

## CHAPTER SIX

### COMPARING THE FORMAL, THE INFORMAL AND THE FAMILY SITUATIONS

The first analysis presented concerns the difference in the three situations in terms of participants, topic and tone. In this way I intend to verify whether changes occur in these features from one situation to the other, according to the research objective set out above (5.1.4). In the first part of the chapter (6.1) a quantitative analysis of these features is presented, in order to compare the incidence of each of them in every situation. This chapter therefore aims to provide a general background to the linguistic analysis of Chapters 7, 8 and 9, as the features - and differences - discussed here are at the basis of the linguistic patterns emerging in each situation.

To the three situational features discussed above, a fourth one, that is, type of interaction, has been added in this analysis. This feature concerns the discourse structure more than the situation itself. Although it was not included in the model of analysis and clauses were not coded for it, type of interaction can be identified in relation to the number of turns in Anna's speech. This feature yields some interesting insights into the variation in the discourse structure in the three situations.

All four features: participants, topic, tone and type of interaction are explored in Anna's overall speech as well as in her speech addressed to the children.

The second part of this chapter (6.2) is a general discussion of the results of the analysis.

## 6.1 Situational and discourse features

As already pointed out in the account of the fieldwork (ch. 4; cf. also 5.1.2), the major factor which brought about changes in the initial situation of data collection was the development of friendship between the researcher and the family members (particularly the mother), that is a change in the relationship among participants from the formal to the informal situation. The relationship is different again in the family situation, given the higher degree of intimacy among participants and the absence of the researcher. However, some points of similarity between the informal and the family situations can be found, as will be shown by both this analysis and the linguistic analysis in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Changes in tenor are manifested through some particular features of the situation and of the type of discourse (cf. 4.3): some of the key factors identified as indexical of the changes occurring from the formal to the informal situation are choice of interlocutors, type of topics, tone and type of interaction. These changes in the situation and in the discourse structure, in turn, bring about different linguistic patterns in each situation.

In the next sections the data regarding each of these features in the three situations are analysed.

### 6.1.1 Participants

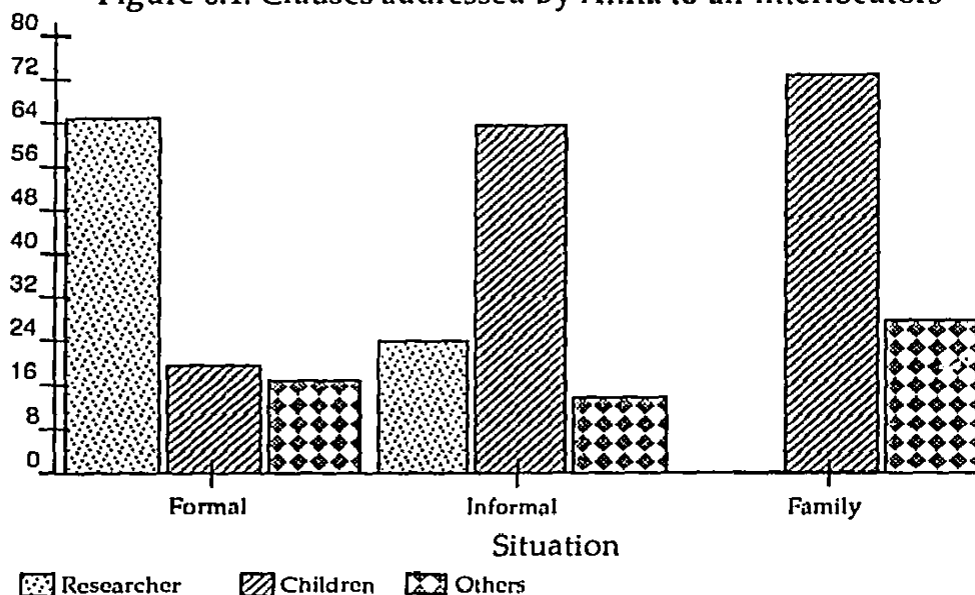
In terms of participants, a major change brought about by the change in tenor is the selection of interlocutors by Anna. The return to the domestic routine in the informal situation is shown in the increased number of interactions taking place between mother and children, as shown in Table 6.1 and Figure 6.1. The chi-square test was run on the frequencies of the formal and the informal situations only, as in the family situation the researcher was absent. The test result is of high significance ( $289.92 > 13.27$ ), thus showing that a relationship exists between interlocutors and the situations.

**Table 6.1: Clauses addressed by Anna to all interlocutors in the three situations**

Situation	Formal n= 557	Informal n=615	Family n=554
Researcher	358 (64.27%)	146 (23.74%)	--
Rino	41 (7.36%)	177 (28.78%)	234 (42.24%)
Giorgio	42 (7.54%)	204 (33.17%)	125 (22.56%)
Children together	24 (4.31%)	6 (0.98%)	44 (7.94%)
Others	92 (16.52%)	82 (13.33%)	151 (27.26%)

\* Due to roundings, totals in all Tables may not equal 100.00%  
Chi Sq = 289.92 df = 4 p <.01

**Figure 6.1: Clauses addressed by Anna to all interlocutors**



The conversations of the formal situation involve mainly the adults, particularly the researcher: 64.27% of all clauses in this situation are addressed by Anna to the researcher and only 19.21% to the children, both individually and together. In the informal situation, the role of the researcher as interlocutor is greatly reduced (23.74%), while the percentages of clauses addressed to both children have increased from 7.36% to 28.78% in the case of Rino, and from 7.54% to

33.17% in the case of Giorgio. Overall, the children now represent the major interlocutors, with 62.93% of all clauses addressed to them. It should be noted also that in the informal situation the children are more frequently addressed individually than together. In the family situation, 72.74% of all clauses are addressed to the children: this percentage highlights the central role played by the children within the family, and shows a similarity between the informal and the family situations.

The difference in percentages of clauses addressed to either child in the informal and family situations can be explained with the episodes chosen for the analysis: in the informal situation, Anna is helping Giorgio do his homework, therefore she is addressing him more often than his brother, as explained above (cf. 4.3.3). In the episodes recorded within the family, on the other hand, the more frequent presence of Rino as interlocutor can be explained with the fact that I had left him in charge of my tape recorder (cf. 4.3.2).

### 6.1.2 Topic type

Table 6.2 shows that selection of topic changes from the formal to the other two situations: the percentage of clauses codified for activity oriented topics increases from 25.13% in the formal situation to 61.30% and 73.28%, respectively, in the informal and in the family situations. The high percentage of activity oriented topics in the informal situation confirms that the exchanges occurring in the situation where the researcher is treated as a family friend are everyday interactions, similar to the ones taking place in the family situation.

Table 6.2: Topic type in the three situations

Situation	Formal n= 557	Informal n= 615	Family n= 554
Activity	140 (25.13%)	377 (61.30%)	406 (73.28%)
Non-activity	417 (74.86%)	238 (38.70%)	148 (26.71%)

Chi Sq = 282.34 df = 2 p < .01

Most activity oriented topics occur in the interactions with the children. Of all the clauses in the corpus coded for activity oriented topic, 39.98% (369 cl.) are addressed to Rino, 31.96% (295) to Giorgio and 4.23% (39) to both children together, totalling 76.16% of all activity oriented clauses. Therefore, changes in topic are closely connected to changes in choice of interlocutors from the formal to the informal and the family situations.

Selection of topic changes also in the speech addressed to the children, thus confirming the pattern found for the entire corpus. As shown in Table 6.3, the percentages of clauses codified for activity oriented topics increase steadily from the formal to the family situation, although in different degrees.

Table 6.3: Topic type in the speech addressed to the children

To Rino

Situation	Formal n= 41	Informal n= 177	Family n= 234
Activity	19 (46.34%)	142 (80.23%)	208 (88.89%)
Non-activity	22 (53.66%)	35 (19.77%)	26 (11.11%)

Chi Sq = 42.52  $df = 2$   $p < .01$

To Giorgio

Situation	Formal n= 42	Informal n= 204	Family n= 125
Activity	26 (61.90%)	156 (76.47%)	113 (90.40%)
Non-activity	16 (38.10%)	48 (23.53%)	12 (9.60%)

Chi Sq = 18.25  $df = 2$   $p < .01$

### 6.1.3 Tone

Tone is the third feature that differentiates the situations: in particular, the presence of emotive speech is an element that distinguishes markedly the formal from the informal situation, and is a feature shared by the informal and the family situations, as shown by

Table 6.4. Nonetheless, it is to be noted that overall only 13.85% (239 out of 1726) of all clauses are codified for emotive speech.

Table 6.4: Tone in the three situations

Situation	Formal n= 557	Informal n= 615	Family n= 554
Ordinary	540 (96.95%)	471 (76.58%)	476 (85.92%)
Emotive	17 (3.05%)	144 (23.41%)	78 (14.08%)

Chi Sq = 101.62  $df = 2$   $p < .01$

With regard to the higher incidence of emotive speech in the informal than in the family situation, this can be explained by considering my choice of episodes for the analysis: when selecting the conversations from the informal situation that in my opinion best illustrate spontaneous interactions between mother and children, I found myself more inclined to choose conversations characterised by discussions, arguments or quarrels, as they seemed to be the most spontaneous kind of speech. The recordings made by the family themselves, on the other hand, display more average type of interactions: though arguments and squabbles occur in these data as well, they do so to a lower extent. It seems reasonable to think that the family would have refrained from recording very intimate moments, particularly charged with conflict and emotion.

Of all the interlocutors, the children are by far the major recipients of speech coded for emotive speech: 48.12% (115 clauses) of all the clauses characterised by emotions are addressed to Rino and 24.69% (59 clauses) to Giorgio. Overall, 72.80% of all emotive speech is addressed to the children.

Presence or absence of emotive speech also varies in the speech addressed to the children, thus confirming the pattern found for the entire corpus. As shown in Table 6.5, for both children emotive speech is practically absent in the formal situation, it reaches its peak in the informal one and is present in the family situation to a lower degree.

Table 6.5: Tone in the speech addressed to the children

## To Rino

Situation	Formal n= 41	Informal n= 177	Family n= 234
Ordinary	39 (95.12%)	102 (57.63%)	196 (83.76%)
Emotive	2 (4.88%)	75 (42.37%)	38 (16.24%)

Chi Sq = 46.33    *df* = 2    *p* < .01

## To Giorgio

Situation	Formal n= 42	Informal n= 204	Family n= 125
Ordinary	42 (100.00%)	161 (78.92%)	109 (87.20%)
Emotive	--	43 (21.08%)	16 (12.80%)

Chi Sq = 6.85    *df* = 2    *p* < .05

## 6.1.4 Type of interaction

The fourth feature analysed in this chapter is type of interaction and is more related to the discourse structure. As mentioned above, although this feature was not specifically included in the quantitative analysis, it can be examined in relation to "language use across turns". This is the variable which analyses Anna's base clause in relation to a preceding turn uttered by her (cf. 5.2.1.6). Through this variable it is possible to know how many clauses uttered by Anna are displayed in a type of interactions that I have called Type A, that is, where Anna's base clauses are preceded by another clause uttered by her in a previous turn, and how many instead are part of Type B, that is, where Anna's base clauses are not preceded by another turn by her, either because the interaction is initiated by another speaker or because her clause marks the beginning of a new interaction. Both types of interactions are illustrated below.

## Type A

Anna: -----  
 Speaker B: -----  
 Anna's base clause: -----

## Type B

Either:  
 (.)  
 Speaker B: -----  
 Anna's base clause: -----

Or:

(.) [beginning of a new interaction]  
 Anna's base clause: -----

Type A, with more turn alternation (at least two turns by Anna), suggests a more dialogic structure, closer to the A-B-A-B structure generally postulated for conversation. Type B, on the other hand, suggests either shorter interactions, of one or two turns only (as Anna's number of turns is lower), or the beginning of a new interaction by Anna. In this way, the presence or absence of a preceding turn in Anna's speech can be an indication - though approximate - of different interaction structures.

Before looking at each situation in particular, one element to consider is the total number of clauses uttered by Anna which are preceded by another turn uttered by her. In the whole corpus, only 21.80% (377) of all clauses have a preceding turn by Anna. This low percentage can be explained if we consider the criteria followed to codify this variable. As mentioned above (cf. 5.2.1.6), if Anna's base turn is made up of more than one clause, only the clause opening the turn is coded for the occurrence of the previous turn. Now, almost half of Anna's turns are made up of more than one clause: as revealed by the variable "adjacent preceding clause" (cf. 5.2.1.4), 46.32% of her clauses in the formal situation, 49.60% in the informal one and 49.64% in the family situation are preceded by other clauses uttered by her.

The fact that almost half of Anna's turns are made up of at least two clauses explains the low percentage of clauses with preceding turns.

Nonetheless, in spite of the limits of this analysis (which is relying on the coding of a different feature), the interesting fact to observe is that exchanges of the type A are more common in the formal situation, where 26.21% (146 out of 557) of the clauses uttered by Anna are preceded by another turn uttered by her. In the informal situation, the percentage is 20.65% (127 out of 615), whereas it decreases further to 18.77% (104 out of 554) in the family situation (Chi Sq = 9.80,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

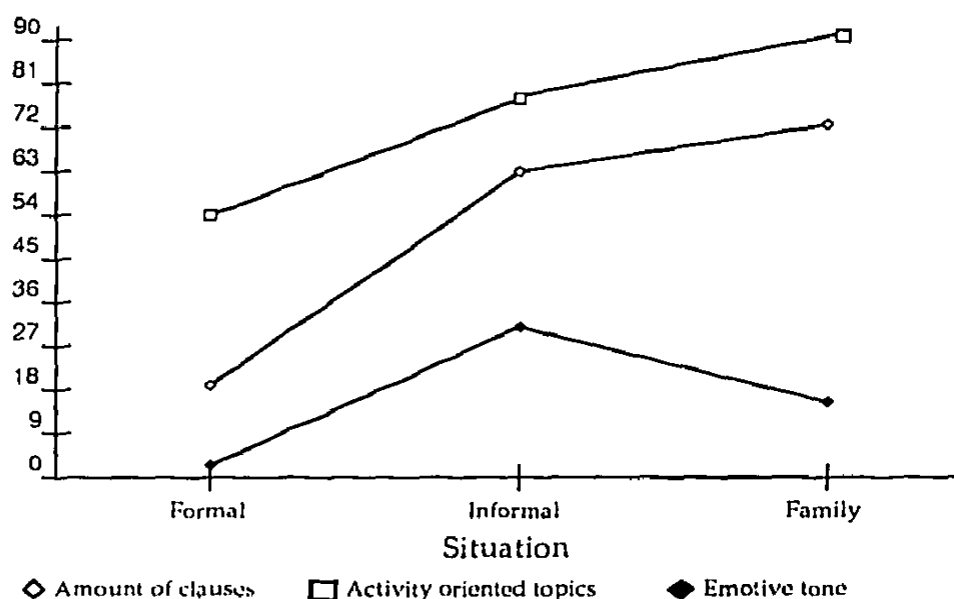
These figures suggest therefore that a more dialogic A-B-A-B discourse structure characterises the formal situation compared to the other two. This result can be explained with the interview style of the formal situation, where most of the discourse is constrained into a clear question-answer structure (cf. 4.3.1). In spite of its limitations, then, this analysis confirms the transition from an interview style to a different style of discourse in the informal and in the family situations, with a less constrained structure as interactions can be shorter, interrupted, incomplete and made up of one turn only (for example, in the case of commands), or initiated by the mother herself.

## 6.2 Discussion of findings

This chapter has shown that the three situations in our corpus do display some substantial differences in terms of the three situational features selected for the analysis: participants, topic and tone. In terms of participants, the situations differ substantially in choice of interlocutors, with the children being the major interlocutors in the informal and in the family situations, and the researcher in the formal situation. In terms of topic, it was shown that activity oriented topics occur much more frequently in the informal and in the family situation than in the formal one. In terms of tone, emotive speech emerges as a feature of the informal and of the family situations while it is almost absent in the formal situation. Therefore these results have confirmed that three different situations are present in the corpus that this study is dealing with. Figure 6.2 illustrates the changes

occurring in Anna's speech to the children from one situation to the other, in terms of amount of clauses addressed to them, activity oriented topics and emotive tone. As mentioned above, these changes are the result of the increasing intimacy between the family and the researcher.

Figure 6.2: Changes in Anna's speech to the children in the three situations



With regard to the fourth feature analysed, that is, type of interaction, it was shown that a change occurs in the discourse structure from the formal to the informal and the family situations, as the interview style gives way to a different and less constrained style.

Some important points emerge from these findings. First, they confirm that participants, topic and tone are the elements that vary in the three situations, thus confirming the prominence of these situational features, as already noted by many other studies (cf. 2.2.4). Secondly, they highlight the degree of similarity that exists in the corpus between the informal and the family situations, as displayed by the central role of children as interlocutors, the prevalence of activity oriented topics and the presence of emotive speech.

One important point highlighted by these situational features is the different degree of structuring - in the sense of "behaviour constrained by rules" - displayed by the three situations, as they seem to be regulated by different social norms, depending upon the relationship among participants.

The norms that regulate the formal situation can be reconstrued as the social event of "visiting" among Italians: if a stranger comes to your house, the majority of talk has to be addressed to her and all domestic chores or other activities have to be interrupted in order to keep her company. Furthermore, topics that interest her are preferred, maximum co-operation is offered throughout the conversation and emotions (e.g., anger and impatience towards other family members) are restrained as much as possible. Thus, as a result of the little shared knowledge among participants, external norms come into play to which all participants can refer to, as they are part of their common cultural background. It is therefore a constrained type of behaviour, in every aspect analysed: in choice of interlocutor, of topics, of expression of emotions and of discourse structure (see also the notion of formality in Rubin, 1968, and Irvine, 1984).

