) is being lost functionally in a migrant context across generations. The focus of this thesis is language shift in the Italo-Australian, more precisely the Sicilian-Australian community in Sydney, as it occurs in a particular historical phase of the community, that is, after over thirty to forty years of settlement, from the post World War II period.

1.2 The research

The research for this study centres on a Sicilian family. It focuses on the mother, a Sicilian woman who arrived in Sydney in 1958, at the age of fourteen, as part of mass migration from Italy to Australia

that took place from the Fifties to the Seventies. The researcher is also a Sicilian woman who has lived in Sydney and has been part of the Italo-Australian community for over ten years. The common background as Sicilians and some similarities in the migration experience are elements of great importance in this research. Shared cultural values, norms and behaviours, and common interests, attitudes and concerns in many aspects of life in Australia, are of great help in a research conducted in such a personal and intimate environment as the domestic one (cf. ch. 4).

From the Fifties to the Seventies, over 300,000 Italians - mainly from the poorer regions and from smaller rural towns - left Italy to look for work and a better future. Many of them came from Sicily, a region economically underdeveloped due to centuries of almost feudal rural practices, maladministration by the government, corruption, and of course, World War II. Sicilian migrants arrived in Australia with the intention either to settle down permanently or to save money and return to Italy. However, the majority of them were to stay in Australia. In a society which was indifferent, at best, and hostile, at worst, they recreated the village environment, kept village networks and maintained their traditions, language and culture. As is the case in many migration contexts, this response was a way of negotiating with the host society. For years the Sicilian-Australian community and the broader Italo-Australian community, made up of Italian migrants from many different regions, existed within the broader Australian community with a level of interaction which was in the main restricted to employment.

Almost forty years have passed and circumstances for the Italians in Australia are now different as a result of changes that have occurred both in the Italo-Australian and in the Australian community. In very general terms, it can be said that the former is more integrated within the wider Australian context as the second generation has been educated here and is employed in a wider range of occupations. Also due to settlement and social policies such as multiculturalism, the Australian society is more willing to accept cultural diversity.

Changes have also occurred in terms of language use. In the Fifties the community was characterised by a majority of people whose

first language was an Italian dialect, that is, a language different from standard Italian, who had had only limited use of the Italian language before migrating and who did not know English. Today, although the majority of migrants still have a dialect as their first language, a higher use of Italian can be found at community level - if not in the home - as well as widespread use of English by both first, second and third generations.

The study of this Sicilian-Australian family, therefore, needs to be placed within its historical context. The focus is on Anna, a woman who has lived in Australia more than thirty years as a migrant and who is now bringing up her children in a context which is very different from the one in which she herself grew up. These are important differences that need to be taken into account when the following question is asked: what happens in a Sicilian household in Sydney, today, in terms of language use?

This study analyses Anna's use of the three languages which co-exist in her repertoire: Sicilian, Italian and English, within the domestic domain, and along two dimensions: a) in a range of different situations, that is, with family members and with the researcher; b) across generations, through her interactions with her children.

Our speaker is observed in a crucial moment of her life as a migrant, as language patterns in her household are changing. This study highlights the process whereby a generational shift from a situation of trilingualism in the direction of monolingualism is occurring: from the mother who can competently use three languages in different situations, to her children whose dominant and almost exclusive language is English.

1.3 General approach

The issue of language shift in migrant communities has frequently been studied in a sociological perspective, that is, focussing on the spheres of society where use of a particular language is receding. This is typically the approach taken by those interested in the sociology of language, where society is the point of departure and language use is explored in different domains, looking at changes across domains and

across generations (e.g., Fishman's work, cf. 2.1). A second field of studies which has furthered our understanding of some aspects of language shift is contact linguistics, when focussing on changes that migrant languages undergo under the pressure of the host language (e.g., Clyne, 1967). In these studies particular linguistic features of migrants' speech are also correlated with socio-demographic factors (cf. 2.2).

Both approaches have provided invaluable insights into the process of language shift in migrant communities, for instance, how it occurs at societal level and how it manifests itself in the language structure (cf. ch. 2). However, both operate on abstractions (e.g., factors valued at societal level; total numbers of speakers; linguistic features out of context) rather than on concrete situations. Therefore neither of them has been able to offer in-depth explanations of language shift as the result of socio-cultural processes of change occurring in the lives of individual migrants as well as in the broader community.

From a different perspective and investigating not so much a migrant community but a bilingual one in rapid transition, studies such as Gal's (1979) have explained language shift in the light of socio-cultural changes. Gal's greater insight into shift is the result of her integration of different approaches in conducting the research: her data were collected through participant observation, questionnaires and interviews, while a quantitative and variationist paradigm was mainly used in the analysis (cf. 2.2.4).

As in Gal's research, this thesis explores language shift by taking real individuals in their everyday lives as the point of departure. Drawing upon the ethnographic tradition, intense observation of the informants allows the linguistic processes to be reconstructed "from the inside", on the basis of a deep understanding of the informants' language attitudes, sense of identity and symbolic allegiances with languages across generations. However, differently from Gal's study where patterns of language choice are analysed mainly through a sociological framework, this thesis focuses upon a detailed analysis of language use in actual interactions.

Through participant observation a corpus of data was collected where the (socio) linguistic competence of our main speaker in the three languages: Sicilian, Italian and English, is fully displayed in a range of interactions and situations with various participants. A different use of the three languages and different patterns of contact among them in varying situations are the main features of the corpus. It must be noted that "contact" in this thesis refers to the use of more than one language within the same interaction.

The major research objective of this study is to link contextual and linguistic features, in order to show how in Anna's speech changes in language use and contact are related to changes in three distinct situations. The main factor differentiating the situations, in turn, is degree of formality, which is here determined by the relationship between the family, particularly the mother, and the researcher.

For the analysis of the data I have used a quantitative model with linguistic and situational variable groups. The quantitative model was deemed the most appropriate one to highlight the relative frequencies of languages and of contact in the situations. Furthermore, with its rigour and representativeness, it complements the qualitative approach adopted in the fieldwork.

Patterns of language use and contact among the three languages in Anna's speech have been examined taking the clause as the grammatical unit of analysis. Furthermore, language contact is examined at different linguistic levels, distinguishing between contact configurations occurring within the clause ("mixing" and "transference") and above clause level ("switching between clauses" and "switching across turns"). Language use across different participants has also been taken into account, to allow for the analysis of the bilingual conversations which are a feature of mother-children interactions. In the analysis of contact a major difference of this study compared to other research on language shift is the presence of three, rather than two languages. Furthermore, the situation is made more complex by the degree of relatedness between Italian and Sicilian.

The situational variables chosen for the analysis are participants, topic and tone, as they are major factors that differentiate the situations and affect linguistic patterns. It must be noted that, compared to other

studies, for the purposes of my analysis I have redefined the notion of topic. Here it does not refer solely to the subject matter of the talk but also to the link between language and action (cf. ch. 5).

The model of analysis adopted in this thesis allows us to: a) explore the changes that occur from one situation to the other both in linguistic terms and in terms of participants, type of topic and tone; b) examine Anna's use of languages with specific interlocutors, namely, the children and the researcher; and c) investigate patterns of contact among specific languages, to verify any differences between related and unrelated languages.

On the basis of the findings and my own observation I am able to raise some considerations regarding the collocation of the three languages in Anna's speech repertoire and the process of language shift as it is occurring in the household under investigation. While language is the point of departure, the socio-cultural processes that affect the individual are also called upon to interpret the language patterns observed. The broader context of the Sicilian-Australian, Italo-Australian and Australian communities is taken into account, as changes in the speech of our informants are closely connected to changes that have taken place at the social level. Thus, while focussing upon individual language use, the family under investigation is seen as a microcosm which is affected by its socio-cultural context, both the immediate one, that is, the Sicilian-Australian and Italo-Australian communities, and the broader Australian society. In this way the family reflects and at the same time highlights the linguistic processes occurring in the community.

On the more structural side, the findings provide insights into patterns of contact as it occurs between related and unrelated languages and into the frequency of contact configurations at different linguistic levels. Considerations are also raised regarding structural constraints on switching.

A further issue that this thesis deals with concerns the role of the researcher in collecting linguistic data. An established tradition in sociolinguistic research relies on the sociolinguistic interview introduced by Labov as a major tool in data collection. It is believed that a researcher can enter a community, a group or a household for a

short span of time and, by manipulating a few elements in the situation (e.g., the topic), elicit casual or spontaneous speech. In spite of the criticism that this method has raised (cf. ch. 4), this view is still held and the interview still widely used.

In this study the shortcomings of the sociolinguistic interview and other data collection methods which are based on only one contact with the informants are fully exposed. The corpus clearly shows that substantial changes in language patterns occur throughout several meetings with the family, as the intense contact modifies deeply the relationship between the researcher and the family members. The crucial factor in changing language patterns is the trust and familiarity gradually developing among the participants, which in turn allows for the emergence of the linguistic patterns typical of the domestic environment. Therefore, a substantial aspect of this thesis is its contribution to the debate concerning the impact of the researcher's presence and characteristics (e.g., sex, socio-economic status or race) on the linguistic data collected. In this work "degree of familiarity" is identified as the major factor affecting linguistic data.

1.4 Plan of the thesis

This thesis is organised in three major parts and divided into ten chapters.

The first part stands as background to the whole study, presenting some general information on the linguistic situation under investigation and on the research project. Chapter 2 reviews some analytical models which have been useful and important reference points for this study. The focus is on some of the major approaches to the study of language shift and contact both in migration contexts and other bilingual communities. Chapter 3 presents the sociolinguistic background of the informants. Firstly it describes the linguistic situation in Sicily, their home region, both at the time of their migration and in more recent years. It then deals with the Italian and Sicilian speech communities in the Australian context both currently and in the early years of settlement.

The second part of the thesis deals with the methodological aspects of the research. Chapter 4 discusses some general issues with regard to the research question of this thesis and critically reviews some fieldwork methods used in linguistic research. An account is given of the methodology adopted in this study to collect the data, as well as of the fieldwork itself. In Chapter 5 the linguistic model that was developed for the analysis of the data is presented in detail.

The third part is a presentation of the analyses and a discussion of the major findings. Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 examine the major linguistic patterns emerging from the data, relating them to some major contextual features (e.g., interlocutors). At the end of each chapter the findings are summarised and discussed at length. The main results and conclusions are taken up again in the final chapter, where some insights are offered into the two general areas dealt with in this thesis: firstly, the process of language shift as it is occurring in the Italo-Australian context; secondly, the issue of the role of the researcher in fieldwork methodology.

CHAPTER TWO

APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE SHIFT, CONTACT AND VARIATION

This chapter reviews and evaluates some analytical models that have represented useful reference points for my work. The focus is on studies concerned with language shift and language contact in migrant contexts or more generally in bilingual communities.

The first approach discussed is the sociology of language approach, which is associated with the work of Fishman. Some key aspects of his studies on language use in migrant communities are presented, as well as his influential model of language shift. A second area which is reviewed are some of the strands in the vast literature on languages in contact. I have distinguished three major strands and have identified them as the structural, the discourse-functionalist and the situational perspectives. It must be noted, however, that I have drawn such distinctions merely for convenience of presentation, as these strands intertwine in various ways.

With regard to the structural perspective, early studies on contact have looked at structural changes that migrant languages undergo at every linguistic level as a result of the pressure from the host language. More recent research has focussed upon the phenomenon of code switching, that is, the alternation of different languages within discourse, either exploring various structural configurations that code switching can take or attempting to discover at which points in the discourse it can occur. The structural perspective is particularly relevant to my work as my informants' speech displays contact among the three languages: Italian, Sicilian and English, in different degrees and modalities in the range of situations investigated (cf. 1.2).

With regard to the other two perspectives, the discourse-functional perspective attempts to explain the occurrence of code switching within the interaction itself, for instance, by examining the discourse function of the switch. Studies conducted in a socio-anthropological perspective in particular have been important in interpreting code switching also in terms of the social meaning that languages have for their speakers.

In the situational perspective, on the other hand, the focus is on the external factors constraining or simply affecting the use of a particular language and the occurrence of code switching; setting, participants, topic and situation have been identified as the major factors that can explain the selection of a language and code switching.

The work carried out in the above areas by some major scholars is presented and commented upon in this chapter. The focus of the discussion is on those aspects of their work which have been relevant to my research, either because they were embodied in it tout court or with some modifications, or because my thesis sets about exploring the same issues from a different angle.

Besides these two major approaches: the sociology of language and language contact studies, this chapter also briefly reviews a third area, that is, the variationist paradigm associated with Labov's work. Although it is not concerned with language shift as defined here (cf. 1.1), nor does it deal specifically with multilingual or migrant contexts, some aspects of Labov's work are also relevant to my thesis: for instance, his notion of linguistic variation according to the levels of formality as well as his concern for methodological issues involved in data collection and analysis.

2.1 The sociology of language approach

The methodological framework associated with the work of the American sociolinguist Fishman is commonly known as "the sociology of language approach". It is sociological for three main reasons: it is concerned with describing "the generally accepted social organization of language usage within speech community" (Fishman, 1972a: 46); its emphasis lies on a set of given societal norms, which are

supposed to regulate the speaker's use of a particular language in a particular situation; the tools it uses in the investigation are those typical of large-scale social investigations, such as data collected via questionnaires, census data or other self-report instruments.

An important part of Fishman's work is what he calls the "dynamic sociology of language" (Fishman, 1972a: 47), that is, the study of language shift and maintenance in migrant communities. Fishman's work on migrant languages in the United States (Fishman, 1964; Fishman and others, 1966) in this respect was seminal as it was the first formulation of language shift and maintenance as a field of inquiry. Two main aspects of this approach will be discussed here because they are most relevant to our study: firstly, the investigation of extra-linguistic factors having an impact on the shift or maintenance of a language; secondly, Fishman's model of language shift in migrant communities.

One of the major concerns of the sociology of language approach is to explore the socio-economic, cultural and linguistic conditions associated with language shift. In his early writings Fishman (1964) underlined the impact of such factors as the distinction between urban and rural dwellers, the role of industrialisation, the prestige of the language and language loyalty. Another scholar who followed him in this attempt is Kloss (1966), who identifies six major factors which are favourable to maintenance, e.g., religio-societal insulation and pre-immigration experience with language maintenance efforts, among others. One important point made by Kloss concerns the ambivalent effect of some factors which can be clearly maintenance-oriented in one situation, while not necessarily so in a different one. Among such ambivalent factors, Kloss mentions the educational level of migrants, their numerical strength and the cultural and linguistic similarity to the host society (cf. Clyne, 1991a: 86-88, for a discussion of these factors as applied to the Australian context). On the basis of data collected by large scale investigation, other factors such as age, gender, length of residence, settlement patterns, contacts with the homeland, religious and educational background, marriage patterns, language attitudes and government policies, have all been identified as significant factors in explaining shift.

Within the Australian context this framework has been used particularly from the mid-seventies onward, that is, after the 1976 Census, when for the first time a specific question on language use was included. Data from the 1976 and the 1986 Census, as well as from the 1983 Australian Bureau of Statistics are reported and analysed in depth by Clyne (1982; 1991a), yielding some important information about the linguistic situation of migrant communities in the broad Australian context.

The sociology of language approach has undoubtedly been invaluable in establishing this field of inquiry on a systematic and empirical basis and is still recognised as an important starting point (Clyne, 1984: 9). Furthermore, there is certainly a need for working with census data as it allows a general picture to be drawn from large size samples; this is particularly important when the urgent implementation of language policies is needed, as noted by Romaine (1989: 26), as well as in the study of "language ecology" in general (Clyne, 1982: 27).

However, this approach has attracted a certain amount of criticism. With regard to the data collection methodology, the accuracy of self-reported survey data has been repeatedly questioned (Fasold, 1984: 216; Nelde, 1986: 473; Gibbons, 1987: 13; Romaine, 1989: 26). Furthermore, in cases of communities where both a language and a dialect are used, census data generally only yield information with regard to the standard language but not the dialect, hence the picture is incomplete. This is the case for Australian census data with regard to the Italo-Australian community.

In terms of the analysis carried out, one point of criticism concerns the difficulty that such studies must face in identifying the causes of shift purely on the basis of survey data, without any knowledge of the speakers' cultural values (Fasold, 1984: 216). Nelde (1986: 473) maintains that

Census-type investigations can only determine trends, and are often useful if complementary studies are available.

Furthermore, it has been noted that attempted predictions of shift or maintenance on the basis of the factors identified have generally not been successful (Fasold, 1984: 217; Romaine, 1989: 38-45), given that most demographic and socio-cultural factors intertwine differently in different contexts as well as across languages. Therefore, particularly when considered in isolation, some of these factors are poor predictors of language shift and maintenance. This was pointed out by Fishman himself ([1964] 1966: 441) and by Kloss, as mentioned above. Caution about establishing predictive factors for survival rates of languages has also been expressed by Clyne (1991a: 105-109) with regard to the Australian context. However, Clyne does suggest that certain statistical facts about the context he investigates can be considered to be predictive, *as long as* there are no new major intervening factors.

The second key aspect in Fishman's work is his model of shift in migrant communities. It introduces a major distinction between stable and unstable (or transitory) bilingualism. According to Fishman, migrant communities are characterised by unstable bilingualism as a consequence of the failure of the migrants to maintain functional differentiation at a societal level within their linguistic repertoires (Fishman, 1972a: 52). In this explanation Fishman is drawing upon the notion of diglossia first introduced by Ferguson (1959) to refer to the relationship between two or more varieties of the same language used in a speech community in very different functions. The variety which is used for more formal purposes is called the High variety, while the one used for more informal and personal uses is the Low variety.

Fishman expanded Ferguson's notion of diglossia by applying it also to situations where different and unrelated languages are used. Furthermore, the functional differentiation of the two languages becomes Fishman's main criterion for defining diglossia (for a comparison between Fishman's and Ferguson's notion of diglossia, cf. Fasold, 1984: 40-43). Hence migrant communities, characterised by a lack of functional differentiation in language use, are described by Fishman as communities which display a situation of "bilingualism without diglossia" (Fishman, 1971: 83); this situation results in the

rapid disappearance of the home language (in the space of a maximum of three generations).

The cycle of language shift presented by Fishman in several of his works (e.g., 1971: 83; 1989: 184-188) with regard to migrant communities appears to be the following: circumstances of rapid social changes, such as migration, lead to the disruption of traditional patterns and the abandonment of old norms; the language of the host country is learnt by those family members who go to work, who are in contact with the host society and who bring the language back home; children become early bilinguals as a result of their exposure to the language at home and later on at school. The separation among domains (family, work, school, and so on) becomes increasingly blurred as the outside language is used more and more within the home until the home language is substituted completely. It is to be noted that Fishman points out that maintenance of ethnic identity outlives linguistic maintenance (1966: 399).

Fishman's model of language maintenance and shift in migrant communities has been considered inadequate on several grounds. Some object to its postulation of a strict compartmentalisation between different languages or varieties, a situation which is almost impossible to find today, when we live in societies characterised by increasingly open networks, social mobility and more fluid role relationships (Romaine, 1989: 36). Fishman himself acknowledges the difficulty of complete social compartmentalisation; however, he concludes that it is not impossible to be found "as the many instances of stable diglossia in the modern world reveal" (Fishman, 1989: 184). Examples of stable diglossia mentioned by Fishman (1989: 183) include some Arabic speech communities with Classical Arabic and French as High languages and a vernacular Arabic as Low language; or the Philippines, with English and Filipino as High languages and Tagalog as the Low one.

Another point that has been noted is that Fishman's model presents only two extremes of bilingualism, that is, situations either with strict domain separation or with languages used equally in all domains - both relatively rare - but it does not say much about intermediate communities, when the languages are at least partially

differentiated functionally (Romaine, 1989: 46; McConvell, 1991: 145). Furthermore, in predicting language shift whenever there is lack of domain separation, Fishman's model does not take into account the social functions of the languages (McConvell, 1991: 145). In particular, according to this model, all instances of code switching would be considered indicative of, and maybe even conducive to, language shift, thus ignoring other roles (e.g., the expressive or metaphorical role, cf. 2.2.3) that code switching can play in stable bilingual communities.

The model has also been considered somewhat deterministic in that it views language shift in a unidirectional way, without leaving any space for either shifts which could be cyclical phenomena related to the age of individuals or counter trends that could occur in coincidence with particular factors (cf. McConvell, 1991: 147; Romaine, 1989: 47-50).

On the whole, it can be concluded that the main criticism concerns the fact that Fishman's model is seen as a rather rigid and deterministic account of language use in a particular speech community, in that it does not attempt to find a link between social constructs and actual interactions. It is also considered a simplistic model as it tries to show that languages in a bilingual context should fall into a neat pattern of complementary distribution, whilst other studies have shown that language use in bilingual communities is a much more complex and variable state of affairs (Martin-Jones, 1989: 112).

2.2 Language contact studies

2.2.1 Early studies

The second area reviewed in this chapter is language contact studies. When applied to migrant contexts, this area of research focuses upon changes that migrant languages (L1) undergo as a result of the process of "borrowing" items, features or rules from the more prestigious and powerful host language (L2).

While the sociology of language approach proceeds at societal level, in this area of studies use of two or more languages is examined taking actual linguistic features as the point of departure. Although the focus is on the individual speaker, it is recognised that over time the changes brought about from L2 pressure become generalised and may lead to new community norms (cf. Romaine, 1989: 50). The same term "contact" takes on a different meaning: in Fishman's work it refers to the co-existence of various languages within a multilingual or bilingual community; in this approach it indicates contact between the linguistic structures (phonological, morphological, syntactic, and so on) of two different systems within discourse. A further difference with the sociology of language is in the data collected. Language contact studies generally make use of corpora of tape recorded speech, elicited in semi-guided, semi-formal interviews.

The framework of language contact studies was systematised by Weinreich (1953) and Haugen (1956) and has been widely used in many studies that deal with migrant languages. Within the Australian context, some important modifications to the original framework were introduced by Clyne (1967; 1972), who changed Weinreich's fundamental term "interference" (which had behaviourist connotations) to "transference", with a more cognitive view of the bilinguals, to indicate

the process of bringing over any items, features or rules from one language to another, and for the results of this process. (Clyne, 1991a: 160)

Clyne also expanded the study of transference to include levels not yet analysed (e.g., graphemic transference), as well as new aspects (e.g., studies of the perception and acceptability of transference; cf. Clyne, 1982: 109).

Early studies have focussed on the following features of linguistic contact:

a) patterns of transference from one language to the other, at every linguistic level: e.g., lexical, semantic, syntactic, phonological, morphological, and so on;

b) degree of integration, that is, the general process of adaptation of the item borrowed, at different levels. Following Weinreich, a distinction is generally made among phonological, grammatical and lexical integration, according to whether the borrowed item is integrated into the phonology, the grammar or the lexicon of the other language. Furthermore, different degrees of integration are distinguished so that an item can be defined as partially or totally integrated.

Overall a number of similar findings across languages and communities have pointed to some general trends in the changes that migrant languages undergo in comparable circumstances. For instance, it has been noted that, compared to other linguistic levels, lexical transference plays a major role in contact situations. Lexical transfers are particularly common in migrant contexts, since migrants find themselves in a new reality and quickly adopt the new terms. Speech economy has also been suggested as an explanation for such high incidence of lexical transference (Clyne, 1991a: 167).

With regard to the word classes most transferred, it has been shown that, among all lexemes, nouns are generally the ones more easily and frequently transferred, a finding already seen in Haugen's work (1950: 224. See, however, Romaine, 1989: 64, for studies where more verbs than nouns occur). On the whole, content words (that is, nouns, verbs, adjectives) are transferred more frequently than function words (e.g., conjunctions, prepositions).

Lexical transfers have been studied also in their process of integration. It has been noted, for instance, that phonological integration increases with frequency of use (Poplack and Sankoff, 1984). As to morphological integration, several studies have dealt with gender assignment in the case of nouns or of class in the case of verbs (Clyne, 1967; Bettoni, 1981; Poplack, Sankoff and Miller, 1988). Frequency of use of transfers has also been recently explored, in an attempt to establish its effect on the degree of integration into the lexicon (Poplack, Sankoff and Miller, 1988). Hasselmo (1970: 180) had earlier introduced the notion of the "social integration" of transferred stretches, "as a function of the degree of consistency with which they

are used in a given context" , which may or may not have a high degree of correlation with linguistic integration.

Compared to lexical material, bound morphology and syntax are much less likely to be transferred. Therefore a hierarchy of borrowing has been suggested, where lexical items, derivational morphology, inflectional morphology and finally syntax are thus ordered according to greater and lesser ease of borrowing (Romaine, 1989: 63). Instances of grammatical changes resulting from contact in migrant contexts have been identified in Australia. Clyne (1991a: 176-186) explains such changes within a broad framework of structural markedness, whereby more marked items of L1 may be rejected in favour of less marked ones in L2; thus changes would generally occur in the direction of the more unmarked features.

Early language contact studies generally have not specifically focussed on the process of language shift. However, by examining changes in linguistic structure, they have contributed to a better understanding of the stages that the process of shift across generations may go through.

The analysis of the speech of first generation migrants has shown that the lexical and semantic levels are the ones more subject to external pressure, as mentioned above. Differences in phonological transference between first and second generation have also been noted as the language of the host country has become dominant in the second generation (Clyne, 1982: 103). Furthermore, Australian studies which have correlated patterns of transference with demographic and sociological factors have indicated an increase in transfers from English among second generation and childhood bilinguals (that is, people who arrived from Italy very young, approximately at ten years of age) compared to first generation (Bettoni, 1981: 94-102). In the Italian language spoken by second generation Italians, a reduction of Italian grammatical morphology, high incidence of lexical and semantic transfers and the presence of phonic, prosodic, syntactic and pragmatic transference from English, together with frequent switches to English due to lack of competence, have all been interpreted as linguistic features accompanying the process of language shift

(Bettoni, 1985a; 1986b; 1991a). In this case both the quality and quantity of transfers have been used as index of language shift.

In this way early contact studies have offered some important insights into the linguistic processes undergone by migrant languages, especially in the areas of phonology and lexicon. Later studies have expanded on these findings, in particular moving away from an analysis conducted mainly at word level, to operate instead at discourse level. This change has taken place mainly around the notion of "code switching". In early studies, code switching was often treated as yet another level of transference, characterised in quantitative terms as the transference of more than one word (e.g., in Clyne, 1972; Kouzmin, 1972; Bettoni, 1981; where it was called "multiple transference"). However, one important aspect of code switching that was highlighted, for instance, in Haugen's work (1956) was its total lack of integration into L1. Haugen in fact defines code switching as "the alternate use of two languages" (p. 40) without any adaptation to the phonology and morphology of the receiving language.

Drawing upon Haugen's work, the scholar who paved the way for future studies on code switching was Hasselmo (1970), who examined the different ways in which stretches in L2 are inserted into L1. Different kinds of code switching were distinguished according to their configuration: for instance, code switching is "clean" when it involves complete phonological and morphological change, or "ragged", when there is some overlapping on one or both levels; it can also be "marked" by such signals as pauses, inflections in the voice or particular phrases. The occurrence of different configurations will depend on the speaker's proficiency in both languages, as well as such situational factors as the interlocutor, the channel, the setting, and so on. Thus, for the first time, the attention is on the dynamics between the two languages in contact and on a discourse perspective of code switching. Both Hasselmo's typology of switches and discourse perspective were seminal for future work.

Two major areas developed from these early studies on language contact. On the one hand, in recent developments the structural approach has focussed upon the properties of contact, going beyond

the mere description of the phenomenon and searching for the rules underlying it. Thus many studies have concentrated on the grammatical (mainly syntactic) aspects of code switching, and have been concerned primarily with discovering the linguistic constraints that govern it.

The discourse perspective, on the other hand, has proved to be a very fruitful area of study which has developed in the pragmatic and functional direction, considering code switching as "a discourse phenomenon which cannot be handled satisfactorily in terms of the internal structure of sentences" (Romaine, 1989: 111). In the following sections both perspectives are presented in turn.

2.2.2 On code switching: the structural approach

In recent studies of code switching from a structural perspective, some of the major issues which have been raised are the following:

a) the definition of a minimal code switch; b) a typology of switches; and c) the postulation of linguistic constraints on code switching.

2.2.2.1 Identifying a code switch

As mentioned above, early definitions of code switching referred to it as multiple transference (e.g., Clyne, 1972; Bettoni, 1981) or "successive stretches belonging to different languages" (Haugen, 1956: 50), thus trying to keep it separate from lexical transfers, that is, the transference of single lexical items (cf. 2.2.1). More recently, however, the term code switching has been extended also to single words, provided that certain criteria are met.

This is the case for example in Poplack's work, where code switching is defined as "the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent" (Poplack, 1980: 583), which is characterised by "the complete lack of adaptation of patterns from one language to the patterns of the other" (Poplack, 1981: 170). Thus, any item(s) - including single words - in one language, which are not fully integrated phonologically, morphologically or syntactically in the

other language, are considered switches. Alternatively, items which display integration are called "borrowings" (or "loanwords").

However, the distinction between code switching and borrowing on the basis of formal criteria may face many difficulties when it concerns single items, as acknowledged by Poplack (1988: 220). For example, phonological integration is often a matter of degree, so it may be very difficult to establish the status of a word on phonological grounds only (cf. Appel and Muysken, 1987: 172); furthermore, phonological integration may not be of help if, in speaking L2, our bilingual speakers constantly transfer phonological patterns from their L1. Also the morphological and syntactic criteria may become irrelevant, for example, if the forms require no affixation or in case of syntactic similarities between the two languages (Poplack, 1988: 220; Romaine, 1989: 139). It has also been noted that various syntactic categories take on differing degrees of morphological adaptation (for example, the verb is more frequently morphologically integrated than other lexemes; cf. Pfaff, 1979: 298).

These methodological difficulties are caused, at least partly, by the fact that the occurrence of a single lexical element in L2 does not signal a change in language as clearly as longer stretches do. Poplack (1988: 220) herself acknowledges this difficulty, saying that

the smaller the switched constituent, and particularly at the level of the lone lexical item, the more difficult it is to resolve the question of whether we are dealing with a code-switch or a loanword.

Furthermore, the occurrence of longer stretches compared to a single item has different grammatical consequences for the sentence; in particular, syntactic connections have to be built in order to link two stretches, whereas a single item can function more easily in isolation within the sentence. Therefore, the insertion of a single item is different from a switch involving a longer stretch also in that it may require a different degree of linguistic ability from the speaker.

Given these difficulties and the different linguistic status of single words, it may be advisable to return to earlier distinctions and maintain a distinction between single words and code switches,

particularly if we wish to distinguish both conceptually and operationally between alternate and simultaneous uses of the two languages, as recommended by Poplack (1988: 238-239).

2.2.2.2 A typology of switches

An influential typology of switches is the one introduced by Poplack (1980, 1981), who distinguishes among tag, intersentential and intrasentential switching. Tag switching involves the use of a tag (that is, tags, fillers, interjections, idiomatic expressions) in the other language; intersentential switching indicates a switch between sentences or clauses; intrasentential switching indicates switches within the clause.

An important claim made by Poplack (1980) is that bilingual ability correlates with type of switching, as each type requires an increasingly greater control of both languages. A study carried out on a large sample of bilinguals at differing levels of linguistic ability showed that in the speech of non fluent bilinguals, tag and intersentential switching occurred more frequently than intrasentential switching (Poplack, 1980). Poplack explains this result by noting the greater syntactic risk involved in intrasentential switching, which is confidently used only by more fluent bilinguals. She concludes that higher bilingual ability correlates with intrasentential switching. In this way code switching also becomes "a sensitive indicator of bilingual ability" (Poplack, 1980: 581).

Poplack's claims regarding the link between code switching and bilingual ability have raised some criticism: for instance, Gardner-Chloros (1983: 49) maintains that the degree of bilingualism cannot be measured only according to the ability to code switch, but should also be measured independently in each language. Nonetheless, the correlation between code switching ability and level of bilingualism identified in Poplack's data is an important finding, as for the first time it dispelled on empirical grounds the negative impression that bilinguals switch languages because of their lack of linguistic competence (e.g., in Weinreich, [1953] 1963: 73).

2.2.2.3 Constraints on switching

From the Seventies onwards many studies have focussed upon exploring the syntactic properties of code switching, in order to find out at which points in the structure of the sentence switches can occur.

In a first phase of studies, the attention of scholars focussed upon particular grammatical constraints, for instance, in the work by Timm (1975), Pfaff (1979) and Gumperz (1982). Constraints were postulated on switches between pronominal subjects or objects and verbs (Timm, 1975: 477; Gumperz, 1982: 87), finite verbs and their infinitive complements (Timm, 1975: 478), the conjunction and the conjoined sentence (Gumperz, 1982: 88), or between auxiliaries and verbs (Timm, 1975: 478). Although these studies provided a number of important insights into the type of constraints that could be expected, according to Appel and Muysken (1987: 123) they lacked an overall theoretical perspective. Furthermore, many counterexamples were put forth by other studies which refuted the proposed constraints (e.g., Poplack, 1981: 174-175).

In a second phase the attention moved to the issue of universal constraints. Appel and Muysken (1987: 123) point out that these later studies can be grouped around two grammatical and psycholinguistic concepts: linearity and dependence. Some studies, in fact, maintain that switching within a sentence can occur only if the linear order of sentences in both languages is respected. This is the position taken by Poplack (1980, 1981). According to the dependency model, on the other hand, a switch between two elements cannot occur if they are lexically dependent on each other. This is the argument put forth by Di Sciullo, Muysken and Singh (1986), among others. This section will discuss only the linear model, given that it has been very influential and that it is the one more frequently used as a reference point in studies on Italian-dialect switching.

Two main constraints were proposed by Poplack (1980, 1981). The first is the "equivalence constraint", which predicts that code switches will occur at points where the juxtaposition of elements from the two languages does not violate a syntactic rule of either of them. In other words, code switching will occur at those points where the

surface structures of the two languages map onto each other. The second is the "free morpheme constraint", which predicts that a switch may occur between a bound morpheme and a lexical form only provided that the lexical form has been phonologically integrated into the language of the morpheme.

As evidence for the validity of these constraints, Poplack (1983: 600) claimed that virtually neither of them was violated in the large corpus of data collected in the bilingual Puerto Rican community of New York that she investigated: less than 1% of the data for both constraints. Furthermore, she observed that the constraints were respected also by non-balanced bilinguals, who did not show any ungrammatical combinations of the two languages.

However, violations were found by Poplack in a later study conducted in the French Canadian community (1988). As a result, her position on constraints was modified, as she acknowledged that different communities may adopt compromise solutions in order to reconcile two languages with conflicting rules. With regard to the equivalence constraint, in the French Canadian community Poplack detected various strategies (e.g., repetitions, hesitation, intonation, and so on) whereby speakers would deliberately interrupt their speech and switch at points which violated the equivalence constraint. This "flagged" type of code switching - as Poplack called it - differed remarkably from the "smooth" switching used by the Puerto Ricans. As to the free morpheme constraint, violations to it were also found in the Canadian corpus and were explained by Poplack as "the mechanism of momentary borrowing" (Poplack, 1988: 235).