On the other hand, different norms seem to be at play in the informal and (even more so) in the family situations, where the higher degree of shared knowledge among participants allows a more relaxed set of rules: interactions can be engaged with any of the participants, activities can be carried out and emotions expressed. Both the informal and the family situations seem to be regulated more "from the inside", by the participants' own preferences, so that their behaviour is less constrained. In this sense, these two situations can be considered less structured and constrained than the formal one.

In our corpus, situations characterised by different degrees of structuring display a different use of the three languages. The next chapters explore language use by Anna both in her overall speech and with some specific interlocutors in the different conditions of each situation.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### LINGUISTIC PATTERNS IN THE CORPUS

While Chapter 6 has presented the different situational features of the three sets of data, this chapter deals with the linguistic patterns of the entire corpus, thus addressing the second research objective set out in 5.1.4. It examines the major linguistic patterns in Anna's speech in the three situations, as they emerge from the quantitative analysis of the data. More specifically, the chapter focuses upon patterns of language use and contact at different linguistic levels (that is, within and above the clause), examining the distribution of the three languages: Italian, Sicilian and English, as well as the amount and the type of contact among them in the three situations.

The chapter starts off by presenting a definition of "base language" in quantitative terms. In accordance with the general analytical framework adopted in this study, where the clause is examined in its linguistic environment, the base language of a situation is arrived at by taking into account two major elements: the language which is most used at clause level and the language which displays the lowest degree of variation between clauses and across turns. On the basis of this definition, the base language in Anna's overall speech is identified in each situation and the three situations are then compared.

Having identified the base language of each situation, the second point which is examined is the incidence of contact in Anna's speech at various linguistic levels: across turns, between clauses and within the clause, according to the framework presented in 5.1.3. The focus here is on the incidence of the various contact configurations, regardless of which of the three languages comes into contact. A

systematic comparison is then made between the amount and the type of contact displayed in Anna's speech in the three situations.

The third issue which is explored in this chapter is language use across participants: the language used by Anna in the base clause is compared to the language used by the preceding speaker (cf. 5.2.1.5). Language use across participants in the three situations is then compared.

The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the linguistic patterns emerging from the corpus in relation to the three situations.

### 7.1 Defining the base language

The first issue concerns the identification of a base language in each situation. In a situation of contact the notion of base language is quite important, as it is the point of departure for distinguishing between what should be considered the main language used by the speaker, that is, the base language (also called L1 or recipient language) and the language(s) of all other linguistic elements (also called L2 or donor language).

For this reason, the notion of base language is frequently used in studies on language contact. However it can be found in a wide range of meanings, as it has been defined from very different perspectives. As noted by Appel and Muysken (1987: 121-122), the base language has been defined grammatically, for example, as the language which may be imposing particular constraints; psycholinguistically, for example, as the dominant language of the bilingual who is switching, given that that particular language is the one determining most of his/her verbal behaviour; or sociolinguistically

as the language in terms of which the discourse situation is defined, the unmarked linguistic code in a particular setting. (p. 121)

As a result, very different criteria have been adopted to identify the base language: for example, in a grammatical or formal perspective Hasselmo (1970: 181) considers a base language to be the one to which most phonological and morphological features of a

discourse can be attributed. In a more psycholinguistic perspective, Poplack (1980: 605) defines the base language in relation to the speaker's bilingual ability and considers it to be the speaker's dominant language. As a result, in the case of fluent bilinguals, she talks of them as having two base languages of discourse, given that neither language is dominant; according to Poplack, the evidence of this is the bi-directionality of their switches. Similarly, Huerta (1978: 53) refers to the base language as the one explicitly preferred by the speaker.

In this study none of the above mentioned definitions of base language was adopted, for the following reasons. Firstly, my language situation was more complex than most other studies in that I was dealing with three rather than two languages. Secondly, Anna is fluent in all three languages and therefore it would have been very difficult to establish before the analysis which is her dominant language; furthermore, to consider as base language her preferred language, irrespective of other factors (for instance, which language she is in fact using) seemed to me a rather limited account of what my data actually record. Finally, I needed some criteria which would account for the base language in the whole situation, given that the focus of my analysis was on language patterns in the overall situation.

As a result of the above considerations, the notion of base language that was devised for this study falls more within the sociolinguistic perspective in that the base language is the language of a particular situation; however, grammatical and quantitative criteria have been used to identify it. Furthermore, in the attempt to fit the type of analytical framework adopted in this study, where use of language and contact are analysed at different linguistic levels, in my definition of base language I have taken into account more than one level.

Therefore, by base language of a situation in this study I refer to the language in which the highest number of clauses is uttered and which, at the same time, shows the lowest degree of variation between clauses and across turns. The degree of variation of a language in each situation is arrived at on the basis of the number of switches preceding the base clause uttered in a particular language (or contact configuration). Thus, a base language is identified on two

criteria: the use of a certain language at clause level, and the "concentration" of a language in sequences of clauses and turns. In fact, the occurrence of a language in continuous alternation with another or, instead, in a more condensed way in long strings, is considered a meaningful factor in establishing the base language of a situation. In this way, my definition rests on a view of the clause not only on its own, but within its linguistic environment.

## 7.2 Identifying the base language

On the basis of the two criteria set out above, the base language in the three situations can now be identified.

The first criterion regards the language used more frequently at clause level: Table 7.1 and Figure 7.1 show the percentages of clauses uttered by Anna in each of the three languages in the three situations; the fourth column presents the percentages of clauses which are not uttered entirely in one language but display some form of contact, either mixing or transference.

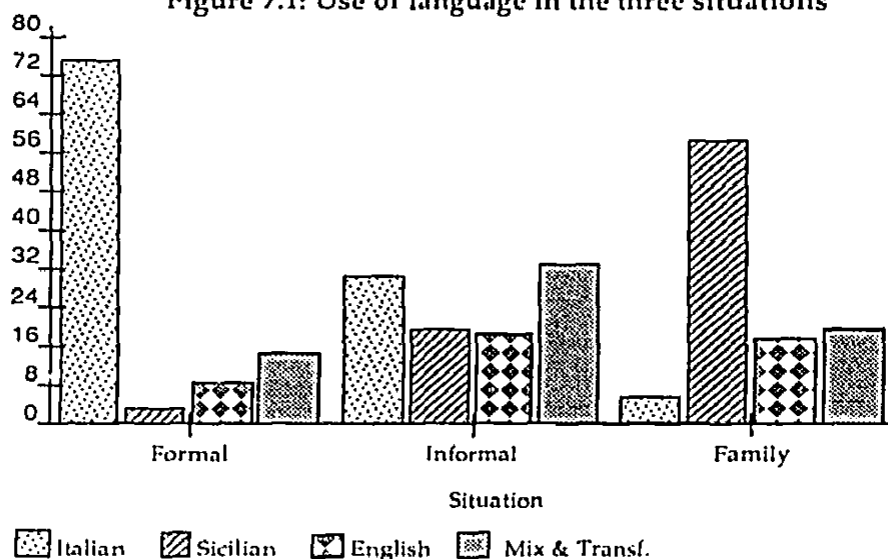
Table 7.1: Use of language in the three situations

Situation		Italian	Sicilian	English	Mix & Transf.
Formal	n=557	417 (74.86%)	16 (2.87%)	46 (8.26%)	78 (14.00%)
Informal	n=615	185 (30.08%)	117 (19.02%)	111 (18.05%)	202 (32.85%)
Family	n=554	30 (5.41%)	322 (58.12%)	95 (17.15%)	107 (19.31%)

Chi Sq = 790.75 *df* = 6 *p* < .01

The distribution of the three languages changes substantially from one situation to the other. In the formal situation, Italian is by far the language most used; the informal situation shows a more even distribution of languages and contact configurations, with the clauses with mixing and transference being more numerous than the clauses uttered in any of the three languages; in the family situation, the highest percentage of clauses is uttered in Sicilian, but English and contact configurations are relatively high.

Figure 7.1: Use of language in the three situations



On the basis of this first criterion, then, in the formal situation the base language is Italian, as it is the language in which the highest number of clauses is uttered (Table 7.1). This is confirmed when considering the second criterion, that is, degree of variation, as Italian shows the lowest degree of variation among the three languages: as shown in Table 7.2, 167 (80.68%) Italian base clauses are preceded by other Italian clauses and 89 (85.58%) turns in Italian are preceded by other Italian turns uttered by Anna. In both respects Sicilian and English show lower numbers. (Chi-square not applied. Cf. 5.2).

Table 7.2: Language variation in the formal situation  
Between clauses

	Preceding clause	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base clause Ital	n=207	167 (80.68%)	9 (4.35%)	9 (4.35%)	22 (10.63%)
Sicil	n=9	8 (88.89%)	--	--	1 (11.11%)
Engl	n=12	3 (25.00%)	--	5 (41.67%)	4 (33.33%)
Mix & Transf.	n=30	17 (56.67%)	2 (6.67%)	4 (13.33%)	7 (23.33%)

## Across turns

	Clause in preced. turn	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base clause					
Ital	n=104	89 (85.58%)	2 (1.92%)	2 (1.92%)	11 (10.58%)
Sicil	n=1	1 (100.00%)	--	--	--
Engl	n=21	7 (33.33%)	--	8 (38.10%)	6 (28.57%)
Mix & Transf.	n=19	11 (57.89%)	2 (10.53%)	2 (10.53%)	4 (21.05%)

The low degree of variation in Italian between clauses and across turns in the formal situation is evident in the excerpt below.

## Excerpt 7.1

- N e poi è nato lì il bambino alla signora?  
 A eh *YEU* una femminuccia ci ha  
 N ah allora saranno tutti non saranno contenti volevano tutti il maschio  
 dice  
 [Anna laughs]  
 A eh è venuta la femmina che cosa devono fare adesso  
 [Anna and Nina laugh]  
 N lei voleva il maschio  
 A ven-veneddi forse è nato  
 N ah ah  
 A e: oggi e usciva  
 N ah ah  
 A e: maria è venuta questa sera volete venire a vedere BA: BABY? ci ho  
 detto poi vengo vengo ve veniamo tutti a casa  
 N sì sì  
 A e: e: che cosa fa? *dici* dorme e: allora perché mi fai venire che dorme?  
 [Anna and Nina laugh]
- N is the child born?  
 A yes she had a little girl  
 N oh well they will be not everyone will be happy they wanted a boy  
 A a girl arrived what can they do now  
 N maria wanted a boy  
 A friday I think she was born  
 N ah ah  
 A and today she was coming out  
 N ah ah  
 A and maria came tonight asking do you want to come and see the baby? I  
 said to her I will come later we will all come  
 N yes yes

- A and what is she doing? she said she is sleeping and why are you asking me to your place if she is asleep then?

On the other hand, in the family situation the base language is Sicilian: it is the language in which the highest number of clauses is uttered (Table 7.1); moreover, in terms of variation, 100 (62.11%) Sicilian base clauses are preceded by other Sicilian clauses and 34 (64.15%) Sicilian turns are preceded by other Sicilian turns uttered by Anna (Table 7.3). Therefore in the family situation Sicilian shows the lowest degree of variation both between clauses and across turns.

Table 7.3: Language variation in the family situation

Between clauses

	Preceding clause	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base clause					
Ital	n=15	2 (13.33%)	5 (33.33%)	4 (26.67%)	4 (26.67%)
Sicil	n=161	5 (3.11%)	100 (62.11%)	28 (17.39%)	28 (17.39%)
Engl	n=40	2 (5.00%)	23 (57.50%)	4 (10.00%)	11 (27.50%)
Mix & Transf.	n=59	5 (8.47%)	28 (47.46%)	13 (22.03%)	13 (22.03%)

Across turns

	Clause in preced turn	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base clause					
Ital	n=7	1 (14.29%)	4 (57.14%)	--	2 (28.57%)
Sicil	n=53	5 (9.43%)	34 (64.15%)	10 (18.87%)	4 (7.55%)
Engl	n=26	1 (3.85%)	14 (53.85%)	7 (26.92%)	4 (15.38%)
Mix & Transf.	n=18	--	6 (33.33%)	8 (44.44%)	4 (22.22%)

An example of the low degree of variation in Sicilian between clauses and across turns in the family situation is given below (notice,

however, how clauses in English and displaying contact configurations occur to a greater extent than in the formal situation: 8.26% and 14.00%, respectively, in the formal situation; 17.15% and 19.31% in the family situation; cf. Table 7.1).

### Excerpt 7.2

[Anna and Giorgio are setting the table for lunch]

A *chi è chi fa?*

[noise from Giorgio]

A ALL RIGHT?

G sì

A *vi u pani u pani mett'a tavula u pani*

G pane pane [whispering to himself, as if singing]

A pane pane [echoing him]

G *pani pani*

A *u pani a tavula u curtellu d'u pani*

G ah? coltello coltello coltello [as if singing]

A *e pigghi'a-cchiddu ci sta nu cuteddu dda?*

[she cuts the bread]

G AND THERE WE ARE

A ALL RIGHT?

G THAT'S IT

A *(ch)iama u papà ci dici c'u manciari è prontu*

G RIGHT papà manciar-è prontu [calling out]

A what are you doing?

A all right?

G yes

A the bread put the bread on the table

G bread bread

A bread bread

G bread bread

A the bread on the table the bread knife

G knife knife knife

A take that one is there a knife there?

G and there we are

A all right?

G that's it

A call dad tell him the food is ready

G right dad the food is ready

In the informal situation, on the other hand, the picture is not so clear, since the distribution of languages and contact configurations is more even (cf. Table 7.1). First, as noted above, the highest percentage of clauses (32.85%) is not uttered in any of the three languages, but contains some form of contact (either mixing or transference). Secondly, among the three languages, although Italian

is the language of the highest percentage of clauses (30.08%), the difference between the percentage of Italian clauses and that of clauses uttered in the other two languages is much lower than in the other situations (19.02% Sicilian clauses and 18.05% English clauses).

With regard to degree of variation (Table 7.4), 48 (52.17%) Italian clauses are preceded by another Italian clause, but 25 (51.02%) English clauses are preceded by another English clause and 25 (38.46%) Sicilian clauses are preceded by another Sicilian clause. Notice also the high percentage of clauses displaying mixing or transfer which are preceded by similar clauses with mixing or transfer (44.44%). With regard to turns, 17 (58.62%) Italian turns are preceded by Italian turns; for Sicilian and English the percentages are 31.25% and 13.79% respectively. Thus, although Italian shows the lowest degree of variation, the difference among the three languages, particularly at interclause level, is not so marked as in the other situations. This trend, but particularly the lack of a dominant language at clause level, make it difficult to talk of a clear base language for the informal situation.

Table 7.4: Language variation in the informal situation

Between clauses

	Preceding clause	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base clause					
Ital	n=92	48 (52.17%)	10 (10.87%)	12 (13.04%)	22 (23.91%)
Sicil	n=65	13 (20.00%)	25 (38.46%)	11 (16.92%)	16 (24.61%)
Engl	n=49	11 (22.45%)	10 (20.41%)	25 (51.02%)	3 (6.12%)
Mix & Transf.	n=99	26 (26.26%)	14 (14.14%)	15 (15.15%)	44 (44.44%)

## Across turns

	Cl. in prec turn	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base clause					
Ital	n=29	17 (58.62%)	3 (10.34%)	3 (10.34%)	6 (20.69%)
Sicil	n=16	1 (6.25%)	5 (31.25%)	1 (6.25%)	9 (56.25%)
Engl	n=29	4 (13.79%)	8 (27.59%)	4 (13.79%)	13 (44.83%)
Mix & Transf	n=53	17 (32.07%)	9 (16.98%)	9 (16.98%)	18 (33.96%)

The excerpt below shows the higher degree of language variation which occurs both between clauses and across turns for all three languages in the informal situation.

## Excerpt 7.3

- A    *eh bello u vè cost' è BEAUTIFUL vedi vedi com' u fa?* [loud and ironic about the way Rino is folding his worksheet]
- R    YEH IT'S OKAY
- A    MY GOD: D e se questo *tuttu::: u rosso chi è idda o-o:: chi-ffu* [looking at his exercise book]
- R    NO NO THAT'S MINE
- A    YOUR WRITING *est macari*
- R    {YEH I BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO WRITE IN ALL
- A    RED PENCIL.
- R    RED
- A    [RED PEN
- A    beautiful you see like this it's beautiful you see how he is reducing it?
- R    yeh it's okay
- A    my god and if this one all this red was it her [the teacher] or what happened?
- R    no no that's mine
- A    this is your writing even
- R    yeh because you have to write in ah
- A    red pencil
- R    red
- A    red pen

As shown by these data, then, a major shift in base language occurs in the three situations. In the formal situation Italian is clearly the base language and use of the other two languages or contact among the three languages within the clause is kept to a minimum. Sicilian is the base language of the family situation, but use of English and

contact within the clause occur to a greater extent than in the formal situation. It must also be noted that English, rather than Italian, is the second most used language in the family situation. With regard to the informal situation, the results point to the predominance of an unclear base language.

### 7.3 Incidence of contact

While in the preceding section the base language of each situation has been identified taking into account both the use of each language at clause level and the variation of each language between clauses and across turns, this section is concerned with examining the incidence of contact in Anna's speech, regardless of which of the three languages are involved. The focus here is on the amount of contact and on the different types of contact configurations that occur at different linguistic levels: code switching across turns and between clauses; mixing and transference within the clause. Following this, a comparison is made of the incidence of contact in Anna's speech at the various linguistic levels in the three situations.