The difference between the two types of code switching: "smooth" switching, that is, a skilled and fluent type of switching, and "flagged" switching, where the switch is introduced by hesitation, pauses or false starts, is explained by Poplack (1988: 232-233) with different attitudes towards bilingualism, and by Poplack and Sankoff (1988) with differences in the status of English in the Puerto Rican and in the Canadian communities. As a result, a difference also exists in the role of switching and in the strategies that each community has developed for itself. While smooth switching is "an integral part of the community linguistic repertoire" (Poplack and Sankoff, 1988:

1176), flagged switching "serves a rhetorical purpose" (p. 1177), as it intends to draw attention to the switch itself. Hence, the first one is constrained and confined to equivalence sites, while the second does not "weave" (p. 1176) the two languages smoothly.

Words of caution concerning claims of universality of constraints have been expressed by many scholars (e.g., Clyne, 1987a; Romaine, 1989: 145). A further point is made by Appel and Muysken (1987: 122), who maintain that a question still to be considered is whether the aim is to establish absolute constraints, as in generative grammar, or whether scholars are aiming to set up quantitative constraints, suggesting statistical trends, as in Labov's variationist theory (cf. 2.3). It has also been suggested that some instances of violations which may be the result of a very high degree of interpenetration between the two languages should be treated as a distinct phenomenon from code switching (Alfonzetti, 1990: 220). However, this may be more the case with closely related languages, such as standard Italian and its dialects.

2.2.3 On code switching: the discourse-functionalist perspective

In this section and under the same label various approaches are summarised which, in spite of some differences, all share a view of code switching as a phenomenon to be studied mainly for its interpersonal function.

While structural approaches are more interested in examining linguistic features that have been transferred from one language to the other or constraints on switching, studies in a discourse-functionalist perspective explore the conversational functions and the semantic value of code switching, and the meaning it has - or creates - for the participants. The departure point here is the speaker, rather than society, as in Fishman's approach, or the language system, as in structural studies.

This approach is closely associated with Gumperz's work. It draws upon different disciplines, mainly anthropology and ethnography. Since the focus is on code switching as it occurs in real interactions, it makes use of natural conversational data collected

through ethnographic techniques, rather than interview or questionnaire data.

One major concern has been the analysis of the discourse or conversational functions of code switching. An influential taxonomy is the one presented by Gumperz (1982: 75-81), who showed that code switching can be used in such functions as introducing a quotation, reiterating or qualifying the message, marking a different degree of distance from the message, and so on. The functions he identified have been confirmed in a number of later studies and across different languages. Code switching has been found to occur also in such functions as translation, paraphrase, emphasis or clarification, among others (cf. McClure, 1981; McClure and McClure, 1988; Gibbons, 1987).

Other studies have focussed upon exploring the semantic value of code switching itself. Once again the point of reference is Gumperz's work. Code switching is seen as a conversational strategy (Gumperz, 1982) that bilinguals have at their disposal and that is shared by members of the same bilingual community. The juxtaposition of the two languages and the value that each language has for both speaker and interlocutor - for instance, in terms of solidarity, common ethnic identity or group membership - is able to convey certain meanings. The act of switching is explained as meaningful in itself, rather than for the propositional content of the sentences. An important notion introduced by Gumperz (1982: 66) is the distinction between what he calls the "we code", generally the minority language associated with in-group and informal activities, and the "they code", the host language, associated with out-group relations.

Research undertaken among migrants from Central American countries in the USA has often followed this approach. Gumperz and Hernández-Chavez (1971) found that Spanish served the solidarity function and English the power function; likewise, Zentella (1981) observed that for the Puerto Rican children that she studied, code switching is "an identity marker of membership" (p. 130); it is important that they should learn it if they wish to be part of their community. McClure (1981) also noted that among her sample of

Mexican children code alternation was used to mark a shift in identity relationships.

As well as a conversational strategy, code switching is also considered to be a "mode of speaking" in certain stable bilingual communities, for instance, among the Puerto Ricans in New York investigated by Poplack (1980; 1981). Its frequency depends upon the perceived norms of the speech situation and the degree of ethnicity of the interlocutor. Through a quantitative model Poplack (1981) demonstrates that switching occurs more frequently in informal speech and with group members as interlocutors, thus confirming Gumperz's hypotheses. Furthermore, variation occurs also in the configurations of the switch, depending upon the interlocutor: with a non-group member noun switches are the most frequent type, whereas intersentential or intrasentential switches (cf. 2.2.2.2) are more frequent with an in-group member. It seems clear that in this stable bilingual community, code switching acts as a marker of ethnic identity, which is deemed by the speakers to be appropriate to their dual identity (Poplack, 1988: 223).

A somewhat different position is taken by those studies following a more "interactional" approach, where the meaning of code switching is not considered as closely associated with a particular language, but as the result of a process of negotiation between the participants. The dichotomy between the "we code" and the "they code" is criticised (e.g., by Auer, 1984b) and it is maintained instead that instances of code switching need to be interpreted and explained locally, that is, within the context of each conversational exchange. This approach is typical of the work by Auer (1984a; 1984b), Auer and di Luzio (1983a; 1983b; 1984), Scotton (1983; 1988) and Heller (1988b), among others.

Studies on code switching conducted in the discourse-functional perspective have attracted some criticism: for example, they have been accused of subjectivity in the interpretation of the data and of vagueness and fuzziness for the categories used (Romaine, 1989: 161); the lack of quantifiable empirical data, necessary to replicate the studies, has also been strongly criticised (Gibbons, 1987: 89).

However, it is generally recognised that these studies have yielded very valuable insights into bilingual communities.

Firstly, they have explored an important aspect of languages, that is, the meaning they have for their speakers, particularly in a situation where languages are in a threatened or weak position, as generally happens in a migration context. It has been shown that languages may be associated with different sets of social values and that use of a certain language can signal such values as solidarity, common ethnic identity or group membership. Nonetheless such association needs to be considered in a dynamic perspective as it is not fixed but can change as conditions change. In this way this approach looks at bilinguals as individuals who actively use their languages, thus

contributing to the definition and redefinition of the symbolic value of the languages [...] in the context of daily interaction, instead of passively observing idealized norms of language allocation (Martin-Jones, 1989: 114),

as postulated by the sociological approach.

Secondly, these studies have shown that code switching is a feature typical of bilingual communities, where it frequently occurs as a communicative norm or a mode of speaking, with its own social rules: for example, it occurs more frequently and easily in informal situations and with in-group members. It has also been noted that it is frequently stigmatised by the speakers themselves, probably as a result of "underlying ideologies of linguistic 'purity'" (Milroy, 1987b: 186). Therefore it is a kind of censored behaviour to be used only with well known interlocutors. Furthermore, different types of code switching can be revealing of different statuses of the two languages in the bilingual community, as shown by Poplack (1988) with regard to English among Puerto Ricans and French Canadians.

Thirdly, and more importantly from a perspective of language shift, these studies prove that code switching is not necessarily a sign of shift, as it can occur in stable bilingual communities where it is used

for particular discourse functions, or to express particular meanings or values.

2.2.4 On code switching: the situational perspective

Closely linked to the ethnographic tradition is also the area of studies concerned with investigating the situational factors that influence the choice of a certain language and the switch from one language to the other. As well as dealing with code switching in bilingual communities, these studies have also dealt with style shifting, that is, variation within the same language according to situational changes.

Although studies in the situational perspective try to allocate language use on the basis of contextual factors similar to those identified in the sociological approach, some major differences can be found. Firstly, the situational perspective explores the language behaviour of individuals examining actual interactions within a particular situational context. Secondly, the fieldwork methodologies and the kind of data used are different, as situational studies follow ethnographic methods and work mainly with conversational data rather than with large social constructs and questionnaire or survey data (however questionnaire data are sometimes used to complement observation, e.g., in Gal, 1979).

A seminal notion in this area of study is the distinction drawn by Blom and Gumperz (1972) between "situational" and "metaphorical" switching: situational code switching is linked to changes in the situational context, while metaphorical switching occurs as a symbol of the relationship between the participants, regardless of the situation. The discourse-functionalist perspective discussed above focuses upon metaphorical switching, while the approach presented in this section is more concerned with situational switching.

Following the models firstly set up by Ervin-Tripp (1964) and Hymes (1974), setting, topic and participants have been identified as the major factors which can explain - or "predict" (see below) - both code choice or code switching and stylistic variation. A fourth major

factor frequently mentioned is situation (e.g., Rubin, 1968; Sankoff, 1972; Blom and Gumperz, 1972).

The important role of setting in language variation has been noted in several studies (Rubin, 1968; Blom and Gumperz, 1972; Hymes, 1972, 1974; Sankoff, 1972; Gal, 1979). The term "setting" generally refers to the place of the interaction, and is usually a well identified social place. In a well known study on bilingualism in Paraguay, Rubin (1968) found that the location was the main variable in predicting language usage. For Blom and Gumperz (1972: 422) setting also indicates distinct places. They distinguish private settings such as home, from public ones, like a restaurant or a workshop. Likewise, for Gal (1979: 124) setting is the place where the interaction occurs, and, similarly, Sankoff (1972: 35) agrees that setting is one of the major features in the communicative situation. However, the term has also been used in different meanings: for instance, Hymes (1972: 60) uses it in a broader sense to refer to all physical circumstances of the speech act (both time and place), and distinguishes setting as a "physical" setting from "scene" as a psychological one. As a result of these differences, Fasold (1984: 202) notes that it is difficult to compare studies and assess the role of this factor in definite terms.

The factor "situation" is often defined in relation to the setting. Blom and Gumperz (1972: 422), for example, clearly distinguish the setting as defined above from "social situations", that is, activities characterised by particular participants in a particular setting and during a particular time. For Sankoff (1972: 44), the situation can be formal or informal and is defined in terms of both the setting (that is, the place), and what she calls "ends" or "reasons" for the speech event: for example, the same setting - e.g., a church hall - can be used in different events, a bingo game or a meeting of the local council. Rubin (1968) also talks of the degree of formality of the interaction as one aspect of the situation. She defines formality as "a limited set of expected behaviour" and informality as "the normal range of permitted behaviours within a group" (p. 522). In her study, the degree of formality is found to be the second most important variable in the choice of language.

With regard to topic, it has also been noted that change of topic can trigger code switching or style shift. Furthermore, certain topics seem to be more closely associated with certain languages or language varieties. For example, in the course of the interview designed to elicit a particular type of data, Labov used a particular question regarding death to elicit style shift; Blom and Gumperz (1972) demonstrated that for a particular group of speakers in Hemnesberget (Norway), that is, young University students, change of topic co-occurred with language shift, as topics which indicated the speakers' social status as urban dwellers and as intellectuals caused a shift from dialect towards standard Norwegian. However, change of topic did not cause any style shift among those speakers who were associated more closely with the village and its local values, as their mutual relationship and identity as villagers required constant use of dialect, irrespective of the topic dealt with. In this case, then, topic was overridden by interlocutors' identity as the determining factor in language choice. Likewise, Huerta-Macias (1981: 158) underlines the importance of topic in causing code switching, but considers it a factor which is overridden by the influence of interlocutors.

With regard to participants, it has been noted that a switch to a different language can occur in conjunction with a change of interlocutor as a result of the social characteristics associated with him/her: e.g., different age, social status, role relationship, language competence, and so on.

Within studies of style shifting, the interlocutor's effect has been considered of primary importance and a factor often overriding topic and setting, as noted above. This position is maintained also by Milroy, and by Rickford and McNair-Knox (see the discussion of Bell's notion of "audience design" in Milroy, 1987b: 178-183, and in Rickford and McNair-Knox, in press).

Within studies of code switching, the interlocutor's identity was found by Sankoff (1972) to be of primary importance against other factors such as setting or topic. Other studies which show the prominent role of participants in code switching are McClure (1981), Gumperz (1982) and McClure and McClure (1988).

A major study showing the important role of participants in code choice is Gal's research in Oberwart (1979), one of the few studies in an ethnographic perspective specifically focussing upon the issue of language shift. Gal investigated a bilingual community in eastern Austria where, after hundreds of years of Hungarian-German bilingualism, German is starting to replace Hungarian. Although Gal's study does not deal with a context of migration, nonetheless for a number of reasons it is an important model for any study exploring language shift. Firstly, it combines different approaches: while the investigation is conducted in the ethnographic mode, which required her living in the village for a year as a participant observer, different methods are used to collect linguistic data, that is, questionnaires and interviews, as well as participant observation. Gal also adapts the concept of "social network" to analyse patterns of language use and makes use of the quantitative and variationist paradigm (cf. 2.3).

Gal analysed patterns of language choice made by different groups of speakers with a range of interlocutors of different ages and statuses. She concluded that such variables as speaker's age and network, and, to a minor extent, social status and sex, allowed her to predict the choice between German and Hungarian. Other situational factors (e.g., setting or topic) were found to be irrelevant. According to Gal, the different choice of German or Hungarian reflects the social contrast between the traditional peasant, associated with Hungarian, and the modern urban worker, associated with German.

On the basis of both observation and interviews, Gal constructed an implicational scale which clearly displays the intergenerational shift taking place in the village: older people use Hungarian more and with more interlocutors; younger people, on the other hand, use more German, while Hungarian is reserved by them for fewer and specific interlocutors only. The younger generation has accepted the higher prestige of German brought about by the better opportunities offered by this language, and tries to dissociate itself from the stigmatised peasant identity associated with Hungarian.

Gal concludes that language shift is caused by the social changes (that is, urbanisation and industrialisation) occurring in the community, not, however, as a direct process of cause and effect, but

through the changes in the speakers' social networks and the new social meanings embodied in the two languages that social changes have brought about.

Gal's work draws upon both the situational and the discourse-functional approaches, as she also tries to take into account the social meaning of code switching. However it must be said that her account of both code switching (Hungarian/German) and style shifting (between standard Hungarian or German and their local varieties) in discourse is rather limited and based on a very small amount of conversational data. Therefore, overall her study falls more within the situational perspective.

To conclude this section, it can be said with Romaine (1989: 159) that the main difference between studies of code switching in a discourse-functional perspective and in a situational perspective lies in the role attributed to the speaker. In the discourse approach speakers play an active role as they choose the perspective and social framework in which their discourse is to be situated. In the situational approach, on the other hand, language choice and code switching are "imposed" upon speakers by certain situational factors. The first approach is mainly interpretive, while the second attempts to be predictive and is therefore open to some extent to the same kind of criticism made with regard to Fishman's approach (cf. 2.1).

Against these accusations of determinism, it must be said, however, that some of these models try to leave scope for individual variation. This is the case for example in Sankoff (1972: 41), who specifically rejects a predictive approach. In her model of "situation-defining variables" she only attempts to specify conditions for "appropriate language use", recognising at the same time the role of individual speech strategies (or "marking variables") which can modify the situation. Likewise, Rickford and McNair-Knox (in press) recognise that style is context-specific and a strategy, and that the intersecting effects of setting, scene and other factors do not allow the prediction of the choice of style or style shifting, but only some valid expectations about it. Similarly, Gal (1979) does recognise the importance of participants' identity for predicting overall language

choice, but still suggests that it is impossible to predict the occurrence of German/Hungarian code switching within a conversation (p. 99).

2.3 The variationist paradigm

A third area of studies that has been a point of reference for my thesis is the work on linguistic variation pioneered by Labov. In this section I will briefly present those aspects of his work that are relevant to my thesis.

The first aspect is Labov's use of different linguistic contexts (that is, tasks) to explore the sociolinguistic variables. In his New York study speech collected in an interview situation ("careful speech") and outside the boundaries of the interview ("casual speech"), was compared with speech elicited by three reading tasks: reading a passage, a word list and some minimal pairs. In this way a range of "styles" was obtained in the five different contexts (cf. Labov, [1972b] 1985: 79).

According to Labov, the five styles could be ordered along a scale of formality according to the amount of attention paid to speech. Informal style, when the least attention is paid to speech, is found in casual speech; the most formal style is found at the other extreme of the continuum, that is, the reading of minimal pairs. Labov made use of this continuum in his description of intraspeaker phonological variation.

This method of eliciting style shifting has been criticised on two main accounts. Firstly, Milroy (1987b: 173-178) discusses at length the problem of regarding speech and reading on the same style continuum as they are different types of behaviour. Milroy (1987b: 179-182) also cites the importance of taking into account the identity of the addressee as an important factor in order to explain variation.

I have incorporated the notion of linguistic variation connected to different contexts in my work, where three different sets of data, at different levels of formality, are compared. In my study, however, variation is not elicited by tests set up by the researcher, but arises throughout the long fieldwork. Furthermore, variation is not so much linked to attention paid to speech as to other factors, such as

changes in the relationship among participants (cf. ch. 4). Finally, my linguistic analysis does not deal with the phonological level, but with use of different languages.

Two other aspects in Labov's work are relevant to this thesis: a) the quantitative framework used in the analysis of the data, which allows the relative frequencies of the variables in different contexts to be shown; b) the particular attention paid to the role of the researcher and her relationship with the informants. However, in my case the sociolinguistic interview used by Labov was rejected as a fieldwork method as it would not have elicited the kind of data needed. This issue is discussed at length in the chapter on the methodology (cf. ch. 4).

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter some major approaches to the study of language shift and contact have been presented and evaluated, focussing upon the insights that they have provided to the study of language in migrant contexts. The studies conducted in these different approaches represented the broad theoretical background against which my study would be placed.

However, before deciding upon the general framework of my thesis, an analysis was needed of the community that I was about to investigate. A sound knowledge of the community where the researcher is going to operate is an important prerequisite in any linguistic project, as many important decisions will depend upon it: e.g., choice of research question, sampling and type of fieldwork. Therefore in the next chapter a sociolinguistic profile of the informants and of the community is presented. The linguistic situation of the Italian migrants is firstly presented in their home country and then in the host country, outlining the linguistic changes brought about by the process of migration.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LANGUAGE SITUATION

The focus of this chapter is a detailed presentation of the sociolinguistic background of our informants.

The first part deals with Sicily and the language situation of our informants before migration; it also discusses the linguistic changes that have taken place in Sicily in more recent years, as they assist in analysing the speech community investigated. Throughout this section, the focus is on the two main languages of the Sicilian speech repertoire - the Sicilian dialect and Italian - their structural differences, their demographic and functional distribution, their evolving patterns of contact and the speakers' attitudes towards them.

The second part deals with Australia and the language situation of our informants after migration. As our research has taken place mainly within the domestic environment, this section focuses on the Italo-Australian community and does not consider other Australian domains in which the informants may find themselves. The community is presented in two main aspects: as a social structure and as a speech community.

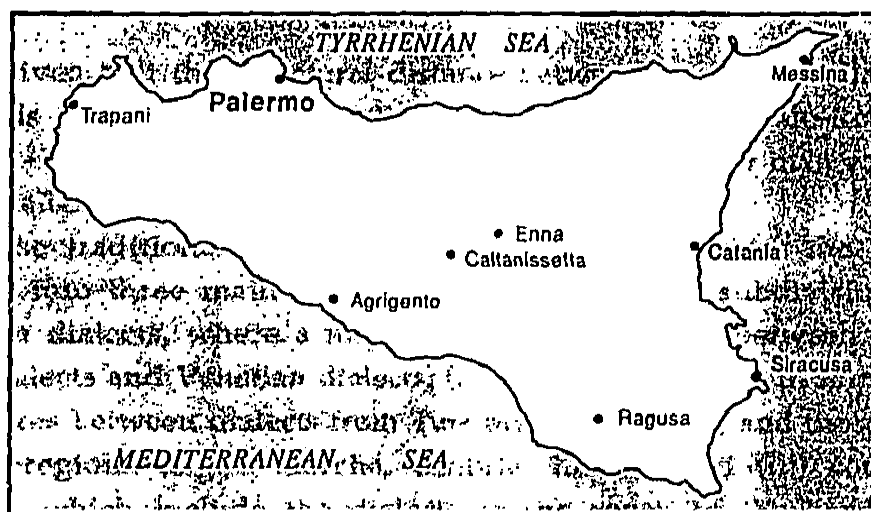
3.1 The linguistic situation in Sicily

Sicily is one of the twenty regions of Italy. It is the largest island in the Mediterranean sea and is situated off the south-western coast of the Italian peninsula. The island has over 5 million inhabitants; it is densely populated along the coast, and less so inland (Ministero Affari Esteri, 1987: 458-461).

Sicily is divided into nine provinces and the nine provincial capitals are also the major towns/cities of the island. The two major

cities are Palermo and Catania, with over 700,000 inhabitants and almost 400,000 respectively; the third largest town is Messina, with over 250,000 inhabitants (cf. Map 3.1).

Map 3.1: Sicily with its nine provincial capitals
(surrounding islands not included)



The linguistic repertoire of the Sicilian community includes two main sets of language varieties - the Sicilian varieties and the Italian varieties. There is also a minority language, Albanian, dating back to the XV and XVI centuries, when groups of Albanians fleeing the Turkish invasions took shelter in Italy. Albanian is still spoken in a number of communities in other southern Italian regions (e.g., Campania, Abruzzi, Basilicata, Calabria and Apulia). In Sicily some Albanian speaking groups can be found in a number of villages (e.g., Santa Cristina di Gela, Contessa Entellina and Piana degli Albanesi; cf. De Mauro and Lodi, 1979: 45-46). Since my research only involves Sicilian and Italian, Albanian will not be dealt with.

The Italian and dialect varieties constitute a continuum which has local dialect at one extreme and standard Italian at the other. In the following sections, I will deal first with the dialect and Italian as they are at the poles of the continuum. Then I will present the complex situation of bilingualism existing in Sicily, and analyse the distribution of the two languages in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

Finally, I will discuss the two main trends that can be identified as resulting from the contact between the languages: the gradual "italianisation" of the Sicilian dialects on the one hand, and the "dialectalisation" of Italian on the other.

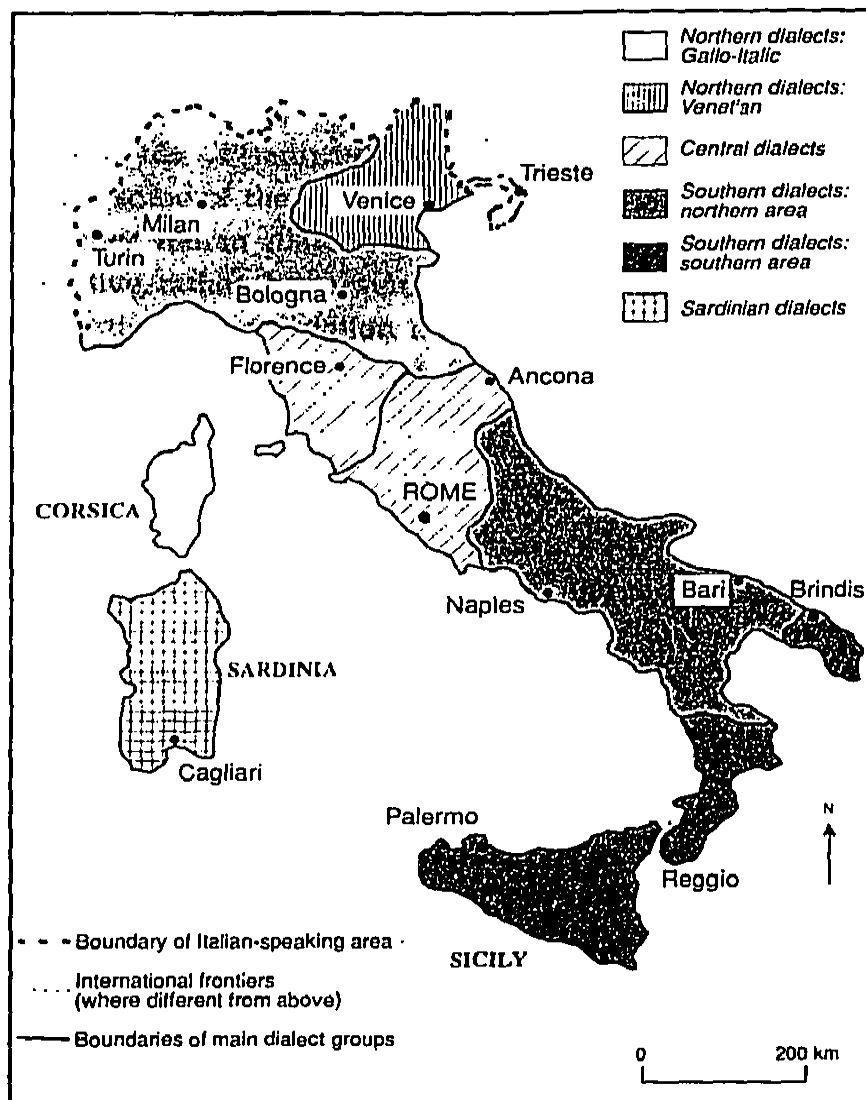
3.1.1 The Sicilian dialects

Given that the structural distance between standard Italian and dialect is fairly large, the Sicilian dialects - like most Italo-Romance dialects - are considered separate language systems rather than varieties of the Italian language.

The traditional classification (see Map 3.2) divides the Italian dialects into three main large groups, with further subdivisions: (i) northern dialects, where a major distinction is made between Gallo-Italic dialects and Venetian dialects; (ii) central dialects, with important differences between dialects from Tuscany and Corsica, and those from nearby regions (e.g., Marche, Umbria, Lazio); and (iii) southern dialects, which include the dialects to the south of the borderline Ancona-Rome. Sardinian dialects are classified separately, although they share some features with the southern dialects. Southern dialects are further divided up between a northern and a southern area with its borderline dividing Apulia and Calabria in two parts. The Sicilian dialects are thus included in the southern group together with the dialects from southern Calabria and southern Apulia (cf. Pellegrini, 1977; Sobrero, 1978: 34-49).

Like the other dialects of this southern group, the Sicilian dialects were isolated in the centuries which were crucial for the formation of dialects from Latin as a result of their geographical position (that is, Sicily is an island, the other two areas are peninsulas). Furthermore, these areas have been occupied by several populations, and a wide gap has always existed between the ruling classes and the mass of the population (cf. Sobrero, 1978: 71). Therefore, geographical, historical and political reasons explain the linguistic peculiarities of this dialectal group, and in particular some of its archaic features, such as the vowel system.

Map 3.2: The main dialect groups of Italy
(based on Pellegrini, 1977)



In Sicily historical events have had a strong impact on the linguistic situation: given its position in the middle of the Mediterranean sea, the island was the site of a long series of invasions which followed the important Greek colonisation and the Roman occupation. Sobrero (1978: 72) remarks that in Sicily the ruling classes were always foreign and that the local elites always tried to adjust to

the language and culture of the invaders. Thus the Sicilian dialects are made up of many different substrata dating back to both the pre- and post-Roman eras. For example, a typical Sicilian feature, namely the presence of retroflex [d], [r], and [l], and of retroflex [t] and [d] in the consonant clusters -tr-, -dr- and -str-, is attributed to the pre-Roman Mediterranean substrata, as reported by Sobrero (1978: 47; cf. also Piccitto, 1959: 185, Pisani, 1974: 326, and Ruffino, 1978: 24). On the other hand, some of the features that characterise the Sicilian dialects vis-à-vis other Italian dialects are dated to the Roman period: for instance, a five, rather than seven, vowel system, that is, [i], [ɛ], [a], [ɔ], [u]; the distinct pronunciation of all vowel endings; the infinitive ending -ri; the diphthong [au] (cf. Ruffino, 1978: 30-31). However, in spite of the presence of these archaic traits, for many other aspects the Sicilian dialects are considered to be the southern dialects furthest away from Latin, as a result of the influences that continued to arrive in the island over several centuries (Ruffino, 1978: 42-47).

Some of the grammatical features of the Sicilian dialects and of standard Italian are listed below, in order to show how they represent different linguistic systems. The description of the Sicilian dialects is largely based on Rohlfs (1968), Galante (1969) and Pitrè (1979), while we draw on Dardano and Trifone (1983) for describing standard Italian.

With regard to nouns (Table 3.1), Sicilian has three classes of nouns, comprising both masculine and feminine nouns: first class nouns end in -a (plural in -i); second class in -u (plural in -i, -a, -ura and -u); third class in -i (plural -i). Standard Italian has also three basic classes of nouns, but the endings are different: first class nouns end in -a (plural in -i if masculine, -e if feminine); second class in -o (plural in -i); third class in -e (plural -i).

Table 3.1: Nouns in Sicilian and in Italian

	SICILIAN		ITALIAN	
First class	Sing	Pl	Sing	Pl
	-à	-i	-a	-i/-e
Masculine:	pueta	pueti	poeta	poeti
Feminine:	cannila	cannili	candela	candele

Second class	Sing	Pl	Sing	Pl
	-u	-i/-a/-ura/-u	-o	-i
Masculine:	libbru	libbri/libbra	libro	libri
	tempu	tempura	tempo	tempi
Feminine:	manu	manu	mano	mani
Third class	Sing	Pl	Sing	Pl
	-i	-i	-e	-i
Masculine:	patri	patri	padre	padri
Feminine:	matri	matri	madre	madri

As for adjectives (Table 3.2), two classes exist in Sicilian: the first ends in -u and -a in the singular, -i in the plural; the second ends in -i both in the singular and in the plural. In Italian, the first class of adjectives ends in -o for masculine and -a for feminine in the singular; -i and -e for the plural; the second class ends in -e in the singular, and -i in the plural.

Table 3.2: Adjectives in Sicilian and in Italian

	SICILIAN		ITALIAN	
First class	Sing	Pl	Sing	Pl
	-u	-i	-o	-i
	-a	-i	-a	-e
Masculine:	tintu	tinti	cattivo	cattivi
Feminine:	tinta	tinti	cattiva	cattive
Second class	Sing	Pl	Sing	Pl
	-i	-i	-e	-i
Mascul/Femin:	duci	duci	dolce	dolci

As for articles (Table 3.3), the Sicilian definite article is {lu} for masculine and {la} for feminine singular, with the reduced forms {u} and {a}, and {li} for both plurals, with the reduced form {i}. Furthermore, the definite article does not merge with the prepositions, as it does in Italian: for instance, Sicilian *di lu* ('of the') compared to Italian *dello*. The indefinite article is {un} for the masculine, with {nu} and {n} as reduced forms, and {una} for the feminine, with {na} or {n} as reduced forms. The Italian definite article system is more complex, as the different forms have several allomorphs according to their phonological position. The indefinite article has three forms, {un}, {uno} and {una}.

Table 3.3: The article system in Sicilian and in Italian

	SICILIAN		ITALIAN	
Definite	Sing	Pl	Sing	Pl
Masculine:	lu/u	li/i	il/lo/l	i/gli
Feminine:	la/a		la/l	le
Indefinite				
Masculine:	un/nu/n		un/uno	
Feminine:	una/na/n		una/un	

As for the verbal system, the Sicilian dialects have a reduced tense and mood system compared to Italian: for instance, they do not have the Romance future tense, which is generally realised by a periphrasis, nor the conditional mood. Of the subjunctive mood, the only form left is the imperfect, which is used with the value of the conditional. Two conjugations exist in the Sicilian dialects, with endings in *-ari* and *-iri*, as compared to the three Italian conjugations ending in *-are*, *-ere* and *-ire*.

Even from these few examples it is clear that, in contrast to Italian, Sicilian dialects represent a strong morphemic reduction in both the nominal and verbal areas.

The Sicilian dialects also display some of the features that characterise southern dialects: the so-called *betacismo*, that is, the substitution of Latin [v] with [b] after consonant or between vowels; the affrication of fricatives after nasals or liquids (e.g., *-ns-* > *-ndz-*); the assimilation of the consonant clusters *-nd-* and *-mb-* into *-nn-* and *-mm-*.

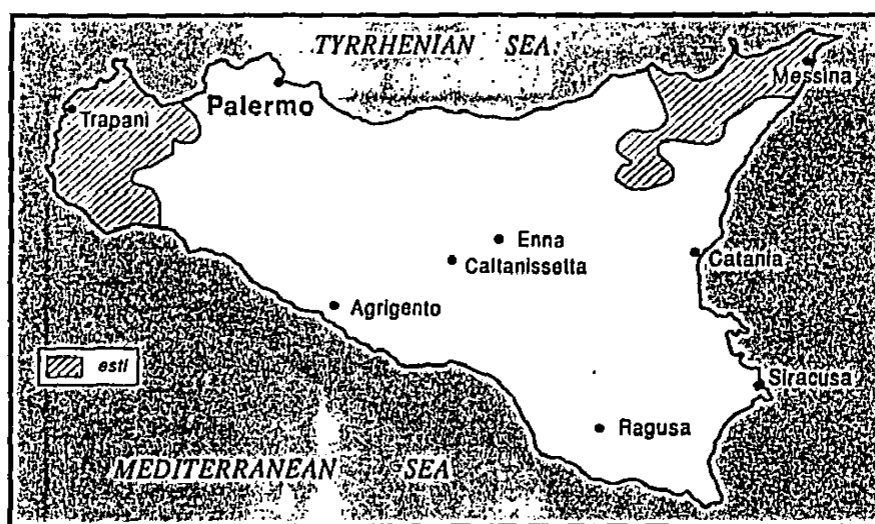
Dialects in Sicily - as the use of the plural already suggests - are not uniform: although they share many features and are generally mutually intelligible, a great variation exists at the phonetic, prosodic, morphological and lexical level given that different areas have been affected differently by the linguistic changes brought in by the new occupants. In general the dialects from the central part of the island present more archaic features than the rest (Ruffino, 1984: 170).

In my research, the informants speak a dialect from the north-eastern part of the island (in the province of Messina, see Map 3.1), an area which is considered linguistically rather uniform as it is marked

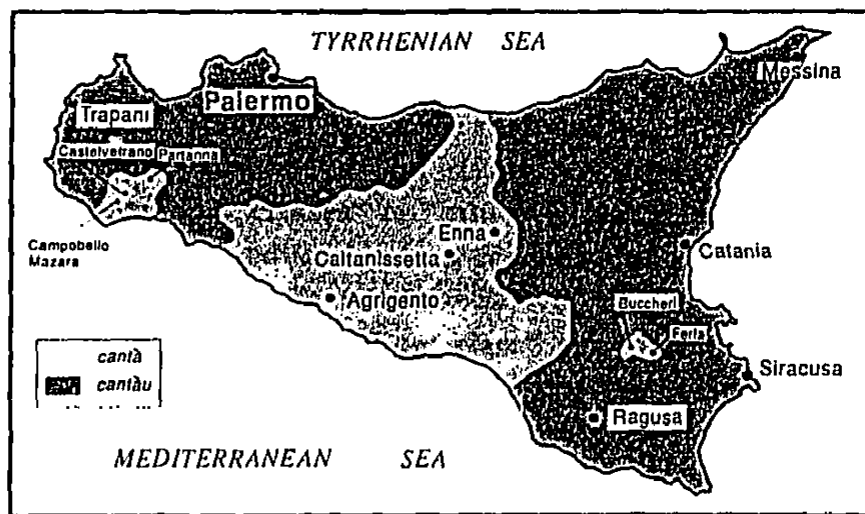
by a number of important isoglosses at phonetic, morphosyntactic and lexical levels (cf. Ruffino, 1984: 167). The researcher, on the other hand, speaks a dialect from the south-west of Sicily (the area of Agrigento on Map 3.1).