#### 7.3.1 Code switching across turns

Table 7.5 shows language use in Anna's speech across turns. In the formal situation, 146 of Anna's clauses are preceded by another turn uttered by her, as mentioned above (cf. 6.1.4): 32.20% of them display a change of language or contact configuration (mixing and transference) compared to her previous turn. The situation is different in the informal and the family situations, where switching across turns reaches much higher percentages (74.02% and 55.77% respectively).

Table 7.5: Language use across turns

Situation	Formal	Informal	Family
	n=146	n=127	n=104
Same language	99 (67.80%)	33 (25.98%)	46 (44.23%)
Switching	47 (32.20%)	94 (74.02%)	58 (55.77%)

### 7.3.2 Code switching between clauses

The pattern displayed in Anna's speech across turns is confirmed also at interclause level. In the formal situation, 258 of Anna's clauses are preceded by another clause uttered by her. As shown in Table 7.6, 67.83% of them do not display any change of language or contact configuration compared to her previous clause, and language use from clause to clause varies only to a low degree (32.17%). The results are very different in the other two situations, where well over half of Anna's clauses display a change of language or contact configuration compared to her preceding clause. It should also be noted that the percentages of switches are quite similar in the informal and in the family situations (59.34% and 58.91%).

Table 7.6: Language use between clauses

Situation	Formal	Informal	Family
	n=258	n=305	n=275
Same language	175 (67.83%)	124 (40.66%)	113 (41.09%)
Switching	83 (32.17%)	181 (59.34%)	162 (58.91%)

### 7.3.3 Within the clause: mixing and transference

Table 7.7 presents the percentages of contact configurations within the clause. The data confirm the trends already observed above clause level, in that the occurrences of transference and mixing increase in the informal and in the family situations. It should be noted that in the formal situation, transference, that is, contact at word level, occurs more frequently than mixing; on the contrary, in

the other two situations mixed clauses are more numerous than transfers.

**Table 7.7: Language use within the clause**

Situation	Formal	Informal	Family
	n= 557	n= 615	n= 554
Transference	45 (8.08%)	92 (14.96%)	50 (9.02%)
Mixing	33 (5.92%)	110 (17.89%)	57 (10.29%)
Other clauses Ital/Sicil/Eng	479 (86.00%)	413 (67.15%)	447 (80.69%)

Chi Sq = 66.90  $df = 4$   $p < .01$

### 7.3.4 Amount and type of contact

The data presented above have shown an increase in the amount of contact in Anna's speech in the informal and in the family situations. At every linguistic level analysed, the formal situation displays the lowest degree of contact among the three languages. In the informal and in the family situations, on the other hand, language contact is much more prominent. This pattern is highlighted in Table 7.8, which summarises the relative incidence of the different contact configurations in each situation.

**Table 7.8: Type of contact in the three situations \***

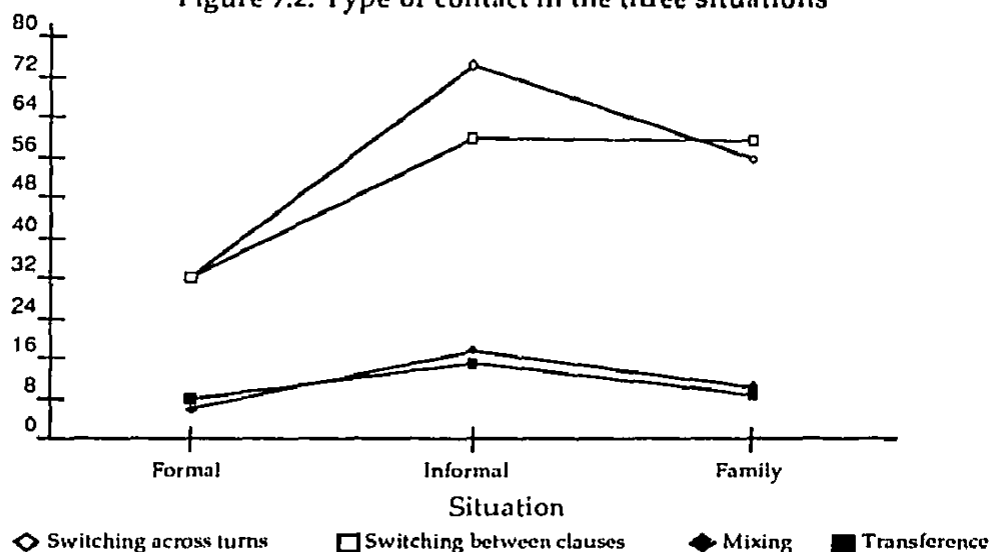
Situation	Formal	Informal	Family
Switching across turns	32.20%	74.02%	55.77%
Switching between cls.	32.17%	59.34%	58.91%
Mixing	5.92%	17.89%	10.29%
Transference	8.08%	14.96%	9.02%

\* The percentages are based on Tables 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7. Although the percentages in the columns are based on different totals and therefore cannot be directly compared, they are still a good indication of the trends regarding the relative incidence of each contact configuration in every situation.

The higher degree of contact in the informal situation compared to the family situation can be explained with the role that Anna often has to play in the informal situation as a mediator among participants with different language preferences (that is, the children and the researcher), as mentioned above (cf. 4.3.3).

As shown clearly in Table 7.8 and Figure 7.2, the incidence of contact is higher in the situations where the base language is either unclear (that is, the informal situation) or Sicilian (that is, the family situation). In the formal situation, where the base language is Italian, a higher percentage of clauses is uttered in one language only and switching is at its lowest. We can conclude that Italian as base language elicits or "allows" a lower degree of contact than Sicilian as base language, both within and above clause level.

Figure 7.2: Type of contact in the three situations



Another result that emerges from these data concerns the type of contact occurring in the situations: in every situation, contact in Anna's speech occurs more frequently above clause level than within the clause.

The findings of this section: the increase in the amount of contact in Anna's speech in the informal and in the family situations, the different roles of Italian and Sicilian as base languages and the

higher frequency of code switching (both across turns and between clauses) compared to mixing and transference, are fully discussed at the end of Chapter 8 (cf. 8.3).

#### 7.4 Use of language compared to previous speaker

The data presented in this section refer to Anna's use of language at clause level compared to the language used in the clause uttered by the previous speaker. It is to be remembered that the criterion of analysis followed here is one of adjacency, as specified above (cf. 5.2.1.5).

As shown in Table 7.9, use of language across participants varies in the three situations. In the formal situation, 270 of Anna's clauses are preceded by a clause uttered by another speaker; in this situation Anna's choice of language follows the language of the previous speaker 78.15% of the times. In the other two situations, on the other hand, well over half of her clauses display a change compared to the language of the previous speaker.

Table 7.9: Anna's language use compared to previous speaker

Situation	Formal	Informal	Family
	n=270	n=272	n=190
Cls. not preceded by a different lg.	211 (78.15%)	97 (35.66%)	82 (43.16%)
Cls. preceded by a different lg.	59 (21.85%)	175 (64.34%)	108 (56.84%)

In line with the findings shown above, then, these data show an increase in the contact configuration called "switching across participants" in the informal and in the family situations.

In order to summarise the trends of contact presented so far, the excerpts below show the different language use across participants from the formal to the informal and the family situations, as well as the increase in contact at every linguistic level analysed in Anna's speech (across turns, between clauses and within the clause).

## Excerpt 7.4 (formal situation)

- N sicuramente ci sarà lei  
 A eh ci ho telefonato stasera  
 N eh che ha detto?  
 A eh sono là *dici*  
 N non se n'è perso uno  
 A eh no ah: anzi *dici* che si trovava mio marito che è andato da-a sua mamma e essa che era a telefono che parlava e ci ha detto che questa sera ci stava questa: spettacolo
- N for sure she will be there  
 A I rang her tonight  
 N what did she say?  
 A I will be there she says  
 N she hasn't missed one  
 A no actually she says that my husband was there as he went to visit his mother and she was on the phone talking and said that tonight there was this show

## Excerpt 7.5 (informal situation)

- A eh NEXT TIME ti porti na bottiglia piccolina e poi *cci â* metti su  
 (next time you take a little bottle and then you can put it on)  
 G THEY SELL THEM AT THE TUCK SHOP FOR FIVE CENTS  
 A e *tâ* compravi non ce l'avevi la moneta? *tâ* compravi e *ci mittiva a*  
 TOMATO SAUCE  
 (why didn't you buy it then? didn't you have the money? you could have bought it and put the tomato sauce on)

## Excerpt 7.6 (family situation)

- A *rino mi senti tu a-mmia?*  
 (do you hear me?)  
 R no [loud]  
 A COME ON  
 R no  
 A COME ON *apparcchiamu ccà a tavula*  
 (come on let's set the table)  
 R WHAT FOR?  
 A *comu* WHAT FOR? *s'ava-* *mo* *iciari* COME ON *facemu ccà pigghia i*  
*bicchieri*  
 (what do you mean what for? we have to eat come on let's take the glasses)  
 R oh  
 A *i fucchetti* ALL RIGHT?  
 (and the forks all right?)  
 R ohi  
 A COME ON  
 R I DON'T WANT TO BUT  
 A *comu* NO WANT TO? *pigghia u* DRINK *furchetti* ALL RIGHT? *a-ssbrigati*  
 (what do you mean don't want to? take the drink forks all right? hurry up!)

- R WHY CAN'T GIORGIO DO IT?  
 A *giorgio macari* giorgio! [calling him] COME ON  
 (Giorgio as well) [calls Giorgio]  
 R I WANT TO GO AND HELP *papà*  
 A *u papà un fa nienti cchiù*  
 (dad is not doing anything else)

### 7.5 Linguistic patterns and the situations

This chapter has examined the major linguistic patterns in Anna's overall speech in the three situations.

The first issue that this chapter has dealt with has been the identification of the base language used by Anna in each situation. A definition of base language has been proposed, which operates in quantitative terms and takes into account both the total number of clauses uttered in a particular language in each situation and the degree of variation between clauses and across turns for each language. As explained above (cf. 7.1), in this way our definition is in agreement with the general analytical framework adopted in this study, where the clause is seen within its linguistic context rather than in isolation.

As shown in the analysis, Anna's base language changes in the three situations. Italian is the language that Anna uses more frequently in the formal situation, while an unclear base language occurs in the informal situation and Sicilian is the base language in the family situation.

A second finding that has emerged in Anna's overall speech concerns the variation in the amount of contact occurring from one situation to the other. The analysis has shown an increase at every level of contact in the informal and in the family situations. The formal situation is characterised by the lowest degree of contact, both within and above clause level; in the two other situations, on the other hand, language contact is a much more prominent feature, at every linguistic level.

Based on these findings some considerations can be drawn concerning the linguistic patterns in the three situations.

It was said above (6.2) that the three different situations are characterised by different degrees of structuring, and that the formal situation was the one most constrained in terms of choice of

interlocutor, topic, expression of emotions and discourse structure. Likewise, the findings <sup>that emerge from</sup> this chapter show that a different degree of constraint also affects linguistic patterns.

In the formal situation Anna's linguistic behaviour is more restricted than in the other two situations: she adheres to use of one language only, Italian; that is, the language spoken and used by her guest; she carefully avoids use of the other two languages (Sicilian and English) or contact among all three languages at every linguistic level; whenever the other two languages do "intrude" upon her speech, it is mainly at word level (transference), that is, in a very circumscribed way, rather than in longer chunks; she also follows other speakers' language use, thus avoiding bilingual exchanges.

In the informal situation, on the other hand, all three languages are freely used even if the person who is visiting does not speak them herself; contact among all three languages occurs at every linguistic level, and so do bilingual conversations. The same happens in the family situation, given the even closer relationship among participants.

Thus, the higher degree of familiarity among participants allows a less constrained language use, where Anna can follow more freely her own language preferences and take into account other participants' preferences or language use only to a lower degree.

Two important points emerge from this chapter: firstly, bilingual speech appears to be a censored type of behaviour, to be used only in the presence of well known people rather than strangers. Secondly, the three languages: Italian, Sicilian and English, seem to enjoy a different status in Anna's speech repertoire as she tends to treat them differently both in linguistic and situational terms.

These issues will be more fully discussed on the basis of findings which emerge from the analyses of Anna's speech addressed to some specific interlocutors (cf. 8.3.1).

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### LINGUISTIC PATTERNS IN THE SPEECH TO SPECIFIC INTERLOCUTORS

While in Chapter 7 Anna's overall speech was analysed, this chapter focuses on the linguistic patterns displayed in her speech addressed to the major interlocutors of the corpus, that is, the children and the researcher. In this way a comparison can be made between linguistic patterns in general and in the speech addressed to specific interlocutors, thus addressing the third research objective (5.1.4). This also allows an evaluation of the effect of the interlocutors on language patterns.

The first part of the chapter (8.1) explores the speech addressed to the children. The analysis proceeds along similar lines as the analysis of Anna's overall speech (ch. 7): first the base language is identified in each situation and the results compared; then the incidence of contact at the various linguistic levels in Anna's own speech is examined and compared in each situation; finally, language use by the children and the mother in adjacent clauses is explored in the three situations. A further analysis which is carried out in the speech addressed to the children is a correlation between a) type of topic and use of language, and b) tone and use of language, in order to verify whether activity oriented topics or emotive speech are associated with a particular language or contact configuration, as per the research objective set out above (5.1.4).

The second part of the chapter (8.2) explores the speech addressed to the researcher. As in the first part, the analysis concentrates on two major aspects: a) identification and comparison of the base language in the two situations where I am present, that is, the formal and the

informal situations; b) analysis and comparison of the incidence of contact configuration at every linguistic level in both situations.

Finally, the third part (8.3) brings together and discusses the major results of Chapters 7 and 8. On the basis of the findings from the quantitative analyses and my observations, the relationship between Sicilian and Italian in Anna's repertoire is explored in depth.

## 8.1 Linguistic patterns in the speech to the children

This first part of the chapter focuses upon Anna's speech specifically addressed to the children. The base language is firstly identified in every situation, then patterns of contact at various linguistic levels are examined and compared as well as patterns of language use by Anna and the children in adjacent clauses. Finally, a possible correlation between use of language, topic and tone is explored.

### 8.1.1 Identifying the base language

The first question concerns the identification of the base language in the speech addressed to the children in the three situations. Table 8.1 shows the percentages of clauses uttered in Italian, Sicilian and English, or displaying contact within the clause, in the speech addressed to the children individually.

Table 8.1: Use of language in speech addressed to the children in the three situations

To Rino		Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Formal	n=41	21 (51.22%)	2 (4.88%)	8 (19.51%)	10 (24.39%)
Informal	n=177	43 (24.29%)	36 (20.34%)	39 (22.03%)	59 (33.33%)
Family	n=234	12 (5.13%)	132 (56.41%)	50 (21.37%)	40 (17.09%)

Chi Sq = 112.58 df = 6 p < .01

To Giorgio		Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Formal	n=42	19 (45.24%)	2 (4.76%)	12 (28.57%)	9 (21.43%)
Informal	n=204	30 (14.71%)	53 (25.98%)	40 (19.61%)	81 (39.71%)
Family	n=125	11 (8.80%)	61 (48.80%)	27 (21.60%)	26 (20.80%)

Chi Sq = 61.61 df = 6 p < .01

With regard to the first criterion set out for base language identification, that is, amount of clauses uttered in one particular language, Table 8.1 shows that with both children, Italian is the language used more frequently in the formal situation (51.22% and 45.24%), while in the family situation it is Sicilian (56.41% and 48.80%). The picture is not so clear for the informal situation. With both children the highest percentage is of clauses displaying some contact (33.33% and 39.71%) rather than clauses uttered in any of the three languages.

Furthermore, in the informal situation the data differ from child to child (see Figures 8.1 and 8.2): of the three languages, Italian is still the one used most in talking to Rino (24.29%), however the other two are used almost as frequently (20.34% Sicilian clauses and 22.03% English clauses). On the other hand, Sicilian is the language used most frequently with Giorgio (25.98%), while Italian is the one least used (14.71%). Such a difference between the two children can be explained with some exchanges of the informal situation where, as mentioned above (cf. 4.3.3), Anna is helping Giorgio do his homework, while I am helping Rino. Therefore, while Anna addresses Giorgio in Sicilian, she talks to Rino more frequently in Italian so as to include me as well. Notice however in the informal situation the high percentage (39.71%) of clauses addressed to Giorgio which display either transference or mixing.