Some of the differences between these two dialects are the following: at the phonetic level, the sound [r] followed by consonant is assimilated to the following sound in the informants' dialect, while it is realised as [r] in the researcher's. At the morphological level, the third person singular of the verb 'to be' is the more conservative form *esti* in the informants' speech, *è* in the researcher's (cf. Map 3.3); the past tense is realised with the ending -à by the researcher and -àu by the informants (cf. Map 3.4). At the lexical level, the informants use the verb *annari* instead of *iri* ('to go'); *macari* instead of *videmma* in the sense of *anche* ('also'; cf. Map 3.5); they alternate between *carusu* and *picciriddu* for *ragazzo* ('boy'), while the researcher uses exclusively *picciriddu* (a typical isogloss from the western side of the island). All these features emerge from our data and are also supported in the literature (cf. Ruffino, 1978 and 1984).

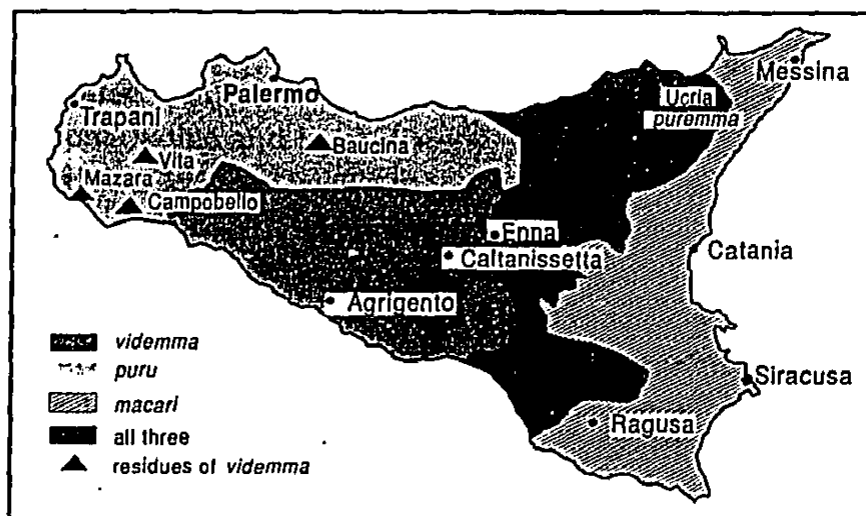
Map 3.3: Third person singular of the verb 'to be':
esti and *è* (based on Ruffino, 1984, map 27)



Map 3.4: Third person singular of the simple past of the verb 'to sing': *cantà* and *cantàu*
(based on Ruffino, 1984, map 12)



Map 3.5: Variants of the word 'also' (based on Ruffino, 1984, map 21)



3.1.2 Italian

As mentioned above (3.1), the Italian and dialect varieties constitute a continuum. Standard Italian lies at the extreme end of the Italian sub continuum, further away from the dialect than any other variety of Italian. In recent years its definition has been at the centre of a debate, given that even educated speakers of the higher socio-economic classes display recognisable regional features at least on the phonological and prosodic levels. (For the purpose of our study, "higher socio-economic classes" or "middle class" refer to people with higher levels of formal education and concentrated in the professional and managerial occupation fields, as well as their partners and dependent family members. "Low class" or "lower socio-economic classes" refer to people with low levels of formal education and concentrated in manual and trades occupations, as well as their partners and dependent family members). Thus, some linguists (e.g., Berruto, 1989b: 9) prefer to call standard only the literary language based on Florentine, while others (e.g., Sabatini, 1985) include as standard also a more formal oral variety.

In the rest of the Italian sub continuum, a high degree of internal variation has developed recently, since for the first time in many centuries Italian has become a language spoken by millions of people (cf. 3.1.3). One of the main concerns of Italian linguists has been to identify and label the different varieties, following the seminal work by Pellegrini (1960), the first one to distinguish four major varieties in the Italian-dialect continuum: standard (or literary) Italian, regional Italian, regional koiné and local dialect. By regional koiné or dialectal koiné Pellegrini ([1960] 1975: 12) refers to a regional variety of dialect, with common features throughout the region. While geographical and social variables are generally recognised as the main dimensions of variation, the borderlines of each variety remain controversial. Berruto (1987: 13-42) gives a comprehensive overview of the main studies and presents about ten different models which attempt a classification of the Italian speech repertoire. The difficulties involved in the task are undeniable, given the strong affinity of the varieties along the continuum and the many overlapping linguistic features.

Furthermore, in many cases attempts are made to include into a single model not only geographical and social variation, but also "diatopical" (that is, situational) and "diamesic" (that is, relating to speaking versus writing) variation, thus making the task even more arduous. An example is given in Figure 3.1, which Zuanelli Sonino (1989b: 95) represents the Italian-dialect situation according to five parameters: functional-stylistic, linguistic, geo-demographic, social and neutral.

Figure 3.1: Synoptic diagram of definitions of Italian-dialect situation (Zuanelli Sonino, 1989b: 95)

	functional	linguistic	geo-demographic (contact)	social	neutral
STYLE	<i>written</i> literary language literary Italian fiorentino illustre learned Italian	standard Italian diasystem common Italian common language			
	oral formal spoken Italian	regional Italian	regional Italian (spoken and written)	<i>written</i> ↓	<i>written</i> ↓
	informal-colloquial or colloquial		popular regional Italian (spoken- written) Italian-dialect (spoken)	popular (unitarian) Italian ↓	average Italian ↓
			regional koine (spoken)	<i>spoken</i>	<i>spoken</i>
patois/local speech (spoken)		local dialect (spoken)		dialect (spoken)	
					PRESTIGE

However, it is true to say that the lack of empirical studies and large corpora of data as a base for these classifications of the Italian repertoire often make discussions over labels sound rather arbitrary.

Given that Sicily is an area generally characterised by a strong regional form of Italian, and that my data do not include any standard Italian, in my presentation only two main varieties of the Italian repertoire will be distinguished: Sicilian Italian and popular Sicilian Italian, the former distinguishing itself mainly geographically, as the label suggests, the latter mainly along the social dimension. Although rigorous quantitative and qualitative studies of each variety are not available, nonetheless enough has been written on the traits that distinguish geographical from social variation, to allow us to describe these two varieties.

Since both these varieties derive their existence from the dialect substrata, I will first deal with the general situation of Italian-Sicilian contact, and then describe the Italian varieties in more detail.

3.1.3 Dialect and Italian bilingualism

In Sicily, as in the rest of Italy, a great deal of bilingualism is to be found as a result of the spread of Italian which has taken place particularly after World War II. For many centuries Italian (based on the Florentine dialect) was known only to a very narrow elite and used mainly in literary works, while the vast majority of the population only spoke the local dialect. According to De Mauro (1963), at the time of the unification of the country in 1860, only 2.5% of the population knew Italian, however Castellani (1982) has placed the figure closer to 10%. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century Italian has spread more and more into everyday communicative situations and through the dialectophone strata of the population, as a consequence of several factors. Among the factors listed in De Mauro (1963: 49-113), the following are largely applicable to the Sicilian situation: the process of urbanisation and the spread of schooling; the influence of the media; migration, which promoted among other things the need for literacy, for instance, in order to keep in touch with relatives. On the negative side, another factor which encouraged the

spread of Italian was the censorious and repressive attitude towards dialects held by the education system, particularly during the Fascist era. This attitude has led the subordinate classes to a deeply-rooted conviction that the dialects are inferior to Italian and an obstacle to its acquisition.

3.1.3.1 Demographic distribution

The diffusion of Italian, however, has not only increased bilingualism but has also brought about a shift away from the dialect. In 1951 more than 60% of the population still used the dialect in most circumstances (De Mauro, 1963: 116). In the following decades a series of national surveys by Doxa, a public opinion poll research institute, in 1974, 1982 and 1988, and by ISTAT (Istituto Centrale di Statistica), the National Bureau of Statistics, in 1987-1988, recorded the gradual changes that were occurring in the use of Italian and dialects throughout the country. Some of their most meaningful findings, drawing upon the analysis and comments provided by some Italian linguists (Coveri, 1978, 1986; Vignuzzi, 1988; Lo Piparo, 1990b; Russo, 1991), are presented below. Unfortunately, since the surveys used different questions and sometimes also different types of samples, a straight comparison is not possible.

The Doxa surveys (Table 3.4) included questions on language use inside and outside the home environment (that is, with friends and work mates). From one survey to the other, a decrease in use of dialect within the family can be noted: in 1974 more than half of the population (51.30%) used the dialect with all family members, 46.70% in 1982 and 39.60% in 1988. The 1974 survey also included a specific question on language use in the family and with particular interlocutors, which showed that age was a significant variable, with 74.30% of the informants using Italian when talking to younger people in the family. Unfortunately the question was not repeated in the two subsequent surveys. Outside the home, in 1974 28.90% of the informants claimed to be using only dialect; the percentages were 23.00% in 1982 and 23.30% in 1988.

As to the data relating to use of Italian, the people who claimed that they spoke Italian with all family members were 25.00% in 1974, 29.40% in 1982 and 34.40% in 1988. Outside the home, exclusive use of Italian increased from 22.80% in 1974 to 26.70% in 1982 and 31.00% in 1988. Table 3.4. summarises such data and also presents the percentages regarding alternate use of the two languages.

Table 3.4: Doxa Surveys on Italian and dialect use (based on Vignuzzi, 1988: 243)

	Language use at home		
	1974	1982	1988
Dialect with all family members	51.30%	46.70%	39.60%
Ital with all family members	25.00%	29.40%	34.40%
Dial with some, Ital with others	23.70%	23.90%	26.00%
	Language use outside the home		
	1974	1982	1988
Always uses dialect	28.90%	23.00%	23.30%
Always uses Italian	22.80%	26.70%	31.00%
Uses both Italian & dialect	22.10%	22.00%	19.50%
Uses more dialect than Ital	13.40%	13.10%	9.9%
Uses more Ital than dialect	12.90%	15.20%	16.30%

The ISTAT survey (Table 3.5) included a much larger sample (e.g., 1,047 informants in the Doxa survey in 1988 and 70,675 in the ISTAT survey, cf. Lo Piparo, 1990b). The questions regarded language use in three contexts: at home, with friends and with strangers. As shown in Table 3.5, use of Italian increases from 41.90% in the family to 44.80% with friends and 64.40% with strangers.

Table 3.5: ISTAT Survey 1987-88 (based on Russo, 1991: 37)

	Family	Friends	Strangers
Dialect	31.90%	26.40%	13.70%
Italian	41.90%	44.80%	64.40%
Ital./Dial	25.00%	27.10%	20.30%

All four surveys also showed that some important variables are age (dialect is used less by younger people), socio-economic level (dialect is more frequently used among the lower classes), environment (dialect is more used in rural than in urban areas), and

sex (men use it more than women). Another important factor is the region. The 1982 Doxa survey showed that dialects are more vital in Tre Venezie (that is, grouping together the north-eastern regions) and Sicily with regard to home use, and in Sardinia and Tre Venezie outside the home. The ISTAT survey also showed that with strangers use of dialect is highest in Veneto (which is included in the area Tre Venezie of the Doxa survey) and Sicily.

With specific regard to Sicily, a large investigation on the use of Italian and Sicilian was conducted in 1984-85 on a sample of 1,320 informants in 73 different locations, aptly distributed according to age, sex, level of education and size of place of residence. The data were collected through different techniques as the research intended to explore language use not only as reported by the informants, but also in actual use; therefore language elicitation tasks were used. To date a first volume (Lo Piparo, 1990a) analysing the data collected via questionnaire has been published. It is a rich source of information on use of Italian and Sicilian in a number of contexts at different levels of formality: from the family to the doctor and public offices. Within the family domain, language use with interlocutors of different ages is specifically investigated. Attitudes towards the two languages have also been collected by eliciting the informants' judgements on a series of statements about the two languages (cf. 3.1.3.3). A very complex picture emerges from the study, which cannot be easily summarised in a few lines. I will only present some of the most general findings, in particular those that deepen the picture provided by the Doxa and ISTAT surveys.

The Sicilian study shows that a remarkable change in language use is occurring starting from the family, with younger interlocutors being more frequently addressed in Italian (Lo Piparo, 1990b: 28). This sharp decrease in use of Sicilian occurs across all informants, although it interacts with other important variables such as size of the place of residence, level of education and age of speakers. As a result, people from smaller towns use more Sicilian and with more family members (for example, also with one's own children) than people from bigger towns, and Palermo in particular, the most Italophone place of the region on all aspects. In terms of level of education, a graduate from a

small town uses more Sicilian within the family than a graduate from Palermo. As for age, informants in the younger age groups overall use more Italian than older people; however, younger people with higher levels of education use Italian more, as well as younger people in bigger towns. In smaller areas Sicilian remains by far the most frequently used language in the family even by the younger group, except when interacting with younger interlocutors.

A second general finding concerns the level of formality of the contexts, with use of Italian increasing in more formal contexts. Outside the family the level of education is of particular importance as people with very low levels of education use Sicilian almost exclusively in less formal contexts (e.g., with friends, within the suburb, at work), while in the same contexts highly educated informants use Italian to a much higher degree and in some cases (e.g., at work), almost exclusively. Once again a difference must be noted between places of different sizes, as Sicilian is used much more in the more informal contexts in smaller towns than in the cities. As for the more formal contexts (e.g., interactions with the priest, the doctor, the teachers and in the offices), although they elicit much higher rates of Italian from all informants, as noted above, also in dealing with these interlocutors older people from smaller towns use Sicilian much more frequently than people of the same age in the cities.

As stated previously, the picture is much more complex than the brief sketch outlined here. It must be said that the authors are very cautious about drawing any definite conclusions as they are well aware of the limitations of self-reported data. Therefore they repeatedly state the necessity of comparing survey data with the actual use of both languages by the informants. This analysis is currently being undertaken.

3.1.3.2 Functional distribution

As shown in Tables 3.4 and 3.5 above, dialects are used more frequently in more informal situations (typically in the domestic setting) and less frequently at work or with strangers. Therefore it can be said that in general in the Italians' repertoire the dialects represent

the Low varieties and Italian represents the High variety (cf. 2.1). Although this distinction would seem to lead to a diglossic situation, it has been remarked (e.g., Trumper, 1984: 34; Berruto, 1989b: 8) that the Italian situation does not represent a classic case of diglossia as defined by Ferguson and Fishman, as there is no clear functional division between the two languages. Furthermore, the Italian situation is characterised by great regional variation. Therefore Italian linguists have attempted to draw some distinctions among the different regional situations.

In an early classification of the Italian context, following Fishman's model, Mioni (1975) and Mioni and Arnuzzo-Lanszweert (1979) distinguished three types of linguistic situations, representing different stages of transition from dialectal monolingualism to Italian monolingualism: 1) diglossia without societal bilingualism, in some of the most backward areas, where dialectal monolinguals can still be found; 2) bilingualism without diglossia, in the industrial areas of the North, where migrants - mainly from the southern regions - more and more shift towards Italian, although they still use their dialects in domestic situations; 3) bilingualism with diglossia, in those regions - like Sicily - where the majority of the population knows both dialect and Italian (in varying degrees), and uses them according to a relatively stable division of contexts and domains.

To further account for the specificity of the Italian situation, more recently Trumper (1984; 1989) has proposed a distinction between two regional types of diglossia. He calls "macro-" or "true" diglossic those regions where Italian co-exists with strong dialect koinés, used in numerous social occasions and with a remarkable overlapping with Italian; in these areas, situational and individual (that is, unpredictable) code switching can be found, and mixed utterances made up of Italian and dialect constituents occur very frequently. According to the results of Trumper's fieldwork, the Veneto region is an example of macro-diglossia. With regard to Sicily, a recent study (Alfonzetti, in press a) has shown that in informal and semi-formal situations Italian-Sicilian switching is also extremely common and unpredictable. Furthermore, the dialects of the major cities (Palermo, Catania and Messina) exercise a strong influence on the dialects of the

surrounding areas, thus acting as koinés. Hence, according to Trumper's definition Sicily would also be a region characterised by macro-diglossia. On the other hand, Trumper (1984; 1989) talks of "micro-" or "pseudo-" diglossia for those regions where no dialectal koiné is present, codes are more clecut and there is a narrow overlapping of functional uses between the two languages. In these cases code switching is limited to few situations and occasions. Calabria and Basilicata are given as examples of micro-diglossia (Trumper, 1984).

These distinctions have been further analysed taking into account social groupings. Thus it has been shown that the Italian middle class (at least in Veneto and Calabria) is characterised by macro-diglossia in both interclass and intraclass interactions, while working class intraclass interaction takes place most exclusively in dialect (micro-diglossia). Thus, a real diglossic situation exists at working class level, while the middle class is referred to as "polydialectal" (Trumper, 1989). It is likely that this distinction would also apply in the Sicilian context.

3.1.3.3 Attitudes

Attitudes towards dialects, and more specifically Sicilian, come from the following sources: a series of matched-guise studies (Baroni, D'Urso and Renzi, 1980; Baroni, 1983), a study conducted in three major cities, that is, Rome, Florence and Milan, by Galli de' Paratesi (1984), and the above mentioned investigation conducted by questionnaire (Lo Piparo, 1990a).

In a research conducted in Padua (Veneto) with Sicilian and Venetian University students as informants, Baroni, D'Urso and Renzi (1980) used a modified version of the matched-guise technique to elicit judgements on dialect (Sicilian and Venetian), regional Italian (that is, Italian spoken with a regional - Sicilian or Venetian - accent) and non-accented Italian. Their results show a positive evaluation of both dialects on the solidarity scale (people speaking dialect are considered nicer and more reliable) but a negative rating on the socio-economic dimension (they are considered less educated, less self-

confident and poorer). Another interesting result is the negative evaluation elicited by regional Italian, while non-accented Italian is thought to be the most prestigious variety, in spite of the fact that it is far less widespread than the regional varieties.

This study also confirmed the lower prestige enjoyed by southern Italian varieties when compared to the northern ones. Negative judgements on the Sicilian accent were expressed by Venetian and Sicilian informants on both the socio-economic and the solidarity scales: Sicilians think that Venetians are more educated, more successful, more beautiful and richer than they themselves are, thus showing a general low self-image (except in some areas, such as work commitment).

A later study (Baroni, 1983), which extended the research to three other regions (Sicily, Lombardy and Emilia) and different types of informants, in general confirmed the prejudice against Sicilian varieties and the judgements with regard to regional Italian and dialect. It also showed that Sicilians living in Veneto give a more positive rating of dialect than Sicilians living in Sicily, and that this latter group has an even lower self-image since their judgements of Venetians on the socio-economic scale were more positive than the ones expressed by their co-regionals residing in Veneto.

While Baroni preferred indirect elicitation techniques, in Galli de Paratesi's (1984) research conducted in Rome, Florence and Milan, language attitudes were elicited by direct questioning. Informants were asked such questions as "Do you like the accent of Milanese/Roman/Florentine people? Why?", "Which Italian pronunciation do you prefer?", or "Which Italian pronunciation do you consider to be the least marked regionally?" Some questions specifically regarding the southern varieties were also included in the investigation. Galli de Paratesi's results clearly showed the acceptance of many varieties of regional Italian (cf. 3.1.4.2), as the inhabitants of each city claimed to prefer their own accent most of all. The results also confirmed the higher prestige of the Florentine accent, which was the second preferred accent by both Milanese and Roman informants; furthermore, the prestige enjoyed by the Milanese variety (and more generally the northern varieties) emerged, as the Florentine

informants opted for the Milanese accent as the second preferred one. Finally, the study confirmed the strong prejudice against southern varieties, which were the least preferred by most informants, particularly by the Milanese. It must be said, however, that this research has been criticised for its bias towards northern varieties of Italian (cf. Berruto, 1986).

More detailed information regarding attitudes towards Sicilian by Sicilians themselves can be found in the above mentioned survey (Lo Piparo, 1990a), where a section of the questionnaire was specifically designed to elicit language attitudes. Unfortunately only a brief presentation of the main results can be given here of what is a very exhaustive analysis of the data (cf. Vecchio, 1990).

The informants were asked to express complete or partial agreement or disagreement on eight statements regarding Sicilian. Such statements could be ordered along a scale ranging from maximum dislike of Sicilian (e.g., "Sicilian is gross and vulgar" and "Educated people should speak Italian rather than Sicilian") to maximum favour (e.g., "Sicilian is a language not a dialect" and "The laws and rules of the Sicilian regional government and Sicilian municipalities should also be written in Sicilian").

With regard to the overall results, the vast majority of informants agreed that "Sicilian is more suited for jokes and cheerful talk" (83.70%) and that both literary works in Sicilian and Sicilian as a language should be studied at school (82.20% and 71.20%). With regard to the negative judgements, Sicilian was judged gross and vulgar by 24.90% of the informants and 47.20% of them agreed that educated people should speak Italian. In both cases, among the people agreeing with such statements, the highest percentages were of women from smaller towns, without any or very limited education and over 65 years of age. Another interesting statement ("A person who can't speak Sicilian is not a good Sicilian") saw 59.90% of complete agreement; once again more consensus came from women from smaller towns and without any education, but in the 45-54 age bracket. Finally, Sicilian was considered a language by almost half of the informants (47.70%), with more consensus coming from males

from the larger towns, without any education and in the 45-54 age bracket.

The researchers remark that the findings do not point to any definite conclusion on a prevailing attitude towards Sicilian but show instead a heterogeneous picture.

3.1.4 Dialect and Italian: patterns of contact

In the last decades, as a result of the intense contact which has developed between Italian and the dialects due to widespread bilingualism, both codes have been undergoing remarkable changes which can be summarised in the following trends: on the one hand, a progressive "italianisation" of dialects, particularly at the lexical level, and the formation of dialectal koinés; on the other, a "dialectalisation" of Italian, and the formation of regional varieties of Italian.

3.1.4.1 Italianisation of the dialect

Like the rest of Italian dialects, today the Sicilian dialects are evolving in the direction of Italian.

The italianisation of the dialect is a gradual process, which is taking place in variable degrees in different regions. In general it affects urban dialects and koinés (cf. 3.1.2) much more than local dialects. In the process, rules are transferred from Italian to dialect, firstly as variable, then as categorical rules (Mioni and Arnuzzo-Lanszweert, 1979). Forms which are present in local dialects and absent from Italian or the regional (or provincial) koiné tend to be dropped and substituted, while, at the same time, some oppositions which are present in Italian and/or in the koiné may extend to the local dialects as well.

The process takes place particularly at phonological and lexical levels, much less on the morphosyntactic level, and leads to the disappearance of local differences and greater uniformity at regional level. In some cases the dialect of the main town(s) may become the dominant one in the region. This is the case for example, in Sicily, as

mentioned above (cf. 3.1.3.2), where the strong influence exercised by the main cities is generally recognised, so that we could talk of several koinés, if not of a single regional one.

The process of italianisation of the Sicilian dialect has been documented in a few studies: for example, Tropea (1976: 11-12) remarks on the substitution of dialectal lexical items, such as *criata* ('waitress') with *cammarera* from the Italian *cameriera*; or *asciari* ('to find') with *truvàri* from the Italian *trovare*. On the phonetic level, substitution of Sicilian with Italian phonemes can be found: for example, *cavallu* ('horse') or *gallu* ('rooster') instead of *cavaddu* or *gaddu*, where the Sicilian retroflex [d] has been substituted with the lateral [l] (cf. Ruffino, 1990: 204)

3.1.4.2 Dialectalisation of Italian

While the dialects draw more and more on Italian, Italian takes on regional features developing into many varieties of regional Italian. As mentioned before (3.1.2), Sicilian Italian is marked mainly - though not exclusively - along the geographical dimension, while popular Sicilian Italian is marked mainly on the social one.

By Sicilian Italian we refer to the variety of Italian used in Sicily by educated speakers, which is marked mainly at the phonological, prosodic and lexical levels. On the morphosyntactic level, Sicilian Italian shares most of the traits that Sabatini (1985) has identified for the so-called *italiano medio*. Furthermore, within Sicilian Italian it is possible to distinguish between a formal and an informal variety. The formal variety is closer to a more standard or pan-Italian variety, but presents some specific traits at the lexicosyntactic level. On the phonological level, rather than being strictly regional, the formal variety can be said to belong to the wider southern area. On the other hand, the informal variety is more specifically regional at all levels.

By popular Sicilian Italian, we refer to a variety of Italian used in Sicily by Sicilian people who normally speak the dialect and who have very little (if any at all) contacts with networks where more standard varieties of Italian are spoken. Such popular varieties of Italian are the ones most commonly spoken in contexts of Italian migration. They

are also the varieties spoken by the majority of Italo-Australians, or at least the base Italian varieties which interact with the dialects as well as with English. It is to be noted that many linguistic features of these varieties, particularly at the morphosyntactic level, do not change throughout Italy, and are independent of the dialectal substrata (cf. Berruto, 1987: 105-138 for an overview). However, at the phonological level, they are always marked regionally.

Popular Italian is characterised by some interference from the dialect, particularly at the phonological, but also morphological, syntactic and lexical levels. Other important mechanisms are however at work, such as hypercorrection and simplification (cf. Berruto, 1987: 116). So far, in the description of popular Italian the emphasis has been on the one hand on the morphosyntactic level, and on the other on its homogeneity throughout Italy. Some linguistic features that are common to all regional varieties are the following: exchange between auxiliaries; use of logical rather than grammatical agreements; polyvalence of the relative and conjunctive *che*; reduction of the pronominal system through the overgeneralised use of the clitic *ci*; analogical formation of certain verbal forms (Cortelazzo, 1972).

Sicilian Italian is one of the few regional varieties which has been described at length in two main works, Tropea (1976) and Leone (1982). Tropea's work adopts a more restrictive use of the term "regional" Italian, distinguishing it clearly from popular Italian. Therefore he excludes from his presentation all those phenomena that in our terminology would belong to popular Sicilian Italian and not be used by educated speakers. Leone's work, on the contrary, describes popular Sicilian Italian, arguing that Sicilian Italian and popular Sicilian Italian are difficult to keep apart and that Sicilian Italian expresses itself mainly *a livello popolare*, that is, among the lower classes (Leone, 1982: 75-76). In both works, Sicilian Italian is considered to be a fluid and transitory variety, varying according to the cultural level of the speakers, their social and psychological attitudes and desire of being "deregionalised" (Tropea, 1976: 13).

3.1.4.3 Mixing in discourse

An area that is of great interest for our research is the study of Italian and dialect in contact at the discourse level. This concerns the alternating use of Italian and dialect in conversation as well as their mixing at sentence, phrase and word level. Unfortunately little research has been conducted in this particular area.

In a pioneering study, Sornicola (1977) analyses the code choice of a Sicilian speaker living in Naples both at the micro and macro linguistic levels. A series of articles on this topic have also been written by Berruto (1985, 1989a, 1990), who attempts to establish some clear categories for the various linguistic contact phenomena. Although they do not deal specifically with Sicilian, these articles represent a useful reference point for the analysis of Italian-dialect mixtures.

Words made up by lexical morphemes of one system and grammatical morphemes of the other are called by Berruto "hybridisms". In assigning the word to either code, Berruto follows a grammatical criterion: for example, a word with a dialectal grammatical morpheme is assigned to dialect. Hybridisms are kept separate from "mixed utterances" and "code switching". By "mixed utterances" Berruto (1985: 67; 1990: 112) indicates the occurrence of constituents from the two languages (Italian and dialect) within the same utterance. According to him, a mixed utterance is to be defined only on morphological rather than on functional or pragmatic grounds. However, he still mentions lack of any specific discourse function as a feature of a mixed utterance. In this way he hovers between an entirely structural definition and one that tries to combine structural and functional criteria. Berruto also analyses in detail the structure and constituents of mixed utterances and remarks on the lack of syntactic restrictions evident in Italian-dialect mixing.

As for code switching, Berruto (1990: 110) defines it on functional grounds, as the juxtaposition of strings in the two different languages used by speakers to convey a change of communicative intentions, topic or discourse functions. Following the taxonomies of discourse functions developed by such scholars as Gumperz (cf. 2.2.3),

Berruto (1985) also identifies a series of discourse functions associated with Italian-dialect switching. In many instances his data confirm the occurrence of switches in those functions already well documented in the literature, such as greetings and confirmation, or comments and explanations.

With specific regard to Italian-Sicilian code switching, some very recent studies were conducted by Alfonzetti (in press a, in press b) in Catania on a corpus of informal and semi-formal speech collected in various situations: e.g., shop assistant-customer interactions; conversations among strangers at a bus stop; conversations among friends and colleagues, and so on. Code switching is defined by Alfonzetti as a "functional change from one language to the other within the same communicative event". In a first analysis of the data from an interpretative-functional perspective, following Auer's (1984a) model of analysis Alfonzetti (in press a) distinguishes switches linked to discourse (e.g., used to reformulate, specify, emphasise, and so on) from switches linked to participants, that is, to be explained with the speaker's language preferences or competence. A major finding concerns the bi-directionality of Italian-Sicilian switching in most situations and with most groups of speakers, including educated ones. According to Alfonzetti, this would indicate that the two languages are not seen in a diglossic relationships, as they are not separated by rigid boundaries. This is also confirmed by the frequent occurrence of asymmetrical conversations, that is, with one speaker using dialect and the other using Italian. In Trumper's classification (cf. 3.1.3.2), this would be a case of macro-diglossia.

In a second study (Alfonzetti, in press b), code switches were analysed from a syntactic point of view, using Poplack's typology of switching (cf. 2.2.2.2). Intrasentential switching was found to be the most frequent in the data, followed closely by intersentential switching. Tag switching was the least frequent. With regard to constraints on switching, Alfonzetti confirms what Berruto already noted, that is, the lack of specific constraints on Italian-dialect switching due to the strong structural similarity of the two languages, the high number of homophones and the occurrence of hybridisms.

3.2 The linguistic situation in Sydney

This part presents the linguistic situation of the Italo-Australian community in Sydney, which constitutes the larger social context of our research.

In the first section, the pattern of settlement of the community is briefly described in historical terms; a socio-demographic profile follows, which presents some basic figures in regard to first and second generation Italians, comparing their age distribution, educational levels and occupations. A short account of the community as a social structure is also given.

As my informants belong to both the wider Italo-Australian community and the Sicilian community, in the second section I give also a brief outline of Sicilians in Sydney. Such presentation highlights one of the main features of the Italo-Australian community, that is, its regional and local character.

The third section deals more specifically with the linguistic situation: it presents the speech repertoire of the majority of Italo-Australians and outlines the current degree of multilingualism among them. Attitudes towards the languages and language varieties spoken in the community are also discussed, as well as the mixing of the languages in discourse.

Throughout this section I focus on the Sydney community. However, in those cases when specific figures were not readily available, I will use state or national statistics. Given that a large proportion of Italian born people living in Australia are Sydneysiders (21% in 1981), national figures can be considered a fair reflection of the situation in this city. The main sources for my presentation are Martin (1978), Ware (1981, 1988), Clyne (1982, 1991a, 1991b), Bertelli (1987, 1988a, 1988b), Burnley (1988), Collins (1988, 1989) and Castles and others (1992), to whom the reader is referred for more comprehensive information. In some parts, my own personal observations and knowledge of the community have complemented the studies and data available.

The terminology adopted here follows official statistics: "first generation" refers to people born in Italy, while "second generation"

is reserved for those born in Australia with at least one Italian born parent. However it must be noted that, within second generation, from a socio-cultural and especially linguistic point of view there are marked differences between those who have both parents born in Italy and those with one only (with particular reference to the linguistic aspects, see 3.2.3.2 on language shift).

For the sake of conciseness, Australian Italians and/or Italo-Australians are often referred to simply as Italians, however the terms are further specified whenever necessary for the discussion.

3.2.1 The Italians in Sydney

3.2.1.1 Pattern of settlement

As in the rest of the continent, the bulk of Italians arrived in New South Wales after 1946, that is in the period of mass immigration: from 1947 to 1954 the Italian born population in the State rose from 8,721 to 29,940, from 1954 to 1971 it rose to 80,416. The vast majority of Italians (over 80%) settled in what is now considered the wider Sydney metropolitan area.

The majority of post-war Italian emigrants were day labourer agricultural workers who were forced to emigrate due to the poor socio-economic conditions of the country and encouraged by the policy of the Italian government of the time, which included emigration as part of its economic reconstruction plan. The major source areas for Sydney were Sicily, Calabria, Veneto, Campania, Tuscany and Lombardy, with a clear dominance of the first three regions. A large number of Italians came from towns and villages of less than 20,000 people. The first inflow (1947-1954) was dominated by men; this imbalance, however, was soon to a large extent redressed as a result of the processes of chain migration. The typology of migrants changed at the end of the Sixties. More tradespeople and skilled workers came from larger cities and emigrated not so much out of stringent economic necessity but driven mainly by a desire to better their conditions. The intake of migrants from Italy started to decline in the decade 1966-1975, until it reached a few hundred per year at the end of

the Seventies. This was the result of both Australian and Italian-based factors. The Australian government redirected its recruitment efforts for migrants to other European and Asian nations. In the meantime the economic conditions in Italy had improved and access to employment in other nations of the European Community had also become less restrictive.