Figure 8.1: Use of language in speech to Rino

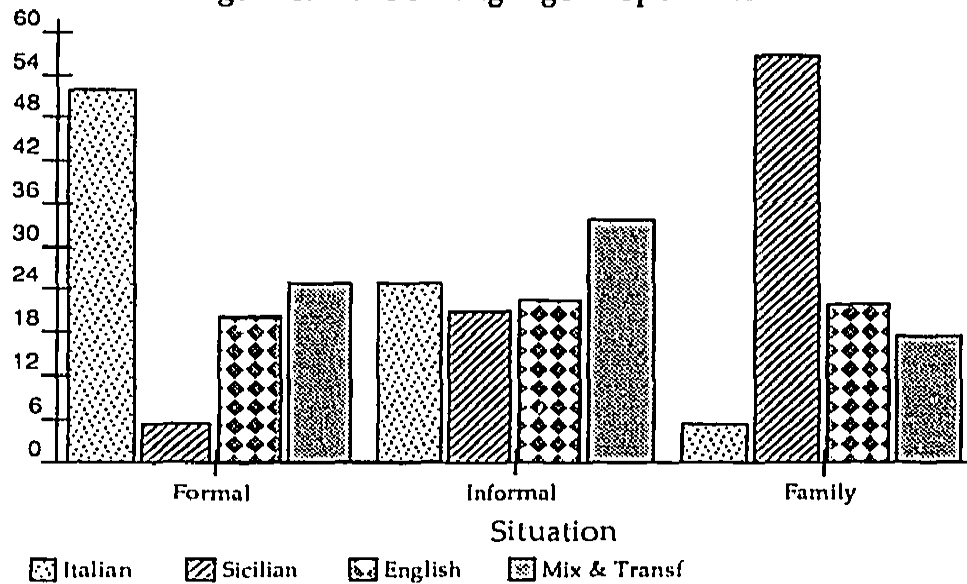
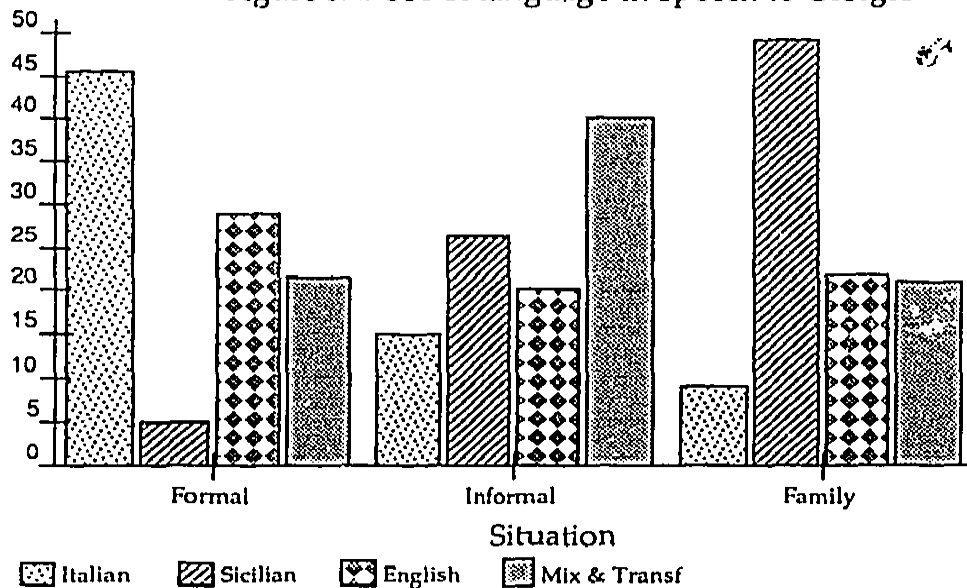


Figure 8.2: Use of language in speech to Giorgio



Let us now examine the second criterion for identifying the base language, that is, degree of variation between clauses. It must be noted that in the speech to the children variation across turns is not being considered in the analysis as the number of occurrences is too low to indicate any clear trends. However, for the purpose of completeness,

the tables are presented in Appendix II. It must be mentioned also that the numbers at turn level confirm all the patterns identified in the analysis at interclause level.

Table 8.2 shows language variation in the clauses addressed to Rino.

**Table 8.2: Language variation between clauses in speech addressed to Rino**

**Formal situation**

	Preced cl	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=12	10 (83.33%)	1 (8.33%)	1 (8.33%)	--
Sicil	n=1	1 (100.00%)	--	--	--
Engl	n=3	--	--	2 (66.67%)	1 (33.33%)
Mix & Transf.	n=3	--	1 (33.33%)	1 (33.33%)	1 (33.33%)

**Informal situation**

	Preced cl	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=17	5 (29.41%)	4 (23.53%)	6 (35.29%)	2 (11.76%)
Sicil	n=21	5 (23.81%)	7 (33.33%)	4 (19.05%)	5 (23.81%)
Engl	n=21	7 (33.33%)	3 (14.29%)	10 (47.62%)	1 (4.76%)
Mix & Transf.	n=27	8 (29.63%)	6 (22.22%)	5 (18.52%)	8 (29.63%)

**Family situation**

	Preced cl	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=3	1 (33.33%)	1 (33.33%)	1 (33.33%)	--
Sicil	n=56	1 (1.79%)	36 (64.29%)	15 (26.79%)	4 (7.14%)
Engl	n=20	2 (10.00%)	10 (50.00%)	4 (20.00%)	4 (20.00%)
Mix & Transf.	n=23	1 (4.35%)	11 (47.83%)	6 (26.09%)	5 (21.74%)

In the formal situation the number of occurrences is too low to draw conclusions with any degree of confidence. Nonetheless, Italian is the language displaying the lowest degree of variation between clauses (Table 8.2): an Italian clause is preceded by another clause in Italian in 10 cases, that is, more frequently than the other languages.

The excerpt below shows the low degree of Italian variation in the speech addressed to Rino in the formal situation.

### Excerpt 8.1

- A     *portati u pacchettu di::: pà tosse*           [Rino coughs]  
 N     *mamma mia però la tosse*  
 A     *meltiti una una una caramella nella tasca tè tiè ci hai la tasca qua o no?*  
       *non ce n'hai tasche?*  
 R     *sì* [soft]
- A     take the packet for the cough with you  
 N     gosh what cough  
 A     put a lolly in the pocket take it have you got a pocket here or not?  
       haven't you got any pockets?  
 R     yes

In the family situation, Sicilian is the language which is used more frequently not only at clause level (Table 8.1) but also at interclause level (Table 8.2): a Sicilian clause is preceded by another in the same language 36 times (64.29%), while a clause in English only 4 times (20.00%) and one in Italian in 1 case out of 3. Excerpt 8.2 shows the lower degree of variation of Sicilian in the family situation in the speech addressed to Rino.

### Excerpt 8.2

- [Rino is serving some food at the table]  
 R     HOW MUCH?  
 A     *no aspetta un minuto*  
       *(no wait a minute)*  
 R     how much?  
 A     *cù cucchiarinu pigghialu bbonu cù cucchiarinu ora veni a mentilu supra u*  
       *tavulinu*  
       *(with the teaspoon take it properly with the teaspoon now come and put*  
       *it on the table)*

As usual, the pattern is not so clear in the informal situation, as Italian is the language used more frequently at clause level (Table 8.1)

but displays a high degree of variation between clauses (Table 8.2): an Italian clause is preceded by another Italian clause only 5 times (29.41%), while in 12 cases (70.59%) it is preceded by a clause in a different language or displaying a contact configuration. Both Sicilian and English, on the other hand, display a lower degree of variation between clauses: a clause in Sicilian is preceded by a clause in the same language 7 times (33.33%); one in English 10 times (47.62%). In the informal situation, then, there is a discrepancy between the language used more frequently at clause level and its degree of variation at interclause level.

The discrepancy between the language used more frequently at clause and interclause level indicates that in the informal situation a clear base language cannot be identified on the basis of the two criteria adopted in this study. The excerpt below shows the unclear base language in the speech to Rino in the informal situation.

### Excerpt 8.3

- A *e a-avà* prend-u -BBUCCU [book] prend-u -BBUCCU *a-lleggiri* FIRST  
(come on get the book you must read first)
- R NO I'LL STAY ON MY OWN
- A nò [loud]
- R YES
- A chi [threatening him]
- G PLAY THE COMPUTER
- R YES?
- A no no COME ON pre leggi un pochettin-u -BBUCCU e poi  
(no no come on read the book a little and then
- R [no::: [loud]
- A [e macari a signora si fa na  
*partitina cu-ttia*  
(and maybe the lady will have a little game with you)
- N ecco dopo giochiamo  
(yes we can play afterwards)
- A [avà ah  
(come on)
- R MUM I DON'T WANT TO READ THE BOOK [whining]
- A WHY NOT [very loud] ah eh è troppo intelligente già i sapi tutto quanto  
no? non c'è bisogno più a. prendere o u -BBUCCU  
(why not? ah he is too intelligent he already knows everything don't  
you? there is no need to take a book any longer)

In the speech addressed to Giorgio, the situation is similar to Rino's with regard to the formal and the family situations. In the

formal situation Italian is the language used most frequently at clause level (Table 8.1) and the one showing the lowest degree of variation at interclause level (Table 8.3): in spite of the low numbers, a clause in Italian is preceded by another in the same language 6 times (54.55%), more frequently than the other languages.

**Table 8.3: Language variation between clauses in speech addressed to Giorgio**

Formal situation					
	Preced cl	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=11	6 (54.55%)	--	3 (27.27%)	2 (18.18%)
Sicil	n=1	1 (100.00%)	--	--	--
Engl	n=1	1 (100.00%)	--	--	--
Mix & Transf.	n=3	2 (66.67%)	--	1 (33.33%)	--
Informal situation					
	Preced cl	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=15	5 (33.33%)	2 (13.33%)	3 (20.00%)	5 (33.33%)
Sicil	n=28	2 (7.14%)	16 (57.14%)	3 (10.71%)	7 (25.00%)
Engl	n=12	1 (8.33%)	5 (41.67%)	5 (41.67%)	1 (8.33%)
Mix & Transf.	n=38	5 (13.16%)	6 (15.79%)	8 (21.05%)	19 (50.00%)
Family situation					
	Preced cl	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=6	1 (16.67%)	1 (16.67%)	2 (33.33%)	2 (33.33%)
Sicil	n=32	1 (3.12%)	22 (68.75%)	6 (18.75%)	3 (9.37%)
Engl	n=8	--	5 (62.50%)	--	3 (37.50%)
Mix & Transf.	n=14	2 (14.29%)	6 (42.86%)	3 (21.43%)	3 (21.43%)

The low degree of variation of Italian in the formal situation is shown in the excerpt below.

#### Excerpt 8.4

[showing Giorgio a spot in the corridor where he can hang something]

A ques questa la metti poi nell'aria così che scende eh

(.)

A dove dove ci sta qualche cosa qua LOOK giorgio (...) là dove c'è quello mett-in cornice eh?

A this one then you can put it up in the air so it will come down where there is something else look giorgio there where there is that one you can put it in the frame right?

In the family situation a similar pattern occurs with Sicilian: a clause in Sicilian is preceded by one in the same language 22 times (68.75%), more frequently than the other languages (Table 8.3). Excerpt 8.5 shows the lower degree of variation of Sicilian, both between clauses (and across turns), in the speech to Giorgio in the family situation.

#### Excerpt 8.5

A COME ON *pigghia*

G [mamma

A *pigghia pigghia comu si chiama pigghia u summaggiu n'ettl'a tavola*  
u DRINK ALL RIGHT? na cosa ciasunu s'av-a-ffari

G *chi?*

A *na cosa l'unu*

G u DRINK

A [*rino rino misi misi i furchetti tu mett-u DRINK bicchieri (...) piatti*

G NOT AGAIN

A come on get

G mummy

A get the what do you call it get the cheese put it on the table the drink all right? each of you has to do one thing

G what?

A one thing each

G the drink

A rino put the forks you put the drink glasses plates

G not again

The data differ from Rino's with regard to the informal situation, in that Sicilian is the language used most frequently at clause

level (Table 8.1) and, among the three languages, the one showing the lowest degree of variation between clauses (Table 8.3): 16 clauses in Sicilian (57.14%) are preceded by other clauses in the same language. However, a feature that must be considered in the informal situation is the high number of sequences of clauses showing mixing and transference. At interclause level, 50.00% of the clauses displaying these two contact configurations are preceded by clauses also displaying them (Table 8.3). Therefore, in the informal situation, not only are 39.71% of all clauses uttered by Anna to Giorgio characterised by either mixing or transference (cf. Table 8.1), but also a considerable amount of these clauses occur in sequences. These figures indicate that, on the basis of our two criteria, Sicilian cannot be considered the base language in Anna's speech to Giorgio in the informal situation. As was the case in the speech to Rino, in the informal situation Anna's speech to Giorgio is characterised by an unclear base language, as aptly shown in the excerpt below.

#### Excerpt 8.6

- G MUM CAN YOU GET ME THE RUBBER WITH THE BUCKET? IT'S ON THE TABLE I PUT  
 A *ci nn'era cchiù -dd'una* RUBBER  
 (there was more than one rubber)  
 G [HERE I PUT HERE I-I GOT (...)  
 A *vidi quantu cosi* RUBBERS *chi cci annu? e-cchissa ceccanu una*  
 (you see how many things rubbers that they have? and this one they are  
 looking for one)  
 G YEH I GIVE ME THE WHITE ONE IT'S MO MORE NEAT  
 A THIS ONE?  
 G YEH THE ONE WITH I  
 (.)  
 G SEE? CAN'T SEE  
 A YEH THAT'S GOOD  
 G SEE? CAN'T SEE A THING  
 A *forsi vidi chi-ssi fai co-questa* meglio  
 (maybe see if you use this one it is better)  
 G [DON'T PRESS HARD ON IT

The result emerging from the speech addressed to the children confirms the pattern identified above with regard to the entire corpus, of a shift in base language from one situation to the other. While Italian is the base language of the formal situation and Sicilian of the family situation, the informal situation displays an unclear base language in the speech to both children.

### 8.1.2 Incidence of contact

Having identified the base language of each situation in the speech to the children, the next section examines the incidence of the various contact configurations in each situation, regardless of which languages are involved in the contact. Therefore the next section presents the overall results concerning code switching across turns and between clauses as well as mixing and transference in Anna's speech to the children, and compare the incidence of the various contact configurations in the three situations.

#### 8.1.2.1 Code switching across turns

As can be noted from Table 8.4, the figures relating to language use across turns are quite low: overall only 86 (15.98%) of a total of 538 clauses addressed to Rino and 79 (21.29%) of a total of 371 addressed to Giorgio. This is a result of the kind of interactions that take place between mother and children: they are often very short, often of one turn only, as they are frequently left incomplete (e.g., with questions unanswered) or easily interrupted by other participants. They are similar to the interactions of the type B described above (6.1.4). However, in spite of the low numbers, the figures have been included in this analysis because they confirm patterns that emerge at other levels.

Leaving out the formal situation, we notice in Table 8.4 that switching across turns is a prominent feature of Anna's speech to the children in the informal and in the family situations: 84.37% and 58.82% in the speech to Rino; 76.09% and 65.00% to Giorgio.

Table 8.4: Language use across turns in speech to the children

To Rino			
Situation	Formal n=3	Informal n=32	Family n=51
Same language	1 (33.33%)	5 (15.62%)	21 (41.18%)
Switching	2 (66.67%)	27 (84.37%)	30 (58.82%)

To Giorgio	n=13	n=46	n=20
Same language	4 (30.77%)	11 (23.91%)	7 (35.00%)
Switching	9 (69.23%)	35 (76.09%)	13 (65.00%)

The excerpt below shows some occurrences of code switching across turns in Anna's speech to Rino in the family situation. Notice how Anna switches from Sicilian to English from the first to the second turn, switching back to Sicilian in her third turn.

#### Excerpt 8.7

- A *e ccà non manci chi è chista?* [pointing at some food in the plate]  
(and this one aren't you eating it what's this?)
- R SAUCE
- A WHAT ABOUT THIS ONE?
- R OH! DID YOU PUT IT [soft]
- A *mancu si nn'accurrgia*  
(he hadn't even noticed it)
- R NO I THOUGHT IT I WAS FINISHED

#### 8.1.2.2 Code switching between clauses

With regard to language use between clauses (Table 8.5), the data are different for the two children.

Table 8.5: Language use between clauses in speech to the children

To Rino			
Situation	Formal n=19	Informal n=93	Family n=112
Same language	13 (68.42%)	29 (31.18%)	45 (40.18%)
Switching	6 (31.58%)	64 (68.82%)	67 (59.82%)
To Giorgio			
Situation	Formal n=16	Informal n=93	Family n=60
Same language	6 (37.50%)	37 (39.78%)	24 (40.00%)
Switching	10 (62.50%)	56 (60.22%)	36 (60.00%)

In the case of Rino, the results confirm the trends observed so far, in that the occurrences of switching increase in the informal and in the family situations compared to the formal one. In the case of Giorgio, however, the percentages are similar in all three situations. This difference can be explained taking into account the children's language use in the episodes chosen for the analysis (cf. 4.3.1). In the formal situation, on several occasions Rino tries to speak Italian or Sicilian, therefore Anna tends to speak to him entirely in Italian. Hence the lower percentage of switches between clauses in her speech to Rino. The excerpt below is quite interesting in this respect as Anna is correcting Rino's Italian/Sicilian.

#### Excerpt 8.8

N	tu ce l'hai qualche disegno bello?
R	YEH ci ho io ci ha a casa
N	uh
R	ci ha <i>nu CARU</i> [car] e io lo <i>faciu</i>
N	cos'hai fatto?
R	<i>nu CARU</i> (...)
A	[na macchina [correcting Rino]
N	ah fammi vedere
N	have you got a nice drawing?
R	yes I have got it at home
N	uh
R	I have a car and I did
N	what did you do?
R	a car
A	a car
N	ah show me

Giorgio, on the other hand, uses English almost exclusively, therefore, in speaking to him, Anna is more inclined to "fluctuate" among the three (or two) languages from clause to clause, as she does in the domestic environment. Hence the higher percentage of switches between clauses in Anna's speech to Giorgio, as shown in the excerpt below.

#### Excerpt 8.9

G	I HAVE NEVER BEEN
A	[come no
	(what do you mean)

- G NOT NOT THAT I HAVE EVER BEEN THERE IT'S JUST THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN AN PUPPET SHOW  
 A [i PUPPET  
 SHOW eh eh ancora non l'avevi visto mai?  
 (the puppet show you hadn't seen it yet?)  
 G HAVE YOU? HAVE YOU EVER SEEN mamma?  
 A EH I SAW *wii-quann* 'ero io: piccola no ora  
 (yes I saw it when I was a child not now)  
 G IN ITALY?  
 A IN ITALY YEH a  
 G [HOW MUCH?  
 A [a [name of village] OH MANY TIMES  
 G MANY TIMES?  
 A eh

In spite of this difference between the two brothers, the interesting feature to underline is the high frequency of switching between clauses in Anna's speech to the children in the informal and family situations, as clearly shown in Table 8.5. The excerpt below aptly presents some occurrences of code switching both across turns and between clauses in the speech to Giorgio in the family situation.