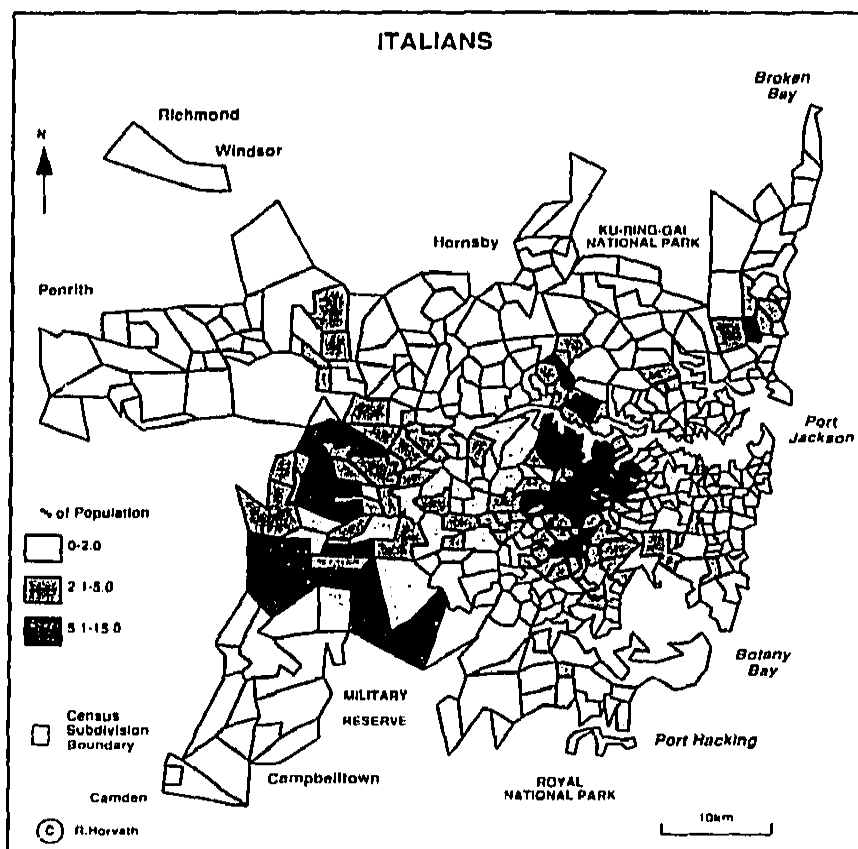
As a result of chain migration and lack of settlement services, Italians congregated in fairly clustered communities; often they formed sub communities from particular villages in individual streets and suburbs. This concentration is still quite conspicuous in Sydney, particularly in the Inner Western suburbs (e.g., Drummoyne, Abbotsford, Ashfield, Burwood), and is higher than that for migrant communities from English-speaking countries. However, Italians today present a lower concentration if compared to other migrant communities from non-English speaking countries. Furthermore, the majority of Italian born now live outside the traditional Italian areas, such as Leichhardt. It has also been noted that the Italians live in predominantly working-class areas and in areas characterised by home ownership, rather than rent or mortgage payments (cf. Map 3.6).

On the whole, the Italian community is considered to represent a case of successful settlement both in terms of economic indicators and acceptance by the wider society: for example, in a recent survey the Italians ranked first as the non-English speaking ethnic group most liked (Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1989).

3.2.1.2 Socio-demographic profile

The Italian community in Sydney represents the largest migrant group from non-English speaking countries with approximately 59,581 first generation Italians (Horvath, Harrison and Dowling, 1989: 76), representing about 80% of the Italian born living in New South Wales (total figure is 73,175, cf. Census Application, 1988: 351). In regard to second generation Italians, there are 80,118 in the whole State (Bureau of Immigration Research, 1990: 7). If we apply the same percentage as for the Italian born, we could estimate that in Sydney there are approximately 64,870 second generation Italians.

Map 3.6: Italians in Sydney (Horvath, Harrison and Dowling, 1989: 77)



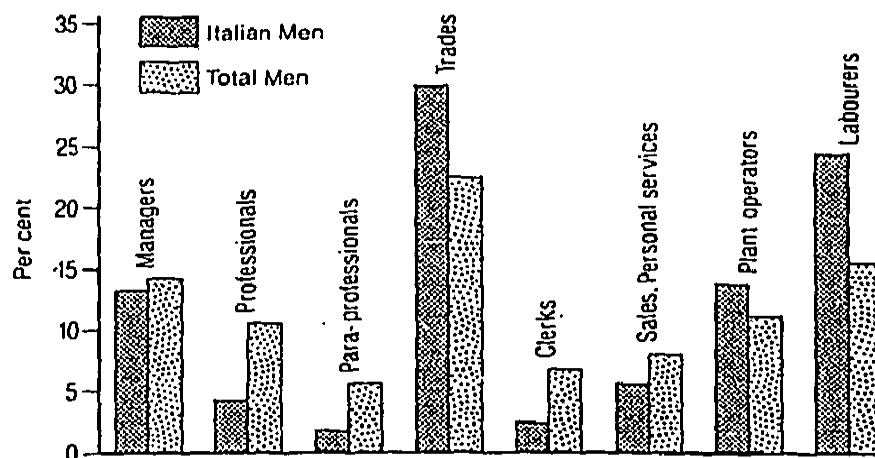
As stated previously, immigration from Italy has practically stopped; in fact among all of the Italian born residing in the wider Sydney area, only 1.7% has arrived since 1981. Consequently, the Italian community is aging fast: 82.1% of the Italians residing in New South Wales are presently over 35 years of age and the greatest concentration of Italians is in the age group 45 to 60 (The Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW, 1989).

Many Italian migrants who arrived in the Fifties and Sixties were raised in a period when formal schooling beyond primary school level in Italy was not the normal practice among the lower socio-economic classes. The limited possibility of continuing to high school was even more difficult for those who came from small rural areas. Therefore, the vast majority of Italian born have only attended

primary or lower secondary school (71% for males; 74% for females); on the other hand, very few have never gone to school (5.6% for males; 8.8% for females), and even fewer have gone to university (less than 2%). These figures refer to the national situation and date back to 1976 (cf. Ware, 1981: 37), but there is no reason to think that they are not representative for Sydney.

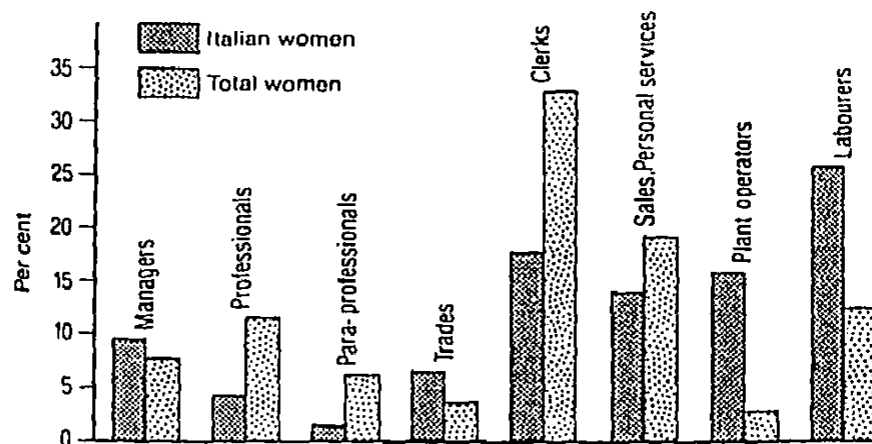
Given their limited formal qualifications and the difficulties in having them recognised when they did exist, a great proportion of Italian born have worked and still work in the semi-skilled or unskilled sectors of industry: according to figures from the 1986 Census, Italian born men are mainly tradespeople, labourers and factory workers (cf. Figure 3.2). Chain migration also had an impact on occupational patterns, as the Italians already established in Australia often employed the newly arrived compatriots. This partly explains why first generation Italian males are largely concentrated in construction and building industries. Women, on the other hand, are to be found mainly in the trade and production-process workers categories and in the service area (cf. Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.2: Italian men compared with all men in the workforce by occupation, 1986 (Castles and others, 1992: 70)



Source: Census 1986

Figure 3.3: Italian women compared with all women in the workforce by occupation, 1986 (Castles and others, 1992: 71)



Source Census 1986

A typical feature of employment among Italians has always been the high rate of self-employment: in 1947 almost 25% of Italian males in Sydney were self-employed in small businesses, such as cafes and fruit shops, while another 10% were market-garden proprietors or employees in the western and northern areas (cf. Burnley, 1988: 629). Most of these small enterprises were family based and started up in areas with large concentrations of Italians, to service mainly the ethnic community. A typical example of this trend in Sydney even today is the suburb of Leichhardt, where next to the traditional small businesses, professional practices have been set up by second generation Italians. On the national scale, today self-employed Italians are concentrated in food and beverage sectors, and the clothing and manufacturing sector. For instance, Italians account for nearly one third of all self-employed and employers in fruit and vegetable shops in Australia (Collins, 1989: 14).

On the whole, Italians enjoy a relatively good level of economic security which has been achieved through very hard work and a life of sacrifice and savings, not just in the attempt to improve their own condition, but in particular to give a better future and better opportunities to their children.

Compared to their parents, second generation Italians display higher levels of educational attainment and different occupational patterns. A comparison between first and second generation brings out a remarkable shift from the trades and labouring area to clerical jobs, that is from blue collar jobs to the lower status end of the white collar occupational scale. However, as Collins (1988: 192) notes, this is not so much an "upward" movement in wage and career structure terms as a mere "sideward" shift. Furthermore, Australian born people with Italian born parents are still over-represented in the trades sector or among process workers, and under-represented in the professional and technical categories, as shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Occupational status according to birthplace of parents, 1981 (Castles and others, 1992: 159)

Birthplace of parents	Occupational status (percentage distribution)													
	Professional technical executive		Clerical		Sales		Farmers fishermen hunters		Tradesmen process & production		Service sport recreation		Unemployed	
	Generation		1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
Australia	18.4	18.4	17.8	17.8	8.3	8.3	7.0	7.9	23.6	23.6	7.7	7.7	5.6	5.6
UK & Ireland (Rnp.)	20.2	20.8	16.9	16.5	7.7	8.6	1.7	6.3	28.5	22.1	9.5	7.9	6.8	4.7
Germany	18.1	14.5	15.2	11.8	6.5	8.8	2.3	4.6	31.8	28.2	10.7	6.9	5.9	13.7
Netherlands	20.3	16.1	14.5	17.1	7.1	9.5	4.7	3.4	33.8	27.4	8.0	8.2	4.6	10.4
Poland	15.5	22.9	9.1	22.8	6.0	8.2	1.4	0.9	35.5	19.0	11.5	6.9	7.4	8.6
Greece	5.7	17.4	4.8	21.3	13.8	11.8	2.4	1.2	47.1	20.9	11.5	6.9	7.4	8.6
Italy	7.6	12.6	7.1	20.1	6.0	11.6	5.4	6.1	51.3	25.5	9.0	6.2	3.8	7.7
Malta	5.7	6.6	7.9	13.8	3.8	7.2	4.3	3.6	51.6	40.7	11.4	6.0	4.9	10.2
Yugoslavia	4.9	14.8	5.0	19.9	3.6	7.4	1.6	2.3	58.6	25.0	8.9	7.4	8.2	14.2
Middle East	6.4	17.5	6.8	19.8	8.5	15.9	1.0	5.6	47.8	15.1	6.8	6.3	12.7	9.5
Asia	25.5	22.6	17.0	17.1	4.5	10.1	2.1	2.0	22.2	23.1	10.4	12.1	10.3	6.5
New Zealand	19.7	21.6	15.9	18.0	8.4	9.6	2.8	4.9	26.4	18.6	10.7	8.7	7.1	6.1

Source: ABS (1981 census, one per cent sample tape of individuals), in Hugo, 1988: 255

3.2.1.3 The social structure of the community

Migration processes are fundamental factors in shaping migrant communities in the host country. In the case of the Italo-Australians, for instance, chain migration and a high rate of in-marriage have been important elements in maintaining and strengthening family ties, a traditional value in the home country. Attachment and respect for the family is fundamental to most Italo-Australians, irrespective of the region of origin, so much so that it has been recognised as their major core value by Smolicz (1981). The power of the family is also shown by the fact that many young Italians live with their parents until

marriage, and that many elderly - in particular women and the widowed - live with their children.

A second element which impacts on the nature of the Italian community is their regional origin. There are two important reasons for this: first, Italian history is a history of regional states (see the persistence of dialects), and secondly, as a result of chain migration, Italians have come from a relatively small number of regions. According to the Italian Department of Foreign Affairs (Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 1982: 199), a handful of six regions - Calabria, Sicily, Veneto, Campania, Friuli and Abruzzo - have been the source regions for approximately 60% of Italian migrants to Australia. Therefore the majority of Italians have attached greater importance to their regional rather than their national origins. The social network of most of them is made up of co-regionals, and among older people even of *paesani* only, that is, people from the same village, even if many close-knit clusterings have now dispersed. In the Italo-Australian community, family networks and friends have been the two important support systems socially, emotionally and economically.

Migration processes are reflected in the community in an organisational sense as well through the proliferation of regional and local associations that characterise the social life of the community and often give it a fragmented outlook. Many have complained about this internal division, because it is seen as an obstacle to the development of a strong and compact community (cf. Bertelli, 1988b: 78). However, it is also fair to say that in general a strong feeling of solidarity which goes beyond regional boundaries exists among Italians vis-à-vis other ethnic groups generally and the Anglo group in particular. Furthermore, in the past two decades the community has become more Italian and less parochial, as a result of the establishment of some national migrants' associations, television and radio programs in Italian, a more active intervention from the Italian authorities, a more intense program of cultural and educational exchange between the two countries, and so on. The later waves of Italians from the Seventies onwards who identify less with their regional origins than those who left Italy in the Fifties and Sixties, have also helped in promoting the Italian image of the community. Finally, in second

generation Italians the sense of region or *paese* as a basis of social interaction is by no means as strong as for their parents. Those second generation Italians who maintain or revive their cultural and linguistic heritage tend to do so by relating more to an Italian identity than to a specific regional or even more local one.

Besides family and friends, two other important values in the community are education and work. Most Italians, who were themselves denied an education, value it very highly as the key to improve their social position. This is one of the explanations for the high percentage of Italian parents who send their children to private Catholic schools; and the high respect shown towards educated people in general and anybody engaged in the teaching profession in particular. Work is another important concern, given that the overwhelming motivation that drove most Italians out of their country was the search for better economic conditions. Work has always had a central role in their lives: most Italian migrants have worked very hard and long hours, with two or three jobs at the same time in order to pay off the house, first, and then offer security and a better future to their children.

Throughout the decades, the distance between the Italo-Australian community and the wider society has gradually decreased. This is due mainly to the prevailing settlement policies of the Government of the day, as well as the reaction to these by the migrants themselves. During the Fifties and Sixties, when migrants were asked to shed their ethnicity, many Italian born reacted by sheltering within their networks in the Italo-Australian community and minimising any contact with the Anglo section of society, while others, particularly the younger ones, reacted by assimilating. The Italian born who lived through the period of "integration", on the other hand, were able to operate in the wider society, and at the same time maintain their values, albeit only within the confined space of their ethnic community. Through these bi-cultural people who "commuted" between the two communities, the gap narrowed during the Seventies. It is only from the end of the Seventies, however, with the new policy of multiculturalism that the gap between the two communities has filled, at least at an official level: today more second

generation Italians are willing to display their Italian identity, and feel both Italian and Australian comfortably. This greater self-confidence of the Italo-Australian community is not exclusively an Australian achievement, but is also the result of the new prestige that Italy and Italian culture generally enjoys around the world (Coen and Vicenzotti, 1989).

3.2.2 The Sicilians

Although no exact figures are available on the regions of origin of the Italians living in Sydney, it is generally accepted that Calabrians and Sicilians form the largest groups in New South Wales, followed by Venetians (cf. Bertelli, 1988b: 78). The conspicuous presence of Sicilians in Sydney dates back to the pre-war period, when Sicilian clusterings from specific villages were identified in such parts of the city as Woolloomooloo and Balmain (cf. Burnley, 1988: 628). Another favoured destination for Sicilians was the Sydney suburb of Leichhardt. Today most Sicilians have moved out of these traditional areas and large clusterings of Sicilians are to be found in Five Dock, Drummoyne and Liverpool.

The early waves of Sicilians who migrated to Australia (up to the Second World War) came mainly from coastal locations and from other small islands around Sicily. The province of Messina, in particular, has been a major source area: between 1890 and 1940, it is thought that over half Australia's male Sicilian settlers came from that area (Pascoe, 1987: 68). In 1963, 7,000 people from the Eolian Islands (a group of islands not far from Messina) were living in Australia; it has been estimated that that figure would have doubled by the 1980s (cf. Pascoe, 1987: 68-70). For many of these people, fishing was the main activity and they carried it over to Australia. Thus, within the Italo-Australian community, fishing became the specialised area of Sicilians.

Studies on Sicilians in Australia have more often focussed on the lifestyle of a specific group, such as the Liminoti in Sydney (Wilton and Rizzo, 1983) and the fishermen in Fremantle (Gamba, 1952), rather than on the Sicilians as a community (see, however, Cronin, 1970). These studies confirm most of the observations made above in

regard to the Italo-Australian community in general. They stress the importance of the family as a support system, in particular as a result of the migration process. In her thorough (though now dated) study conducted both in Sicily and in Australia, Cronin agrees that among Sicilians, relatives had an important role in Australia, but she also underlines that the nuclear family is considered much more important than the extended family.

Within the family, the children hold an important role for a number of different reasons: according to some (e.g., Cronin, 1970: 218-219), to "serve" the family and add to its prestige; but also - as our experience tells us - for the company they bring and for the pleasures they give their parents. Also in this latter case, however, high expectations and aspirations generally reside with the children, as parents consider that the children's achievements alone could repay them for the many years of suffering and humiliations in a foreign country. In turn, an attitude of deference and respect towards the parents and adults generally is expected of children. In most families, adults and children share much of the social space: while the children are required to attend all social functions with their parents, the parents take part in their children's activities.

These studies also confirm the presence of close-knit social networks, made up mainly of relatives and *paesani*, in which most Sicilians move. This is reflected, for instance, in a high number of Sicilian local associations, as well as in the many festivals organised to replicate the main annual event of the old village, usually the feast of the patron saint. For the Sicilian fishermen, instead, the main celebration is the Blessing of the Fleet, an annual event which marks the opening of the fishing season and reproduces in Sydney a similar Italian feast. All these festivals are important occasions for keeping in touch with other *paesani*, maintaining local traditions, and conveying to the young the feeling of belonging to the *paesani* community.