#### Excerpt 8.10

- A *o cucchiarinu pi mettir'u summaggiu giorgio giorgio?*  
 G OH OH OH LOOK NOT FAIR  
 A WHAT'S WRONG? *mell'u cucchiarinu c'un pocu di summaggiu*  
 G cucchiaino cucchiarino [as if singing]
- A the teaspoon to put the cheese on Giorgio  
 G oh oh oh look not fair  
 A what's wrong? put the teaspoon with a little bit of cheese  
 G teaspoon teaspoon

#### 8.1.2.3 Within the clause: mixing and transference

With regard to contact configurations within the clause (Table 8.6), we notice that, while switching tended to increase in both the informal and the family situations, mixing and transference increase consistently only in the informal situation. As was discussed above (cf. 4.3.3) this can be attributed - at least partly - to my presence, in particular for the increase of mixing, as mixed clauses (especially Italian-Sicilian mixing) are often used by Anna as a way of addressing the children while including me in her address.

**Table 8.6: Language use within the clause in speech to the children**

To Rino				
Situation		Mixing	Transference	Ital/Sic/Engl
Formal	n=41	5 (12.20%)	5 (12.20%)	31 (75.61%)
Informal	n=177	35 (19.77%)	24 (13.56%)	118 (66.67%)
Family	n=234	19 (8.12%)	21 (8.97%)	194 (82.91%)
Chi Sq = 15.98 df = 4 p < .01				
To Giorgio				
Situation		Mixing	Transference	Ital/Sic/Engl
Formal	n=42	5 (11.90%)	4 (9.52%)	33 (78.57%)
Informal	n=204	48 (23.53%)	33 (16.18%)	123 (60.29%)
Family	n=125	17 (13.60%)	9 (7.20%)	99 (79.20%)
Chi Sq = 15.31 df = 4 p < .01				

A second trend to observe in Table 8.6 is the decrease of transference and mixing in the family situation compared to the formal one (the only exception being the occurrences of mixing in the speech addressed to Giorgio, which increase slightly compared to the formal situation). Thus, while switching, that is, contact above the clause, increases both in the informal and in the family situations, in the case of contact within the clause the increase is limited to the informal situation.

#### 8.1.2.4 Amount and type of contact

From the data presented above, the major result to underline is the high frequency of contact configurations in Anna's speech to the children, particularly above clause level. Table 8.7 summarises the relative incidence of the different contact configurations in the speech to the children in the three situations. In all three situations and with both children, contact occurs more frequently above clause level than within the clause. Although mixing and transference do occur, code switching is the contact configuration that occurs most frequently in

Anna's everyday speech to the children. This is confirmed also by the fact that in Anna's speech within the family situation occurrences of mixing and transference are at their lowest, as noted above (8.1.2.3).

**Table 8.7: Type of contact in the three situations in speech addressed to the children \***

To Rino Situation	Formal	Informal	Family
Switching across turns	66.67%	84.37%	58.32%
Switching bet. clauses	31.58%	68.82%	59.82%
Mixing	12.20%	19.77%	8.12%
Transference	12.20%	13.56%	8.97%
To Giorgio Situation	Formal	Informal	Family
Switching across turns	69.23%	76.09%	65.00%
Switching bet. clauses	62.50%	60.22%	60.00%
Mixing	11.90%	23.53%	13.60%
Transference	9.52%	16.18%	7.20%

\* Percentages based on Tables 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6. See also note in Table 7.8.

The same result, that is, a higher incidence of code switching compared to contact within the clause, was also found in Anna's general speech, as discussed above (cf. 7.3.4). Therefore, in terms of incidence of contact configurations, the pattern which emerges from the speech to the children coincides with the pattern identified for the entire corpus and confirms that Anna's bilingual (or trilingual) speech tends to be built upon higher constituents rather than at word level. This finding regarding the higher incidence of switching in Anna's speech, will be discussed below (cf. 8.3).

On the other hand, it has been noticed how a variation in the amount of contact in the three situations - as was found in the entire corpus (cf. 7.3.4) - is often difficult to identify in the speech to the children, given the low number of occurrences available in some configurations.

### 8.1.3 Use of language compared to children's use

Another feature analysed in the speech addressed to the children is the language used by Anna to reply to them (Table 8.8).

As mentioned above (cf. 5.2.1.5), the data which refer to Anna's use of language compared to the previous speaker in the entire corpus codify the sequentiality of language use in the general unfolding of the discourse. However, for the purpose of the present analysis, Anna's clauses addressed to each child which were preceded by another clause uttered by the same child were all manually checked, in order to verify whether the child was also Anna's interlocutor. In this way, those occurrences of "switching across participants" which were linked to a change of interlocutor were excluded from the analysis. Therefore the percentages presented in Table 8.8 only refer to replies given by Anna to the children.

Table 8.8: Anna's language use compared to the children's as previous speakers

Talking to Rino			
Situation	Formal	Informal	Family
	n=13	n=55	n=77
Same language	7 (53.85%)	17 (30.91%)	23 (29.87%)
Switching	6 (46.15%)	38 (69.09%)	54 (70.13%)
Talking to Giorgio			
Situation	Formal	Informal	Family
	n=18	n=83	n=32
Same language	13 (72.22%)	26 (31.33%)	12 (37.50%)
Switching	5 (27.78%)	57 (68.67%)	20 (62.50%)

The first feature to notice in the Table is that Anna replies in a language different from the children's more frequently in the informal and in the family situations, while in the formal situation she follows the children's language use more often, particularly in talking to Giorgio, the younger child. Therefore the interactions between mother

and children are more frequently monolingual in the formal situation and bilingual in the other two. Notice also the similarity in the percentages of bilingual conversation in the informal and family situations.

The difference between the two children in percentages of switching in the formal situation (46.15% to Rino and 27.78% to Giorgio) can be explained with the differences mentioned above (cf. 4.3.1) with regard to Anna's language use with the children. As a result of Rino's attempts to speak Italian or Sicilian in the formal situation, some of the exchanges between Anna and Rino codified as monolingual occur in Italian or in Sicilian (and only to a lower extent in English). Rino's attempts to use Italian and Sicilian, however, also cause Anna to use more Italian in replying to him, even when he has addressed her in English; hence the higher percentage of bilingual exchanges with him. Giorgio, on the other hand, uses English almost exclusively, and Anna tends to follow his choice more readily, as already mentioned (cf. 8.1.2.2); thus the monolingual exchanges between the mother and the younger child occur generally in English. The excerpt below shows this difference in language use in mother-child exchanges in the formal situation: Anna uses Italian to answer Rino's question in English, while English is used to echo Giorgio's comment in English.

#### Excerpt 8.11

[talking about a Sicilian puppet]

R MUM HOW COME THEY WEAR DRESSES?

A e e così erano a quei tempi vedi ci avevano le gonnelle  
(that's how they were in those times you see they had little skirts)

N eh

R YEH

G LIKE THE SCOTTISH

A THE SCOTTISH YEH

G THE THE ONES THAT USE THE BAGPIPES

However, this difference in language use caused by Rino's attempts disappears in the informal and in the family situations, where both children use English almost exclusively, as already pointed out (cf. 4.3.1). Therefore in these two situations, with both brothers the bilingual conversation is characterised by the use of



switching to English, or encouraging Rino's attempts to use Italian or Sicilian. In the other two situations, on the other hand, the children are addressed in any of the three languages; language contact occurs much more freely; bilingual exchanges become the norm, therefore the fact that the children's knowledge of Italian is mainly passive is, so as to say, openly admitted.

This seems to confirm what was said above (7.5) regarding the linguistic norms that regulate the three situations. The formal situation is more constrained by a monolingual norm, while in the informal and in the family situations participants can follow more freely their own preferences.

Furthermore, the linguistic patterns emerging from Anna's speech to the children yield some interesting insights into the role of interlocutors in language use. As the same interlocutors are addressed by Anna in different language(s) in the three situations, the interlocutor's identity does not seem to be the crucial factor in affecting language patterns. While in other studies the interlocutor has been found to be the critical element in the use of a particular language(s), as discussed above (cf. 2.2.4), in my corpus the effect of participants on language patterns does not seem to be a direct result of their identity as interlocutors. Instead, in my case the effect of participants on linguistic patterns is more indirect as it is related to the relationship and degree of familiarity among participants, and the type of situation that this relationship defines, as discussed above (cf. 6.1). Therefore the general situation - more than the interlocutor's identity - is the factor that can explain the patterns in Anna's speech.

The analysis of the effect of single situational factors on linguistic patterns is pursued also in the next two sections, which explore the relationship between the other two situational factors included in my analysis, that is, topic and tone, and language use. In this way we can further verify whether in my corpus the general situation is a more prominent factor in affecting language patterns than any of the situational factors taken in isolation, as per the research objective set out in 5.1.4.

### 8.1.5 Topic, tone and language use

The analysis of linguistic patterns in Anna's speech to the children has shown that the general situation is a factor which overrides one particular situational feature, that is, interlocutor's identity, in affecting language patterns. In this section the other two situational factors: topic and tone, are explored in relation to language use. The analysis is limited to the role of these two factors in Anna's speech to the children, rather than in the whole corpus, given that variation in both topic and tone manifests itself particularly in mother-children interactions.

Two major reasons can be mentioned to justify the analysis of these two factors in this study. First, both of them are frequently mentioned in the literature as major determinants of language use or of code switching, as already said (cf. 2.2.4 and 5.1.2); hence the need to verify their role in the corpus, even allowing for our broader definition of topic (cf. 5.1.2). Secondly, although I found that language use to the children does change in the three situations, it seemed important to verify whether, in spite of this variation, particular types of topics or emotive speech remained more frequently expressed in a specific language(s), irrespective of the situation. In particular, it was expected that activity oriented topics and emotive speech might be associated more with the domestic languages, that is, Sicilian and English, while Italian might be preferred for non-activity oriented topics and ordinary speech.

Table 8.9 shows the results of the correlation between topic and use of language in the speech to each child.

[Table 8.9 follows]

Table 8.9: Topic and language use in speech to the children

	To Rino		To Giorgio	
<b>Formal situation</b>				
	Activity n= 19	Non-activ. n= 22	Activity n= 26	Non-activ. n= 16
Italian	7 (36.84%)	14 (63.64%)	15 (57.69%)	4 (25.00%)
Sicilian	2 (10.53%)	--	2 (7.69%)	--
English	4 (21.05%)	4 (18.18%)	4 (15.38%)	8 (50.00%)
Mixing & Transf.	6 (31.58%)	4 (18.18%)	5 (19.23%)	4 (25.00%)
	Chi Sq could not be applied		Chi Sq could not be applied	
<b>Informal situation</b>				
	Activity n= 142	Non-activ. n= 35	Activity n= 156	Non-activ. n= 48
Italian	37 (26.06%)	6 (17.14%)	18 (11.54%)	12 (25.00%)
Sicilian	29 (20.42%)	7 (20.00%)	44 (28.20%)	9 (18.75%)
English	35 (24.65%)	4 (11.43%)	36 (23.08%)	4 (8.33%)
Mixing & Transf.	41 (28.87%)	18 (51.43%)	58 (37.18%)	23 (47.92%)
	Chi Sq = 7.43 df = 3 n.s.		Chi Sq = 10.92 df = 3 n.s.	
<b>Family situation</b>				
	Activity n= 208	Non-activ. n= 26	Activity n= 113	Non-activ. n= 12
Italian	12 (5.77%)	--	11 (9.73%)	--
Sicilian	115 (55.29%)	17 (65.38%)	54 (47.79%)	7 (58.33%)
English	46 (22.11%)	4 (15.38%)	24 (21.24%)	3 (25.00%)
Mixing & Transf.	35 (16.83%)	5 (19.23%)	24 (21.24%)	2 (16.67%)
	Chi Sq = 2.49 df = 3 n.s. (2 cells with exp. counts less than 5.0)		Chi Sq = 1.59 df = 3 n.s. (3 cells with exp. counts less than 5.0)	

We notice that the data do not display a clear pattern, as the trends vary both from situation to situation and child to child: in the

formal situation, Italian is the language used most for both types of topics, except with Giorgio, with whom English occurs more frequently with non-activity oriented topics. In the informal situation, in the speech addressed to Rino, Italian and English show similar percentages with activity oriented topics, while Sicilian is more used with non-activity oriented ones. In the speech addressed to Giorgio, on the other hand, the opposite trend can be found, as Italian increases with non-activity oriented topics. Finally, in the family situation, Sicilian is the language used most with both types of topic and both children. Furthermore, whenever the chi-square test could be applied, the result was not significant. As the test could not be applied to every situation (given the low numbers), it was decided to run it on the total frequencies of topic, collapsing the three situations. Table 8.10 presents the result of the test, which was not significant.

Table 8.10: Topic and language use in speech to the children in the corpus

	To Rino		To Giorgio	
	Activity n= 369	Non-activ. n= 83	Activity n= 295	Non-activ. n= 76
Italian	56 (15.18%)	20 (24.10%)	44 (14.92%)	16 (21.05%)
Sicilian	146 (39.57%)	24 (28.92%)	100 (33.90%)	16 (21.05%)
English	85 (23.03%)	12 (14.46%)	64 (21.70%)	15 (19.74%)
Mixing & Transf.	82 (22.22%)	27 (32.53%)	87 (29.49%)	29 (38.16%)
	Chi Sq = 10.55 df = 3 n.s.		Chi Sq = 6.15 df = 3 n.s.	

These data therefore do not seem to support the hypothesis of a language being closely associated to a particular type of topics, as defined in this study.

Similar results emerge from the analysis of the tone of the interactions (Table 8.11).

Table 8.11: Tone and language use in speech to the children

	To Rino		To Giorgio	
<b>Formal situation</b>				
	Emotive n=2	Ordinary n=39	Emotive n=0	Ordinary n=42
Italian	2 (100.00%)	19 (48.72%)	--	19 (45.24%)
Sicilian	--	2 (5.13%)	--	2 (4.76%)
English	--	8 (20.51%)	--	12 (28.57%)
Mixing & Transf.	--	10 (25.64%)	--	9 (21.43%)
	Chi Sq could not be applied		Chi Sq could not be applied	
<b>Informal situation</b>				
	Emotive n=75	Ordinary n=102	Emotive n=43	Ordinary n=161
Italian	18 (24.00%)	25 (24.51%)	9 (20.93%)	21 (13.04%)
Sicilian	12 (16.00%)	24 (23.53%)	10 (23.25%)	43 (26.71%)
English	18 (24.00%)	21 (20.59%)	5 (11.63%)	35 (21.74%)
Mixing & Transf.	27 (36.00%)	32 (31.37%)	19 (44.19%)	62 (38.51%)
	Chi Sq = 1.71 df = 3 n.s.		Chi Sq = 3.63 df = 3 n.s.	
<b>Family situation</b>				
	Emotive n=38	Ordinary n=196	Emotive n=16	Ordinary n=109
Italian	1 (2.63%)	11 (5.61%)	2 (12.50%)	9 (8.26%)
Sicilian	17 (44.74%)	115 (58.67%)	8 (50.00%)	53 (48.62%)
English	13 (34.21%)	37 (18.88%)	5 (31.25%)	22 (20.18%)
Mixing & Transf.	7 (18.42%)	33 (16.84%)	1 (6.25%)	25 (22.93%)
	Chi Sq = 5.19 df = 3 n.s. (1 cell with expected counts less than 5.0)		Chi Sq = 2.94 df = 3 n.s. (3 cells with expected counts less than 5.0)	

Leaving aside the formal situation, where emotive speech is practically absent, in the informal situation a rather even distribution

across languages in relation to emotive speech can be found, with both children: Italian and English show the same percentages in the emotive speech addressed to Rino, while Sicilian is used less frequently; Sicilian is the dominant language in the emotive speech addressed to Giorgio, but Italian follows closely. In the family situation, the language distribution does not display any difference between emotive and ordinary speech: Sicilian is the dominant language in both cases, followed by English. The only difference is given by the higher percentage of contact configurations in the speech addressed to each child in the informal situation. Nonetheless, the results of the chi-square test, wherever it could be applied, confirm the hypothesis of independence between the variables. The three situations were also collapsed in order to run the test on all frequencies. Table 8.12 shows the results, which again confirmed the null hypothesis. Therefore, as was the case for topic, these data do not support the hypothesis of a link between use of a particular language (e.g., Italian and/or English) and emotive speech.

Table 8.12: Tone and language use in speech to the children in the corpus

	To Rino		To Giorgio	
	Emotive n= 115	Ordinary n= 337	Emotive n= 59	Ordinary n= 312
Italian	21 (18.26%)	55 (16.32%)	11 (18.64%)	49 (15.70%)
Sicilian	29 (25.22%)	141 (41.84%)	18 (30.51%)	98 (31.41%)
English	31 (26.96%)	66 (19.58%)	10 (16.95%)	69 (22.11%)
Mixing & Transf.	34 (29.56%)	75 (22.26%)	20 (33.90%)	96 (30.77%)
	Chi Sq = 10.56 df = 3 n.s.		Chi Sq = 1.05 df = 3 n.s.	

We can conclude that neither of these two situational factors can explain the selection of a particular language. As was the case for the interlocutor's identity, in the corpus activity oriented topic and emotive speech are not so strongly associated with a certain language as to determine its use irrespective of the situation; language patterns depend instead on the general situation. All three languages can be

used by Anna for a certain type of topic or to express emotions, and it is the general situational context which leads her into using one or the other.

Previous studies which have noted this close association of topic and tone with particular languages have generally not worked within a quantitative model, but with more ethnographically oriented linguistic analyses. I certainly do not intend to diminish the credit of such studies which have the merit of having highlighted these important traits of bilingual discourse. Nonetheless, while acknowledging the differences in the categories as used here and in other studies, my results suggest that the association between topic and language, and tone and language might not occur as frequently and as systematically as some of these studies would have it to be.

## 8.2 Linguistic patterns in the speech to the researcher

After the analysis of Anna's speech to the children, this second part of the chapter focuses upon the other major interlocutor of the corpus, that is, the researcher. The following section presents the major trends in the speech addressed to me. As was done previously, the base language of the formal and of the informal situations is identified and compared. Then the incidence of the various contact configuration - regardless of the languages used - is examined in both situations. Finally, the language patterns emerging from the speech to the researcher are compared with those discussed above with regard to the entire corpus and the speech to the children.

### 8.2.1 Identifying the base language

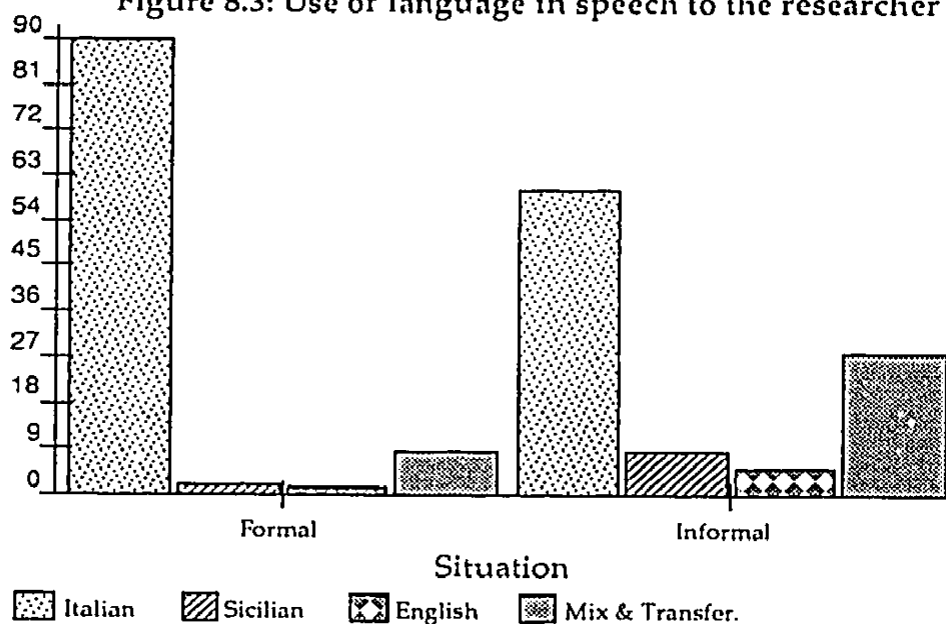
Table 8.13 and Figure 8.3 show the distribution of the three languages and the contact configurations within the clause in the speech to the researcher, in both the formal and the informal situations.

Table 8.13: Use of language in speech addressed to the researcher

Situation	Formal n= 358	Informal n= 146	
Italian	320 (89.38%)	87 (59.59%)	- 29.79
Sicilian	5 (1.40%)	12 (8.22%)	+ 6.82
English	4 (1.12%)	7 (4.79%)	+ 3.67
Mixing	9 (2.51%)	22 (15.07%)	+ 12.56
Transference	20 (5.59%)	18 (12.33%)	+ 6.74

Chi Sq = 64.97  $df = 4$   $p < .01$

Figure 8.3: Use of language in speech to the researcher



The first feature to notice is a major change in language distribution in the transition from the formal to the informal situation: among the three languages, maximum decrease occurs in Italian (-29.79) and maximum increase in Sicilian (+6.82). However it is interesting to notice that the highest increase is not in any of the languages, but in mixing (+12.56). Furthermore, Italian-Sicilian mixing is the most frequent combination found in the informal situation: of 22 mixed clauses, 13 are Italian-Sicilian, 4 are Italian-English and 5 display all three languages.

If we compare the formal and the informal situations on the basis of the criteria set out to identify a base language, it must be said that a complete shift in base language does not occur: at clause level, Italian is still the language most used in both situations (Table 8.13). Furthermore, it is also the language displaying the lowest degree of variation both at interclause and turn level, as shown in Tables 8.14 and 8.15: in the formal situation, an Italian clause is preceded by another in the same language 133 times (87.50% of the cases), and 34 times (77.27%) in the informal situation, in both cases more frequently than the other languages; likewise, at turn level, in the formal situation an Italian turn is preceded by a turn in the same language 78 times (87.64%), in the informal situation 10 times (66.67%), more frequently than the other languages.

Table 8.14: Language variation between clauses in speech addressed to the researcher

Formal situation					
	Preced clause	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=152	133 (87.50%)	4 (2.63%)	1 (0.66%)	14 (9.21%)
Sicil	n=5	5 (100.00%)	--	--	--
Engl	n=2	2 (100.00%)	--	--	--
Mix & Transf.	n=17	11 (64.70%)	--	--	6 (35.29%)
Informal situation					
	Preced clause	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=44	34 (77.27%)	2 (4.54%)	1 (2.27%)	7 (15.91%)
Sicil	n=5	3 (60.00%)	--	1 (20.00%)	1 (20.00%)
Engl	n=1	--	--	--	1 (100.00%)
Mix & Transf.	n=20	10 (50.00%)	1 (5.00%)	--	9 (45.00%)



- A e per questo ci sono i bambini ba: allora gio eh uh uh com'è oggi giovedì  
e venerdì essa stava a casa
- A she is expecting a baby for  
N yes?  
A next month you know but she was working three days a week and now  
she has left the job you know?  
N I understand yes  
A and for this reason the children are here because what's today  
Thursday and Friday she used to be at home

#### Excerpt 8.14 (informal situation)

[Anna is complaining with me about Rino's dirtying the wall]

- A vedi che *tuttu tuttu* quanto iè ha fatto:  
N THAT'S ALL RIGHT  
A l'anno scorso l'ha pulita la stanza  
N sì eh?  
A e già *avi tuttu quantu*  
R [YEH WELL  
A attorno attorno che *sempri* girano co la sedia e e e fanno *tuttu*  
N le lo sporcano di nuovo  
A eh e be *macari* la sedia *mi pari chi si rumpi*
- A you see all of that part there he did  
N that's all right  
A and he cleaned the room last year  
N did he?  
A and it's already all  
R yeh well  
A they keep turning round and round with the chair and make it all  
N and they dirty it again  
A and it seems to me that even the chair is going to break

Therefore the data regarding the speech to the researcher point to a change in language distribution from the formal to the informal situation. This finding indicates a difference with the results discussed above in relation to the entire corpus and the children, where a complete shift in base language occurred from one situation to the other.

#### 8.2.2 Code switching

Table 8.16 shows the incidence of code switching between clauses and across turns in the formal and in the informal situations in the

speech to the researcher: in the case of both configurations the percentages increase substantially in the informal situation.

**Table 8.16: Language use above clause level in speech addressed to the researcher**

Across turns		
Situation	Formal	Informal
	n=99	n=31
Same language	78 (78.79%)	13 (41.94%)
Switching	21 (21.21%)	18 (58.06%)
Between clauses		
Situation	Formal	Informal
	n=171	n=70
Same language	134 (78.36%)	39 (55.71%)
Switching	37 (21.64%)	31 (44.29%)

The excerpt below shows some occurrences of code switching between clauses and across turns in the speech to the researcher in the informal situation.

### Excerpt 8.15

[talking about the tomato sauce that Anna should have given Giorgio with his school lunch]

- N la TOMATO SAUCE per che cosa?  
 A *co a SANDUIGLIA* [sandwich] ci ho met-*f-fatta*:: la:: la carne impanata  
 N [AI YEI]  
 A *ie-aieri* sera no?  
 N YAHYAH  
 A e ci ho fatta *a SANDUIGIA* di un panino di stamattina e co: ci ho messo la lattuga e voleva anche la TOMATO SOSSO lui  
 R TOMATO SAUCE [correcting]  
 A e poi *i TOMATO SAUCE* si fa tutta quanta brutta quando è *u TOMATO SAUCE* si mangia subito *ie ALL RIGHT*  
 R [DOESN'T MATTER]  
 A poi:: *ie com'è u ia:: u pani si fa*  
 N [uh uh]  
 A SOFT  
 N what was the tomato sauce for?  
 A I put some schnitzel in the sandwich last night you know?  
 N yes  
 A and then I made a sandwich with a roll this morning and I put some lettuce and he also wanted some tomato sauce

- R tomato sauce  
 A but then the tomato sauce gets all bad the tomato sauce is all right if  
 you eat it straight away  
 R doesn't matter  
 A otherwise you know the bread becomes soft

In Table 8.13 above an increase of mixing and transference was shown in the informal situation. Likewise, Table 8.16 confirms that the increase in the incidence of contact from the formal to the informal situations occurs at every linguistic level analysed. This finding is in line with the pattern identified in the entire corpus and in the speech to the children, of a general increase in contact from the formal to the informal situation.

Both of these results: change in language distribution and increase in contact, confirm what was noted above (8.1.4), that is, that in my corpus the interlocutor's identity is not the major factor affecting language patterns: the changed relationship between Anna and myself brings with it a different and less constrained language use with me as well as with the children.

### 8.2.3 Amount and type of contact

As was done above for the entire corpus (Table 7.8) and for the speech to the children (Table 8.7), Table 8.17 summarises the relative incidence of the different configurations of contact in both situations, highlighting the increase occurring from one to the other.

Table 8.17: Type of contact in speech to the researcher \*

Situation	Formal	Informal	
Across turns	21.21%	58.06%	+ 36.85
Between clauses	21.64%	44.29%	+ 22.65
Mixing	2.51%	15.07%	+ 12.56
Transference	5.59%	12.33%	+ 6.74

\* Percentages based on Tables 8.13 and 8.16. See also note in Table 7.8.

Two main features are to be pointed out: first, in each situation contact is more frequent above clause level than within the clause. Secondly, maximum increase in contact also occurs at code switching

level, and in particular at the highest level analysed, that is, across turns. These two features therefore confirm the pattern already noted in the whole corpus and in the speech addressed to the children, of Anna's bilingual speech being based on higher constituents (cf. 7.3.4 and 8.1.2.4). This finding will be discussed below (cf. 8.3.2).

### 8.3 Discussion of findings

#### 8.3.1 Linguistic patterns in Anna's speech

This chapter has examined the major linguistic patterns in Anna's speech addressed to the children and the researcher in the three situations.

Chapter 7 showed the shift in base language occurring in Anna's overall speech in the transition from one situation to the other. Likewise, this chapter has shown that in her speech to the children Italian is the language that Anna uses more frequently in the formal situation, while an unclear base language occurs in the informal situation and Sicilian is the base language in the family situation. As to the speech addressed to the researcher, while a complete shift in base language cannot be identified, nonetheless a major change in language distribution occurs from the formal to the informal situation.

The findings of this chapter have also confirmed an increase at every level of contact in the informal situation in Anna's speech addressed to the researcher. The speech addressed to the children, on the other hand, presents a high frequency of contact configurations in all three situations.

On the basis of the findings of this chapter and those of Chapter 7, a number of important considerations can be raised.

First, Anna's performance in the three situations shows her (socio) linguistic competence in all three languages, in that she can keep them separate or use them in contact, as deemed appropriate to the situation. This is an important feature as too often in the literature on Italian migrants the emphasis has been merely on their mixing of languages, while their high degree of linguistic ability in two or three languages has not been considered. Furthermore, there has been an

assumption that contact is a language deficit phenomenon. Anna shows this not to be so.

A second set of considerations concerns Anna's linguistic behaviour in situations characterised by different degrees of structuring, as mentioned above (cf. 7.5). Three points in particular deserve some attention.

Firstly, as noted above, in the formal situation a constraint seems to be operating towards use of one language only, that is, the language spoken and used by the guest, and avoidance of the other two languages. In the informal and in the family situations, on the other hand, a much freer use of all three languages is allowed as well as a higher degree of contact among them. In other words, bilingual or trilingual speech or contact among the three languages, occurs more frequently when the relationship among participants has changed from strangers to friends.

This is an important finding in that it shows that multilingual speech among Italo-Australians is considered a censored or marked type of behaviour with strangers, while it is commonly used with familiar interlocutors (cf. also 7.5). It must be said that previous studies conducted within the Italo-Australian community have frequently reported negative comments made by Italo-Australians with regard to their own or other Italian migrants' common habit of mixing languages (e.g., Kinder, 1987). Furthermore, in their study on language attitudes among Italo-Australians, Bettoni and Gibbons (1988: 23) also found that their informants rated "heavy mixtures" (that is, mixing of Italian dialects and English) very negatively, and considered them "a marker of Australian acculturation" (Bettoni and Gibbons, 1988: 28).

However, given that previous studies on language patterns in the Italo-Australian community have relied mainly on interview data (cf. 4.1.1), bilingual or trilingual speech in conversation had not yet been recorded nor analysed in the Italo-Australian context, nor has it been compared to speech occurring in more structured situations. Therefore the finding that emerges from our corpus throws some light on an important feature of Italo-Australian linguistic behaviour and underlines its similarity with other migrant contexts, as negative

attitudes and self-censorship towards language mixing are extremely common in bilingual - and migrant - communities, as shown in several studies (e.g., Huerta-Macias, 1981: 157; Gumperz, 1982: 62-63; Romaine, 1989: 258-269).

It must be noted, however, that a major difference exists between the findings in my corpus and in other studies conducted in migrant contexts with regard to the factor which elicits or prevents multilingual speech from occurring. While my study agrees with other research in so far as bilingual speech is treated by Anna as a censored type of behaviour, it differs from it in that in my case the crucial feature triggering bilingual speech is degree of familiarity among the participants. On the other hand, other studies have underlined interlocutor's identity - often in the sense of ethnic identity - as a major factor in eliciting or preventing bilingual speech. This is the case, for example, in Poplack (1981), who shows very clearly the overall increase in code switches from a conversation held with a non-group member to one held with a person belonging to the group. In my study, instead, in-group membership is not valued in terms of mere ethnicity (Anna and myself are both Sicilian), but of familiarity and friendship among participants.

A second point regarding Anna's linguistic behaviour in situations characterised by different degrees of formality concerns her use of language compared to the previous speaker. The data have shown that her language use varies in the three situations: in the formal situation, only a small percentage of her clauses shows a language which differs from the previous speaker's, while in the informal and in the family situations over half of her occurrences display a different choice (cf. 7.4).

A different degree of constraint therefore seems to be at play also with regard to language use across speakers. The formal situation, characterised by the presence of participants with little shared knowledge - particularly in terms of language preferences - appears to be regulated by a monolingual, external norm to which all participants refer and adjust to. In the other situations, which are characterised by participants with a higher degree of shared knowledge, an "internal" norm, consisting of the participants' own language preferences, is at

play, whereby use of different languages can occur, or be "tolerated", more freely, and bilingual and trilingual conversations can be the norm.

With regard to language use across speakers, one important feature of the data is the high frequency of bilingual conversation taking place between mother and children, particularly in the informal and in the family situations. Bilingual conversation represents the norm and the unmarked type of communication in mother-children conversation in informal and domestic situations, and is obviously to be explained with language preferences in Anna's case and language abilities in the children's case. In approximately one third of the occurrences Anna switches to English, the children's language; much more rarely do the children switch to their mother's language(s). In this way our data record a particular stage or situation of bilingualism in the Italo-Australian speech community, where the mother has not shifted to English but uses it to a certain extent, and the children's linguistic abilities in Sicilian and Italian are mainly receptive. In this context, then, the occurrence of code switching in Anna's speech can be considered an important indication of a process of language shift for the mother, that is, from Italian and Sicilian to English, and of language loss for the children. Frequent asymmetries in language use in situations of language shift have been reported in other studies, for example, in Gal (1979: 110), where mention is made of the "unreciprocal" use of Hungarian and German in conversations between older and younger people. Further considerations on the process of language shift highlighted in my data will be presented in Chapters 9 and 10.

A third point regarding Anna's linguistic behaviour concerns the incidence of specific situational features on language use. The analysis has shown that in the formal situation a constraint is at play whereby the same language is used by Anna with all interlocutors (the children in particular), irrespective of their identity and of the fact that she would normally address them in a different language(s). It seems therefore that the interlocutor's identity is not in this corpus such a strong factor in affecting language patterns as the general situation is: and, as already mentioned in the course of this discussion, the crucial

factor in defining the situation is the relationship among participants. After our relationship has changed, Anna feels freer to address the children in Sicilian or in English, or to mix two or three languages at different levels, as she normally does. The minor role of single situational factors compared to the overall situation is confirmed also in the analysis that was conducted on topic, tone and use of a particular language. The correlation gave negative results in that no clear association emerged between a particular type of topic (as defined in this thesis) and a specific language, or emotive speech and a specific language.

### 8.3.2 Frequency of contact configuration

Another result which has emerged from the analysis in this chapter concerns the frequency of contact configurations occurring in the data: in each situation contact occurs more frequently above clause level than within the clause. This result was found in the entire corpus and was confirmed in the speech to the children and the researcher: as shown in Tables 7.8, 8.7 and 8.17, in every situation the incidence of code switching is by far higher than the incidence of mixing and transference. Furthermore, whenever contact increases in the transition from one situation to another, maximum increase tends to occur at code switching level, rather than within the clause. As mentioned above (8.1.2.4 and 8.2.3), this indicates that Anna's bilingual (or trilingual) speech is built more on the juxtaposition of longer chunks (that is, clauses) in different languages than on the insertion of single lexemes drawn from L2 or L3 in a clause in L1.