Given their numerical strength and close ties, the Sicilians as a group represent a significant section of the Italo-Australian community. Together with other Southerners, they have given a major contribution to the socio-cultural development and image of the community.

In many respects the Sicilian family with whom I conducted my research is typical of the Sicilians living in Sydney. In terms of pattern of settlement, they followed the process of chain migration and moved to Australia at the end of the Fifties with their entire families. The father's family also settled down in Leichhardt, a typical Italian suburb. In terms of area of origin, both parents come from a village in the province of Messina, like many other Sicilians. As to occupation, both families were involved in fishing, however only the father's family continued this activity in Australia, while the mother's relatives went into different occupations and economic activities. In terms of family and social life, our family confirms what has been stated above in regard to the important role of the family and the children, and the tightness of the social networks.

3.2.3 The speech community

Before presenting the Italian speech community in Sydney, it is important to clarify the definition of speech community that has been adopted here, given that this notion does not constitute a clear sociolinguistic category but has been defined in a variety of ways.

In our context, the most appropriate definitions to operate with seem to be Hymes' and Gumperz's, who set as a requirement for the existence of a speech community the shared knowledge not only of one language or language variety, but also of a whole complex of communicative norms. In Hymes' words (1972: 54), a speech community is

a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety. Both conditions are necessary.

Gumperz (1968) defines a speech community in very similar terms; however he points out that shared knowledge depends upon intensity of contact and communication networks, and concludes that often speech communities may in fact coincide with such social units as countries or ethnic groupings.

Since all three components - sharing of at least one language, sharing of communicative norms and intense contact - are present in the Italo-Australian situation, this can be considered a speech community. However, many Italo-Australians belong to more than one speech community, in so far as these minimal conditions are fulfilled with regard to Sicilian, Italian and English. In fact, the majority of them belong to their dialect speech community, the Italo-Australian community at large and the English-speaking community, albeit in different degrees, with a sense of membership of each community that varies according to such factors as frequency of contact and communicative competence in each language.

3.2.3.1 The repertoire

The following description of the linguistic repertoire of the Italians in Sydney draws largely on personal observations as well as on comments expressed by other linguists (e.g., Bettoni, 1985b), as no systematic study of the full repertoire exists to this date.

The repertoire of the Italians includes three main languages: Italian, dialect and English. Within at least two of these languages - Italian and dialect - regional, local and social varieties can also be identified. The three languages and varieties are variously distributed according to several factors, such as generation of migration, region of origin in Italy, socio-economic position and level of education.

In general we can say that dialect is the first language of most first generation migrants. Although specific figures on the Australian situation are not available, such factors as the time of Italian mass migration to Australia (soon after the war), the low socio-economic background of most migrants, and the strong dominance of dialect in their regions of origin, all point to a starting situation of dialect as mother tongue (cf. Bettoni, 1983). Some dialect monolinguals - mainly among older migrants from the lower socio-economic classes - are also present; however, their number is thought to be low for at least two reasons: first, migrants are generally upwardly mobile people, and hence highly sensitive to the prestige of Italian (cf. Bettoni and Gibbons, 1988: 16); secondly, migration generally promotes an

"italianisation process" among the first generation (De Mauro, 1963), since it puts into contact people from different regions. However, dialect is the language that is generally used with relatives and close friends from the same village and region.

Most first generation migrants speak Italian as their second language. This is the language that they have learnt and used mostly during their few years of Italian schooling. Their Italian is marked regionally at the phonological, prosodic and lexical levels, and displays those morphosyntactic features that have been identified as typical of the variety called popular Italian (see 3.1.4.2). Italian is commonly used with Italian friends from other regions and in dealing with community matters: e.g., in dealing with professionals (e.g., solicitors, doctors), in Italian shops, in community functions and in religious services.

English is the third - and weakest - language of the first generation's repertoire, since it was acquired after arrival in Australia. Among first generation Italians, knowledge of English can vary a great deal, according to such factors as their age on arrival, type of occupation and general degree of integration into the Australian society. The degree of competence can vary from the native-like competence of those who arrived as children or the good working knowledge of the self-employed male who runs his own business, to the few words known by the isolated homemaker or the aged pensioner.

The language repertoire of second generation Italians generally consists of English as their dominant language and a knowledge of their parents' dialect and of Italian at very different levels. One factor which has been suggested as capable of explaining this varying degrees of competence is birth order in the family (cf. Bettoni, 1986b), with older children maintaining their parents' dialect or Italian better than younger siblings. Although personal observation in the community would tend on the whole to support such a view, no systematic research has been conducted so far to verify it on a large scale. Other relevant factors to explain such variability are the following: the parents' length of stay in Australia, visits to Italy and contacts with friends and relatives living there, and instruction at school. However,

since no study so far has established the correlation between social factors and level of speaking skills in dialect or Italian, no firm conclusion can be drawn on the relative weight of each factor.

For many second generation Italians, the parents' dialect is their first language in a chronological sense. A lot of them continue to speak it also in adulthood, in particular with older relatives. However an investigation currently under way in Sydney on a sample of 202 informants by Rubino and Bettoni (1990) shows that use of English with older relatives is more frequent - and presumably on the increase - among younger second generation Italians, that is, people below twenty five years of age, compared to older second generation, that is, people who are today in their thirties or forties (cf. Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: Use of English by older and younger 2nd generation subjects in the family domain (Rubino and Bettoni, 1990: 73)

	older	younger
in the whole domain	69%	67%
interlocutor		
grandparent	0%	12%
older relative	11%	33%
parent	26%	47%
spouse	86%	90%
child	90%	*
younger relative	94%	91%
sibling	93%	98%
same age relative	94%	100%

English becomes the dominant language of second generation Italians from the time they start school or even earlier, through older siblings (Bettoni, 1986b). It is also the only language of their repertoire that they develop fully, as an adult language, since it is the language of education and the one used in the full range of social functions.

With regard to Italian, a remarkable discrepancy often exists between active and passive skills. While a good comprehension is quite widespread, possibly as a result of both the proximity between dialect and Italian, and the exposure to Italian within the family and the community (e.g., friends and acquaintances from other regions, visits of relatives from Italy, radio and television programs, and so on), the ability to speak it varies a great deal, as noted above.

The speech repertoire of our informants is fairly typical of the Italo-Australians living in Sydney: Sicilian dialect is the first language of both grandparents and parents, and they all understand and speak popular Sicilian Italian (cf. 3.1.4.2). The parents, however, speak Italian more fluently and frequently than the grandparents. The grandparents' knowledge of English is extremely limited, while the parents speak it fluently albeit with an Italian accent. The children's dominant language is English; they have a good understanding of both Sicilian and Italian but their speaking skills are very limited.

3.2.3.2 Language shift

As in other migrant communities in Australia, in the Italian community a rapid process of language shift to English is under way. The shift occurs at different rates in the different sections of the community: it is more rapid among second than first generation Italians; within the second generation, it accelerates substantially among younger groups - as noted above - and among children of interethnic compared to intraethnic marriages. Table 3.8 shows such differences between first and second generation.

Clyne (1987b: 62) explains these different patterns in regard to the first generation, with greater social flexibility and mobility among the young and first language reversion among the old; and in regard to the second generation, with factors such as school entry, leaving the parental home and the death of one's parents, which promote more English usage.

Table 3.8: Language shift (per cent, to the nearest whole number) - 1986 Census (Clyne, 1991b: 218)

Birthplace of speaker or of ethnic parents		NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Germany	(1)	41	39	42	44	38	43	49	44	41
	(2)	73	70	83	72	58	76	75	70	73
	(2m)	84	85	90	87	85	87	88	84	85
Greece	(1)	5	4	9	8	4	5	5	6	4
	(2)	9	7	20	22	8	5	8	12	9
	(2m)	36	41	56	54	40	60	41	50	41
Italy	(1)	11	9	16	11	10	23	19	16	11
	(2)	30	24	44	36	28	43	43	38	29
	(2m)	66	69	80	76	71	89	81	80	71
Malta	(1)	26	22	44	55	35	74	68	47	26
	(2)	62	53	73	73	70	84	89	74	59
	(2m)	84	86	94	92	89	94	91	93	87
Netherlands	(1)	49	49	49	45	47	47	60	51	48
	(2)	85	87	86	82	85	84	84	86	85
	(2m)	99	99	99	99	99	99	100	—	99
Poland	(1)	17	16	20	40	13	17	30	15	16
Yugoslavia	(1)	8	9	18	12	14	25	33	10	10

(1) Overseas-born

(2) Australian-born of two parents of same country of birth.

(2m) Australian-born of one 'ethnic', one Australian British or Irish-born parent.

As for the more general factors causing the process of shift among Italo-Australians, the difficulty of identifying with accuracy such causes and the ambivalence of some factors were already discussed (cf. 2.1). With specific regard to the Italo-Australian community, it has been noted that the shift is occurring in spite of some socio-demographic characteristics that in general would seem to favour maintenance: e.g., numerical strength, a long history of immigration, dense concentrations of population, a higher degree of distance from the mainstream culture compared to other ethnic groups, the significance of language in the value system of the group and extended family patterns (cf. Bettoni and Gibbons, 1988: 15).

Based on broad survey data, Clyne (1987b: 62-63) has offered the following explanations for the shift occurring among Italo-Australians: he has pointed out two factors such as higher rates of exogamy among second generation and low literacy rates among first generation Italians. More specifically with regard to the shift which has occurred

between the 1976 and 1986 Census data, Clyne (1991a: 48) identifies a number of possible causes, such as the changed wording of the language use question in the 1986 Census: by concentrating on home language use, the '86 question would allow for greater impact of exogamy compared to the '76 question which focussed instead on regular use. Another factor could be the decrease in Italian born respondents due to deaths and remigration.

Useful as they may be, such explanations suffer from the limitations of broad quantitative survey data, as already discussed (cf. 2.1). The representativeness given by high numbers of informants (e.g., in the 1986 Census the entire Italian population of Australia was included, cf. Clyne, 1991a: 46) does not have the depth nor the explanatory power of more qualitative approaches. In the specific case of the Italian community, a further problem is that census data do not differentiate between Italian and dialect speakers: the figures indicate merely shift from the Italian variety without any further specification. The investigation by Rubino and Bettoni in Sydney mentioned above, is trying to provide more detailed information on the shift by keeping Italian distinct from dialect, and exploring the use of the three languages (Italian, dialect and English) in five different domains (i.e., family, friendship, the transactional domain, employment and organised contacts). However to date only data regarding the use of English are available (Rubino and Bettoni, 1990).

Another possible explanation for the language shift in the Italian community, based on a different approach, is provided by Bettoni and Gibbons (1988; cf. also 3.2.3.3). They have suggested that a fundamental factor weakening the relative strength of socio-demographic factors is the widespread use of dialects, given that

very few, if any, Italians speak Standard Italian, that their cohesion is broken up into numerous dialects and regional or popular varieties, and that their attitudes toward these nonstandard varieties are mostly negative. (p. 15)

This explanation of the shift is supported by their own empirical findings, as well as by my own observation in the community and comments often heard among Italo-Australians.

The analyses in the sociology of language approach by Clyne and the attitudinal research by Bettoni and Gibbons have identified a number of causes for the shift among Italo-Australians. This thesis aims to contribute to this debate by exploring the shift from a different angle, that is, an ethnographic approach. In this way I hope to grasp to some extent the deeper reasons causing the shift that is occurring in Italian and the dialects, both at individual and community levels.

3.2.3.3 Attitudes

To the best of my knowledge, the only empirical research on language attitudes among Italo-Australians is the already mentioned study by Bettoni and Gibbons (1988; 1990). They used a matched-guise experiment to elicit the language attitudes of a group composed of first and second generation Sicilians and Venetians living in Sydney.

Taking the sample globally, the findings showed that speakers of dialect were rated negatively both on the solidarity and the socio-economic scales by all informants, while regional Italian was assessed positively on both scales and English rated positively on the socio-economic scale, but neutral on the solidarity one. Included in the test were also some Heavy Mixtures (considerable English transference on a dialect base) and some Light Mixtures (light English transference on a regional Italian base): while the latter occupied an intermediate position in the scores, the speakers of Heavy Mixtures were rated more negatively than all the others, on all traits. Thus, the prejudice against the dialect emerges both from the negative ratings of "pure" dialect as well as from the total disapproval of language mixing with a dialectal base.

A second analysis of the data according to the generation of the informants (Bettoni and Gibbons, 1990) yielded some interesting results: the second generation, understandably, did not show the same emotional attachment to the different varieties, as they rated them lower than first generation on the "likeability" and "competence" factors. However, they rated all varieties (Italian varieties, dialects and mixtures) more favourably than the first generation on the "sophistication" factor.

Bettoni and Gibbons (1990: 130) explain this result by proposing an attitude of respect from the younger Italo-Australians towards their parents' language varieties, as the latter are probably seen in connection with their rich cultural heritage, hence as a symbol of culture and sophistication. The difficulty for some of the informants of distinguishing between Italian and dialect is also acknowledged.

Another interesting result is a more favourable rating from the second generation toward Sicilian than Venetian varieties. According to Bettoni and Gibbons (1990: 133) this shows that the prejudice against Southerners - still strong in Italy (cf. 3.1.3.3) - has weakened in a context of migration, probably as a result of contacts with people from different regions and the fact that the Sicilians are one of the largest regional groups in Australia.

The findings by Bettoni and Gibbons bring empirical evidence to language attitudes as they can be observed in the community. A number of attitudes and practices have been identified which confirm first generation migrants attributing low prestige to language varieties most commonly used in the community (e.g., dialects or regional-popular Italian) and high prestige being attributed to the more rarely used varieties, such as regional Italian. For instance: a widespread aspiration among Italian parents is that their children learn standard Italian at school; in formal interactions with interlocutors that are not well known, dialect is carefully avoided; among many Italo-Australian teachers of Italian it is very common to find a strong censorious attitude towards any language items that may come from the dialect.

3.2.3.4 Mixing in discourse

In the language use of Italians in Australia, English mixes with Italian and dialect. The mixing occurs in different degrees, according to socio-demographic factors (e.g., age of the speaker upon arrival, level of education), situational features (e.g., type of speech event, interlocutor) and linguistic factors (e.g., competence in each language).

The vast majority of studies so far have focussed on the mixing of English and Italian. In particular, the phenomenon of transference

from English into Italian has been explored systematically at every linguistic level by Bettoni (1981, 1983), who also correlated transference patterns with social and sociolinguistic variables. Lexical transference was found to be the main characteristic of first generation Italians, while phonic, syntactic and pragmatic transference occurred more frequently in the speech of second generation informants (cf. also 2.2.1).

The role of dialect in language mixing so far has been examined only in the speech of second generation Italo-Australians. Bettoni (1990a; 1990b) studied the frequency and distribution of dialect items in the speech of adolescents and found that dialect occurs more frequently and in a wider range of grammatical categories among the less proficient speakers of Italian. Furthermore, in the mixing of all three languages, dialect seems to be the more frequent source language for function words, and English for content words and discourse markers. Rubino (1987) studied language mixing in the speech of some Italo-Australian schoolchildren and found that the degree of dialect and English varied according to the level of formality of the interaction. Rubino (1989; 1990) also showed how the mixing of the three languages decreased from one year to the next both at the lexical and morphological levels, probably as a result of language instruction.

3.3 Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter I have both described the repertoire of the Sicilian community in Sicily and given a general review of the literature on the topic. The following points have been specifically dealt with:

- a) a structural description of the Sicilian dialects and of the Italian varieties most commonly spoken in Sicily;
- b) an outline of the bilingual situation of the Sicilian speech community at large, and of the attitudes towards Italian and dialect varieties, as displayed both at regional and national level;
- c) a summary of the main trends and changes resulting from the contact between Italian and the dialectal varieties.

Although I have tried to focus on the Sicilian speech community, I often had to refer to studies conducted at the national

level or in similar regional contexts, as few studies have been published on the present linguistic situation of Sicily.

Throughout the presentation I have referred to the Sicilian community in general, however it is obvious that not all members have an active competence in each variety: while the speech repertoire of the upper and middle classes stretches over a wider range of varieties, the lower classes do not control the higher varieties of Italian, due to their lack of contact with more formal networks.

If considered in relation to the sociolinguistic context of Sicily, my informants can be placed along all the dialect sub continuum and along the lower part of the Italian sub continuum, as their higher variety is popular Sicilian Italian. However, their speech repertoire is more complex than that of the Sicilians living in Sicily as a third language - English - was added to their Italian and Sicilian varieties as a result of migration.

In the second part of this chapter I have presented the social context in which my informants - the parents and grandparents particularly - spend most of their time, that is in the Italo-Australian community, or, more specifically, the Sicilian-Australian community. I have discussed both the history and lifestyle of the Italians living in Sydney, and of the Sicilians in particular. Some of the main linguistic issues that characterise the community have also been dealt with: the questions of language shift, of language mixing in discourse, and the attitudes displayed by the Italo-Australians towards the languages spoken in the community.

The speakers who participated in the research reported on here are fairly typical of the Sicilians living in Sydney in many aspects: in their lifestyle, values and attitudes, as well as in their use of the three languages - dialect, Italian and English. Therefore the study of this family can be considered to be representative of a significant section of the Italo-Australian community.

Having presented the sociolinguistic community that I investigated, the next chapter deals with the actual study that I conducted. It discusses some specific issues involved in the choice of the fieldwork methodology and then presents the fieldwork that I carried out to collect the linguistic data needed.