Although comparison with other studies on this particular issue is made difficult by the different categories used, nonetheless there are similarities between my result and the findings of other studies: Poplack (1980: 602) also shows that in her corpus, among the different syntactic categories where code switching is analysed, the highest percentage of switches occurs at intersentential level (20.30%); a whole sentence is switched much more frequently than a phrase (varying between 3.80% and 9.50%) or even a noun, the second most switched category (9.50%). The same result is found in Huerta-Macias

(1981: 156), where sentences are the most switched segments (62.85%). Therefore, the English-Spanish bilinguals studied by Poplack and Huerta-Macias behave in the same way as Anna does, in that their bilingual speech is based more on higher level (sentences, clauses) than lower level constituents (nouns, determiners, verbs, and so on).

Poplack explains this result with the two constraints that she postulates on switching, the free morpheme and the equivalence constraints (cf. 2.2.2.3). Switching in points which are less risky syntactically, such as between clauses or sentences, can be a way of avoiding the problems caused by divergent syntactic structures. Poplack (1980: 606-609) also maintains that this is the reason why intrasentential switching, which is more risky syntactically, occurs more frequently with fluent bilinguals, who are capable of mapping a sentence in L1 onto a sentence in L2 without violating the constraints in spite of syntactic discrepancies. It must be remembered that this is the type of code switching that Poplack and Sankoff (1988: 1175) define as "smooth", in that it occurs with smooth transitions; according to them, it is typical of bilingual communities where switching is an integral part of their repertoire (cf. 2.2.2.3).

On this issue of intersentential versus intrasentential switching, it is interesting to note also the findings reported in Romaine (1989: 262-269). In a study that she conducted with Chana on language attitudes among Panjabi-English bilinguals, they found that intersentential switching rated higher on intelligibility than intrasentential switching. It seems therefore that switching at higher constituent level is both easier to perform and easier to comprehend; intrasentential switching, on the other hand, is not only more difficult to perform and more difficult to comprehend, but also causes more negative reactions (cf. Romaine, 1989: 268, reporting findings by Amuda).

It must be said that Poplack's position and explanation have not gone unchallenged. Berk-Seligson (1986), for instance, found that in Hebrew-Spanish code switching, intrasentential switching occurs more frequently (63% intrasentential switches) than intersentential one. Notice however that 40% of her intrasentential switches are represented by nouns. As mentioned above (cf. 2.2.2.1), within

intrasentential switching a particular status should be given to noun switches as they are relatively free of syntactic restrictions and therefore do not involve the same degree of difficulty as phrases in establishing syntactic links with the other elements of the sentence (cf. also 9.3.2). If we reconsider Berk-Seligson's results and leave aside noun switches, we notice that the second most frequently switched category in her data - after tag switching (21.00%) - is intersentential switching (14%).

Therefore a number of studies, including my own, confirm Poplack's hierarchy of constituents in switching, whereby - leaving aside nouns - major constituents are switched more frequently. Poplack's theory also provides a basis for identifying the reason for the higher frequency of larger constituents. However, it is necessary to consider a number of elements: a moderate or weakened version of the equivalence constraint; the nature of the bilingual community that we are dealing with - as noted by Poplack herself; and the structural differences between the languages in contact both within and above sentence or clause level.

With regard to the equivalence constraint, I would not claim its universality as many more data would be needed and on very different language pairs. Nonetheless it seems reasonable to think that, in a community where two or more languages are used constantly and commonly within the flow of conversation (such as in the Puerto Rican community investigated by Poplack or in the Italo-Australian community), part of a bilingual's skill would be the ability to identify those points in discourse where the transition to the other language would occur more easily and smoothly. In this way the bilingual speaker is minimising the difficulty to her/himself as a speaker who is handling two languages, and to the listener. The natural "breaks" provided by clause or sentence boundaries would generally represent a good point for the switch to occur without excessive difficulty to the flowing of conversation and favouring ease of articulation, particularly if the two languages present syntactic differences at phrase level but coincide at higher level constituency.

Notice however that Berk-Seligson (1986: 333-334) reports that the low number of switches at clause level from Spanish to Hebrew

occurring in her data can be explained by the fact that in Hebrew many types of clauses are introduced by bound morphemes; hence, according to Berk-Seligson, they were avoided by the speakers in order to avoid possible violations of the morpheme constraint. It seems therefore that an important element in the issue of the frequency of intrasentential versus intersentential switching is the level of affinity between the two languages, as at times divergences can be found at higher level. In these cases intersentential switching would not represent any longer an optimal site for switching with ease. The speakers may then decide to avoid the switch or rely heavily on the insertion of single lexemes, as Berk-Seligson's informants did; alternatively, they may resort to other strategies, for example, the insertion of entire constituents in L2 in a sentence or clause in L1 (cf. Poplack and Sankoff, 1988: 1176). On the other side of the coin, however, in cases of languages with strong structural similarities at all levels, both intersentential and intrasentential switching would occur without excessive difficulty at any point of the sentence or clause, as the mapping of two sentences or clauses would not present any major problem. This is the case of Italian dialects and Italian. This point will be taken up again in the next chapter (cf. 9.1.1.2), where it is shown that Italian and Sicilian mixing (that is, the category that partly overlaps with intrasentential switching) occurs more frequently than mixing between Italian and English, or Sicilian and English.

In conclusion, the higher incidence of switching compared to mixing and transference in my data can be explained firstly by structural considerations. For the three languages dealt with in my corpus (and particularly for Sicilian/Italian versus English), higher constituent boundaries represent good sites for the transition to another language, while some divergence can be found below clause level: for example, in the noun phrase structure, where English requires pre-nominal adjective placement while Italian and Sicilian require post-nominal position. A second explanation can be found in the fact that switching is extremely frequent in Anna's informal speech (as in the informal speech of Italo-Australians), therefore it is realised with a "smooth" kind of transition, where such factors as ease of

articulation and intelligibility for the listener all play an important role, as mentioned above.

On the issue of the frequency of contact configuration in the corpus, another factor that needs to be taken into consideration is the relationship between contact configurations and type of discourse. Some findings suggest that the frequency of particular contact configurations is also related to type of discourse. For instance, previous work on the Italian spoken by Italo-Australians through data collected via interviews, found that the most frequent contact configuration was lexical transference (Bettoni, 1981), while in the more spontaneous speech of our corpus it is code switching. Likewise, in investigating an Italian-dialect situation, Sobrero (1988b: 214-215) observes that in an interview situation and in more formal speech the only elements occurring in dialect are pragmatic locutions, deictics or tag switches. Therefore, understandably, a very structured type of speech such as the interview elicits contact at word level more than at higher level, as transference ("noun switches") does not affect the base language of the interview to the same extent as switching of longer chunks does. In comparing frequency of contact configurations in different corpora, then, attention should be paid also to type of discourse where the data are collected. A corollary to this finding is the importance of analysing language contact in a range of contexts and of types of discourse, in order to gain a fuller picture of the phenomena being investigated and be able to distinguish more general trends from the more specific ones related to a particular kind of discourse.

### 8.3.3 Italian and Sicilian in Anna's language repertoire

An important consideration emerging from the findings of this chapter concerns the status of Italian and Sicilian in Anna's repertoire, as mentioned above (cf. 7.5). The data have shown that Italian is the language used in a situation characterised by the presence of a stranger, who is perceived to be of a different, higher social status, while Sicilian is used in the domestic environment or when a friend is around. Furthermore, Italian and Sicilian as base languages have shown different degrees of "permeability": Italian as base language

"allows" use of the other two languages as well as contact among the three languages (both below and above clause level) to a much lower degree than Sicilian as base language does.

On the basis of these and other features that will be discussed below, I would like to argue that in Anna's repertoire Italian and Sicilian are in a diglossic relationship. The notion of diglossia goes back to the classic work by Ferguson (1959), who used it in reference to situations where two varieties of the same language co-exist each with a different role to play. In Ferguson's definition, the relatedness between the two language varieties is a necessary criterion for identifying a diglossic relationship. A second fundamental criterion is the specialisation of function of the two varieties, whereby only one of them can be used in particular situations. Ferguson calls High language the variety which is used in more formal situations (e.g., a sermon in a church, speech in parliament or a university lecture; cf. also 2.1) and Low language the one reserved for more informal circumstances. A third criterion presented by Ferguson is a set of features that differentiate the two varieties, that is, degree of prestige, literary heritage, pattern of acquisition, standardisation, stability, grammatical structure, lexicon and phonology.

The original notion was later expanded by Fishman to apply also to situations with different languages, rather than just language varieties (see the discussion in Fasold, 1984: 40). Furthermore, Fishman emphasised functional differentiation in the use of the two languages/varieties as the crucial factor to identify a diglossic situation.

Following Ferguson and Fishman, what have been called "maximalist" and "minimalist" definitions of diglossia have developed (Pauwels 1988b: 86): a maximalist position is taken by those who maintain that the term diglossia should be applied only in those language situations that display all the features described by Ferguson. Those supporting a minimalist position, on the other hand, claim that the term has now been too widely applied to some very different language situations; therefore they suggest the use of a typology of diglossic relations and situations as a way of resolving the controversy.

While acknowledging the debate that has surrounded the notion of diglossia and recognising the need for redefining its use in particular language situations, in this study I would like to adopt a definition that follows quite closely Ferguson's original definition. Given that my ultimate aim is to explore and understand the relationship among the three languages: Italian, Sicilian and English, in Anna's repertoire, I feel that a definition of diglossia which is too generalised runs the risk of losing sight of some specific features which may play an important role in defining such a relationship, such as the different circumstances under which the three languages have entered Anna's repertoire.

Therefore, following Ferguson's criteria, the first feature supporting a diglossic relationship between Italian and Sicilian is the relatedness between the two languages. As to the second criterion, all the findings discussed in this chapter point to a different functional distribution of Italian and Sicilian in Anna's repertoire, with Italian being the High language of the pair: Italian is the language to be used in a more formal situation, with a stranger; furthermore, its lower degree of permeability to contact with other languages indicates a "special" treatment by Anna, in so far as use of Italian occurs in situations which are outside everyday, domestic patterns, thus carrying with it increased control and awareness over her linguistic performance. Hence the intrusion of the other languages, particularly of English, is carefully monitored and avoided. On the other hand, Sicilian is used in everyday interactions and with familiar interlocutors. It is also more permeable to contact with the other languages, both as a result of its everyday use in contact with English, the language of the children, and of the more relaxed attitude brought about by its daily use with family members.

As to the third criterion for identifying a diglossic relationship, we find that most of the features mentioned by Ferguson as associated with the High language coincide with Italian: for instance, Italian was acquired by Anna mainly through her schooling in Italy, thus it was added to her first language, Sicilian. At school Anna must have learnt about Italian grammar rules; she can read and write Italian, while she finds it difficult and strange to read Sicilian, as I found out one day

when reading together some recipes in Sicilian. Furthermore, Anna often praises her own educational experience that she considers far superior to the education that her children are receiving in Australia. In terms of prestige, it must be said that, in spite of a strong emotional attachment and a great deal of respect towards Sicilian that she calls "our language", Anna seems to be aware of different degrees of prestige carried out by Italian and what is considered a dialect. The lower prestige of Sicilian is apparent in the linguistic analysis, which has shown that Anna uses Sicilian in informal situations, with well known interlocutors, and only after the other participants have agreed, so as to say, upon using it. This result is also in agreement with what was reported by Bettoni and Gibbons (1988: 25; 28), who found that their informants, most of whom were dialect speakers themselves, rated dialects in very negative terms, as unpleasant, uneducated, unsophisticated and poor. On the other hand, their attachment to dialects was shown by the fact that they were considered strong markers of Italian ethnicity.

Therefore, on all three criteria set out by Ferguson: relatedness, functional differentiation and specific features, Italian and Sicilian appear to be in a diglossic relationship in Anna's repertoire.

A further confirmation of such a diglossic relationship comes from the broader context in which Anna lives. As mentioned above (cf. 3.2.2), like most Sicilians who arrived in Australia in the Fifties, Anna moves in a very restricted network, made up mainly of her relatives to whom Sicilian is the language normally used in conversation (in alternation with English). For Anna and for many other migrants whose first language is a dialect and who have moved mostly in regional networks, Italian was rarely used and developed as a "conversational language". In their life within the Italo-Australian community, a very limited space is reserved to Italian. However, two major elements are to be noted: firstly, this space has increased throughout the years, as a result of the changes which have occurred in the community and in the Australian society at large; secondly, limited as it is, this space is characterised by a high level of formality. Each of these two points are discussed in turn.

Throughout the years, general use of Italian has increased, as a result of the changes that have taken place in the community and have made it more "Italian" and less regional (cf. 3.2.1.3). Such factors as the arrival from the Seventies onwards of more educated Italian migrants who spoke (regional) Italian more than dialect, the formation of national rather than regional associations, the introduction of such media as radio 2EA and the television channel SBS which brought Italian programs in the homes, the growth of Italian teaching in the educational system, the opportunity of more frequent visits to Italy due to lower fares and more economic welfare in the community, are all elements which have given Italian more scope in a community which was traditionally centred around regional networks.

However, most of the space allocated to Italian in the community remains characterised by a high degree of formality: Italian is the language of the media (the Italian paper, the radio and television programs) or of the Italian teacher at the children's school; it is the language to be used in some special events (for example, in the official speeches in any function organised in the community, even those organised by regional associations), as well as in more formal interactions: for example, Italian rather than dialect is used to deal with the professionals in the community (e.g., solicitors, doctors or accountants), as shown in a survey by Rubino and Bettoni (in progress), where 53 (75.72%) out of 70 first generation Italians claimed to be using Italian with such interlocutors.

These considerations regarding language use in the community, together with the other factors considered above (that is, language patterns in the corpus, relatedness, functional distribution and specific features of each language), all contribute to confirm that Italian and Sicilian are in a diglossic relationship in Anna's repertoire. Such a relationship finds its reason in Anna's early years in Sicily, where clear boundaries between the two languages existed in society and were internalised in Anna's repertoire through her everyday life in that context. The nature of the Italian migrant community of the Fifties and Sixties, where dialectophone networks were the norm, contributed to maintain and even reinforce such boundaries between

the two languages. On the contrary, throughout the same decades, Italy underwent a remarkable process of linguistic change, whereby the intense contact between the two languages resulted in a progressive Italianisation of the dialects and dialectalisation of Italian (cf. 3.1.4).

More evidence of this diglossic relationship will also come from the analysis in the following chapter. In the meantime it must be remembered that in Anna's speech repertoire another language, English, co-exists with Italian and Sicilian. The collocation of this third language in her repertoire will be explored in the next chapter, after more data on Anna's use of English compared to Italian and Sicilian are presented and discussed.

## CHAPTER NINE

### PATTERNS IN THE CONTACT

In Chapters 7 and 8 general patterns of language use and contact were examined; this chapter focuses more specifically upon the languages that enter in contact, examining them in relation to the base language of the situations.

The first part (9.1) attempts to verify whether "preferences" of contact between certain languages can be identified, according to the fifth research objective set out in 5.1.4. Such preferences are established by comparing the specific languages that enter in contact at the various levels in situations characterised by different base languages. Thus, within the clause, we look at occurrences of transference and mixing in an Italian and in a Sicilian base language, to verify whether the language of transfers or the languages coming in contact in the mixed clauses differ in the two base languages. Likewise, at code switching level, the language distribution of switches is analysed in situations characterised by an Italian and by a Sicilian base language, in order to find out whether a difference in base language corresponds to a difference in the languages mostly involved in switching. Such preferences of contact are explored both in the entire corpus and in the speech to the children and the researcher, so as to establish whether patterns identified in Anna's overall speech are confirmed also in the speech addressed to specific interlocutors.

The second part of the chapter (9.2) focuses upon the role of English in the corpus as a language in contact with Italian and Sicilian, according to the sixth research objective set out in 5.1.4. Such features in Anna's linguistic performance as the incidence of English in situations characterised by different base languages, the degree of variation displayed by English at various linguistic levels and the

specific use of English by Anna as compared to other speakers, are all taken into account in the analysis. They provide important insights in establishing the position that English occupies in Anna's speech repertoire.

The findings emerging from this chapter bring more evidence to and enrich some of the issues discussed at the end of Chapter 8, in particular with regard to the role of Italian and Sicilian in Anna's repertoire. With the considerations concerning the role of English, the general picture of the position that the three languages occupy in Anna's linguistic repertoire is completed. The third and final part of this chapter (9.3) presents a general discussion of all the findings emerging from the linguistic analysis, and attempts an explanation of the process of language shift that is occurring within the family under investigation.

#### 9.1 Preferences of contact in relation to base language

The first question which is dealt with in this chapter concerns the preferences of contact in situations characterised by different base languages: Italian or Sicilian.

Since this analysis regards specifically contact in relation to base language, the data taken into consideration are only those of situations which display a clear base language, as established in Chapters 7 and 8. Therefore, with regard to the entire corpus, I have used the data of the formal and the family situations, as the analysis carried out in Chapter 7 has shown that they clearly display Italian and Sicilian, respectively, as base languages. The informal situation, on the other hand, has been excluded due to its unclear base language. Likewise, in analysing the speech addressed to the children, the data used are only those of the family situation, as Sicilian was shown to be the base language there. Although the formal situation also displayed a clear base language, in the case of the children its data have not been included in this analysis, due to the low number of clauses which were addressed to the children. With regard to the speech to the researcher, the data examined come from the formal and the informal situations, since

Italian remains the base language in both of them, as shown above (cf. 8.2.1).

The languages that most frequently enter in contact in situations showing Italian and Sicilian as base languages are examined first at clause level, as displayed in transference and mixing, then at interclause level, that is, looking at the languages occurring in switching between clauses. Given the much lower number of occurrences compared to switching between clauses, switching across turns has not been included in the analysis.

### 9.1.1 Within the clause

#### 9.1.1.1 Transference

The language distribution of transfers in the formal and in the family situations (Table 9.1) shows a major difference: in a situation characterised by an Italian base, the highest percentage of transfers comes from Sicilian (60%); in a Sicilian base, on the other hand, the highest number comes from English (62%).

Table 9.1: Transfers in the formal and in the family situations

Situation	Formal n=45	Family n=50
Italian cl. with Sicilian tr.	27 (60.00%)	7 (14.00%)
Italian cl. with English tr.	13 (28.89%)	--
Sicilian cl. with English tr.	3 (6.67%)	31 (62.00%)
Sicilian cl. with Italian tr.	2 (4.44%)	12 (24.00%)

Chi Sq = 54.85  $df = 3$   $p < .01$

It must be pointed out, however, that the identification of Italian transfers in a Sicilian base can be quite problematic as a result of the structural similarity between the two languages. Furthermore, the classification of transfers made in this study, which is based on their linguistic environment (cf. 5.2.3.2), may have lowered the number of Italian transfers occurring in the family situation. Nonetheless, the

data still point to the following findings: a) an Italian base shows a preference for Sicilian transfers; b) an Italian base displays a lower number of English transfers than a Sicilian base does (overall, 16, that is, 35.56% English transfers in an Italian base compared to 31, that is, 62.00% in a Sicilian base).

The two excerpts below are indicative of both trends: Excerpt 9.1, taken from the formal situation, shows Sicilian transfers in a situation characterised by an Italian base; Excerpt 9.2, from the family situation, shows English transfers in a Sicilian base.

#### Excerpt 9.1

A lo facevano *pi*: o pubblico *si-si* voleva la sedia dovevi pagare  
(they did it for the audience if you wanted a chair you had to pay)

#### Excerpt 9.2

[Anna and her father are talking about a radio station]

A *ma iu un saria di di furi già*  
 F *ma ah ah c'è-ddi diri se un sona bbonu (...)*  
 A *eh ma po-ddas-si spustà a STESCIONA* [station]  
 F *u [munzià?] tutta forse*  
 A *YEH ma po-ddarsi spustasti a STESCIONA*

A but it shouldn't be time to fix it up yet  
 F but listen to her if it doesn't work properly  
 A yes but maybe the station moved  
 F he (...) all of it maybe  
 A yes but maybe you moved the station

Both of these trends identified in the entire corpus can be found also in the speech addressed to the researcher and to the children (Tables 9.2 and 9.3). Table 9.2 confirms that the highest number of transfers in an Italian base comes from Sicilian: in speaking to me, both in the formal and the informal situations Sicilian transfers are the most numerous. Table 9.3, on the other hand, confirms that in a Sicilian base the highest number of transfers comes from English.

Table 9.2: Transfers in overall speech to the researcher

	n= 38
Italian cl. with Sicilian tr.	22 (57.89%)
Italian cl. with English tr.	13 (34.21%)
Sicilian cl. with English tr.	2 (5.26%)
Sicilian cl. with Italian tr.	1 (2.63%)

Table 9.3: Transfers in speech to the children in family situation\*

	n= 33
Italian cl. with Sicilian tr.	6 (18.18%)
Italian cl. with English tr.	--
Sicilian cl. with English tr.	20 (60.61%)
Sicilian cl. with Italian tr.	7 (21.21%)

\* Includes also 3 transfers in clauses addressed to both children together.

### 9.1.1.2 Mixing

The language distribution of mixing (Table 9.4) shows that in both the formal and the family situations, that is, in situations characterised by different base languages, the highest percentage is of mixed clauses between Italian and Sicilian (51.52% and 49.12% respectively).

Table 9.4: Mixing in the formal and in the family situations

Situation	Formal n=33	Family n=57
Italian & Sicilian	17 (51.52%)	28 (49.12%)
Sicilian & English	2 (6.06%)	18 (31.58%)
Italian & English	8 (24.24%)	4 (7.02%)
All three languages	6 (18.18%)	7 (12.28%)

Chi Sq = 11.30 df = 3 p < .025  
(2 cells with expected counts less than 5.0)

At first, this may seem contradictory compared to the previous result of English transfers being more numerous than Italian transfers in a Sicilian base. However, structural considerations can help explain this apparent contradiction: the insertion of a single lexical item in a clause in a completely different language (that is, transference) is an "easier" process than the juxtaposition of elements of different sizes (e.g., morphemes, words or phrases) in different languages within the same clause (that is, mixing). This is also confirmed in those studies which have shown that, within the category of intrasentential switching, nouns - rather than phrases - are always the most frequently switched category (cf. Poplack, 1980, 1981; Huerta-Macias, 1981; see also 8.3.2). As discussed above, the bilinguals' preference for the insertion of single lexemes (and of nouns particularly) is well documented in the literature on language contact and finds its explanation in the fact that noun switches are relatively free of syntactic restrictions (cf. 2.2.1 and 2.2.2). Nonetheless, the use of multiple elements from different languages within the same clause (that is, mixing) can be facilitated if the two languages are structurally very similar, at all linguistic levels, as fewer adjustments are required. Hence, mixing in our corpus tends to occur more easily and frequently between the two languages structurally closer, Italian and Sicilian. The preference of contact already noted between Italian and Sicilian is thus confirmed.

Some Italian-Sicilian mixed clauses occurring in an Italian and a Sicilian base language respectively are shown in the two excerpts below.

Excerpt 9.3 (formal situation)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| A | fai vedere alla signora cos'hai fatto a scuola oggi<br>(.) |
| A | a sedia  |
| G | WHAT?  |
| A | a sedia <i>chidda</i> c-hai fatt-oggi                      |
| G | ah!  |
| A | show the lady what you did at school today                 |
| A | the chair  |
| G | what?  |
| A | the chair the one you did today                            |

## Excerpt 9.4 (family situation)

- A ma non è non è bbuono (gh)iri iddu cu vuoiatri / picchi vuoiatri sili ranni / iddu ancora e è: BABY  
 (but it's no good that he should come with you because you are big but he is still a baby)

A second feature to observe in Table 9.4 is that, although Italian-Sicilian mixing is the most frequent type of mixing in the family situation, Sicilian as base language still elicits a higher degree of mixing with English than Italian as base language does (31.58% and 24.24% respectively). Thus, as was the case for transference, with mixing too English "penetrates" upon a Sicilian base more frequently than upon an Italian base. An example of how this occurs is shown in Anna's last turn in the excerpt below, where she is "echoing" the child.

## Excerpt 9.5

- A non ha studiato *propria iddu*  
 (he hasn't studied at all)  
 R YES I DID  
 A WHEN [loud]  
 R LAST NIGHT  
 A LAST NIGHT e LAST NIGHT tu *aieri manciasti oggi manciasti macara no?*  
 (last night you ate yesterday and you ate today as well didn't you?)

The figures regarding the researcher and the children (Tables 9.5 and 9.6) confirm the preference for Italian-Sicilian mixing in both an Italian and a Sicilian base. Italian-Sicilian mixed clauses are the most numerous in the speech to the researcher in both situations (that is, in an Italian base), as well as in the speech to the children in the family situation (that is, in a Sicilian base).

Table 9.5: Mixing in overall speech to the researcher

	n= 31
Italian & Sicilian	18 (58.06%)
Italian & English	7 (22.58%)
All three languages	5 (16.13%)
Sicilian & English	1 (3.23%)

Table 9.6: Mixing in speech to the children in family situation\*

	n= 42
Italian & Sicilian	22 (52.38%)
Sicilian & English	13 (30.95%)
All three languages	4 (9.52%)
Italian & English	3 (7.14%)

\* Includes also 6 mixed clauses addressed to both children together.

### 9.1.2 Between clauses

Table 9.7 shows the language distribution of switches between clauses in the formal and in the family situations.

Table 9.7: Switching between clauses in the formal and in the family situations

Formal situation -		Total switches: 83			
	Preced clause	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base clause					
Ital	n= 40	--	9 (22.50%)	9 (22.50%)	22 (55.00%)
Sicil	n= 9	8 (88.89%)	--	--	1 (11.11%)
Engl	n= 7	3 (42.86%)	--	--	4 (57.14%)
Mix & Transf.	n= 27	17 (62.96%)	2 (7.41%)	4 (14.81%)	4 (14.81%)
Family situation -		Total switches: 162			
	Preced clause	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base clause					
Ital	n= 13	--	5 (38.46%)	4 (30.77%)	4 (30.77%)
Sicil	n= 61	5 (8.20%)	--	28 (45.90%)	28 (45.90%)
Engl	n= 36	2 (5.55%)	23 (63.89%)	--	11 (30.55%)
Mix & Transf.	n= 52	5 (9.62%)	28 (53.85%)	13 (25.00%)	6 (11.54%)

In the formal situation, switches occur mainly between Italian and Sicilian (8 from Italian to Sicilian and 9 from Sicilian to Italian, 20.48% of all switches), or Italian and clauses displaying contact configurations (17 from Italian into a clause with contact, and 22 in the opposite direction, 46.99% of all switches). In many cases switches occur between Italian clauses and clauses with transfers (16 from Italian into a clause with transfer, and 15 in the opposite direction, 37.35% of all switches). It must be remembered that in this situation the majority (60.00%) of transfers are represented by Sicilian transfers in Italian clauses (Table 9.1). Therefore, in an Italian base, switching between clauses occurs mainly between Italian clauses and either Sicilian clauses or, more frequently, Italian clauses with Sicilian transfers; for example, in the excerpt below, the switch is from an Italian clause to an Italian clause with a Sicilian transfer.

#### Excerpt 9.6

A e perché n-arriva fin-a oggi / che *semu* me: martedì?  
(why doesn't he arrive till today? what's today, Tuesday?)

The preference for contact between Italian and Sicilian in an Italian base is therefore confirmed at interclause level.

In the family situation (Table 9.7), on the other hand, a higher number of switches occurs between Sicilian and English (23 switches from Sicilian into English and 28 in the opposite direction, 31.48% of all switches), while Italian plays a minor role. From a Sicilian base, therefore, switches tend to depart in the direction of English more frequently than from an Italian base.

The data relating to switching between clauses in the speech addressed to the researcher and the children confirm these trends. In the speech to the researcher (Table 9.8), from an Italian base switches occur more frequently in the direction of Sicilian: when looking at the frequency of switches between Italian clauses and clauses with transfers or mixed clauses (42, that is, 61.76% of all total switches), it must be remembered that the majority of these are Italian clauses with Sicilian transfers (cf. Table 9.2), or Italian-Sicilian mixed clauses (cf. Table 9.5).

Table 9.8: Switching between clauses in overall speech to the researcher

Total switches: 68		Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base clause	Preced clause				
Ital	n= 29	--	6 (20.69%)	2 (6.90%)	21 (72.41%)
Sicil	n= 10	8 (80.00%)	--	1 (10.00%)	1 (10.00%)
Engl	n= 3	2 (66.67%)	--	--	1 (33.33%)
Mix & Transf.	n= 26	21 (80.77%)	1 (3.85%)	--	4 (15.38%)

The excerpt below aptly shows this kind of switching from an Italian base in the direction of Sicilian: switching occurs mainly between Italian clauses and Italian-Sicilian mixed clauses.

#### Excerpt 9.7

- [Anna is complaining about Giorgio]
- A ogni settimana è sta storia / prima poi di.: l'ultima sera e *si* fa tutti  
*nta na vota* / non ci arriva / *si mett-a piangiri dda*
- N ah sì?
- A eh sta CRANKI [cranky] / e poi *a matina certli* volte prima che se ne va /  
ci face-io / be fe mettiamoci così mettiamoci così /
- N oh!
- A {e *si* fa
- A every week it's the same story first then the last night and he does it  
all at once [the homework] he can't make it and he starts crying
- N does he?
- A and he gets cranky and then in the morning sometimes before he goes I  
tell him let's see let's write this and he does it

With regard to the speech to the children (Table 9.9), the data from the family situation confirm that in a Sicilian base the highest number of switches occurs between Sicilian and English: they represent 34.95% (36 out of 103) of all switches in the speech to the children.

Table 9.9: Switching between clauses in speech to the children in the family situation

Total switches: 103					
	Preced clause	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base clause					
Ital	n=8	--	2 (25.00%)	3 (37.50%)	3 (37.50%)
Sicil	n=37	2 (5.41%)	--	21 (56.76%)	14 (37.84%)
Engl	n=26	2 (7.69%)	15 (57.69%)	--	9 (34.62%)
Mix & Transf.	n=32	3 (9.38%)	17 (53.13%)	9 (28.13%)	3 (9.38%)

With regard to the tables presented so far, it is to be noted that, although in some cases the number of occurrences is too low to draw conclusions with any degree of confidence, it still confirms the trends identified throughout the analysis.

The excerpt below shows Sicilian-English switching between the clauses in Anna's speech to the children.

#### Excerpt 9.8

[Anna and the children are trying to fix up a radio]

G LET'S SEE UH WHAT KIND OF BATTERY?

A *com'a -cchidda dda* u SQUARE ONE / *di com'a-cchidda chi cci avi u nonnu* / THAT'S THE CHARGEABLE ONE  
(like the one the square one like the one that grandpa has that's the chargeable one)

R THE ONE THAT WE GOT FOR OUR RADIOS

A [ *ssu-rradio u sa / quant'esti?* / TWENTY ONE YEARS OLD!  
(you know how old this radio is?)

R & G oh!

[Anna laughs]

G DID YOU GOT IT (sic) FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY?

A NO AH I-I GOT-*a-rradio* [radio very loud] ah ah

A *qua- a no a nonna a a* / THAT'S AMERICAN ONE  
(when grandma...)

R americana [putting on Italian accent]  
(American)

A [*americana esti*  
(it's American)]

## 9.2 English as contact language

The second part of this chapter focuses upon the role of English as contact language with Italian and Sicilian in all three situations.

The first point to notice is that English intrudes upon a Sicilian base more frequently than upon an Italian base, as already pointed out above (cf. 9.1.1.1 and 9.1.2).

Secondly, in my corpus English never appears as base language, according to the criteria adopted in this study. Although it occurs in high percentages (cf. Tables 7.1 and 8.1), it is never the most used language at clause level, either in the entire corpus, or even in the speech addressed to the children. In Anna's overall speech English reaches a maximum of 18.05% in the informal speech (Table 7.1); in the speech addressed to Rino, a maximum of 22.03% in the informal speech (Table 8.1); in the speech addressed to Giorgio, a maximum of 28.57% in the formal speech (Table 8.1). Higher percentages are displayed by the other two languages at clause level, as shown above (7.2 and 8.1.1).

Furthermore, among the three languages, English is the one frequently showing the highest degree of variation at interclause and turn level, notably in the family situation. Leaving aside the formal situation, where only 12 clauses in English are preceded by another clause (Table 7.2), we notice that in the family situation (Table 7.3) out of 40 English clauses only 4 (10.00%) are preceded by another English clause. With regard to turns in the family situation (Table 7.3), only 7 English turns out of 26 (26.92%) are preceded by other English turns.

The degree of variation is high in the family situation even in the speech addressed to the children, the interlocutors with whom English is used most. In the speech addressed to Rino, only 4 English clauses out of 20 (20.00%) are preceded by other English clauses (Table 8.2); in the speech addressed to Giorgio, out of 8 English clauses not even one is preceded by another clause in English (Table 8.3). The percentages regarding variation across turns in the speech to the children confirm these trends (cf. Appendix II).

It is clear from these data that, even in speaking to the children, English is never used by Anna for long sequences of speech, as shown in the exchange below.

### Excerpt 9.9

R	ma ma ma uh::	[smelling a rock melon]
R	GOOD TASTE	
A	[ <i>u culuri cci l' à</i> ALL RIGHT <i>ora u</i> TASTE] (taste)	
	(the colour is all right now the taste)	
R		[NICE NICE UH::]
A	SMELLS GOOD	
R	uh uh uh	
A	com'è?	
	(how is it?)	
R	uh	[while slurping]
A	è <i>bbonu</i> ?	
	(is it good?)	

The third feature regards Anna's use of English in the unfolding of the conversation. Table 9.10 below shows that in the entire corpus, a clause uttered in English by another participant is followed by a clause in English uttered by Anna in only 32.59% of the cases. This percentage becomes particularly meaningful if we consider that, on the contrary, Anna follows a clause in Sicilian using the same language 60.26% of the times and one in Italian 74.01% times. Therefore, in our corpus, English is the language eliciting the lowest degree of "sequencing": use of English by another speaker does not necessarily require reciprocal use of English by Anna.

Table 9.10: Language use across participants in the corpus

Cl. of prev speaker	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Anna's clause	n=304	n=78	n=316	n=34
Ital	225 (74.01%)	10 (12.82%)	48 (15.19%)	9 (26.47%)
Sicil	15 (4.93%)	47 (60.26%)	78 (24.68%)	4 (11.76%)
Engl	15 (4.93%)	8 (10.26%)	103 (32.59%)	1 (2.94%)
Mix & Transf.	49 (16.12%)	13 (16.67%)	87 (27.53%)	20 (58.82%)

On the other side of the coin, Table 9.11 shows that, whenever Anna does use English, in 81.10% of the cases her English clause is preceded by another clause in English uttered by a different participant, as shown in Excerpt 9.9 above. Thus, use of English by Anna is generally elicited by another speaker. Notice that, on the other hand, whenever Anna is using Sicilian, only in 32.64% of the cases is she following the language used by the previous speaker.

Table 9.11: Language use by Anna compared to previous speaker

	Cl. of prev speaker	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Anna's clause					
Ital	n=292	225 (77.05%)	10 (3.42%)	48 (16.44%)	9 (3.08%)
Sicil	n=144	15 (10.42%)	47 (32.64%)	78 (54.17%)	4 (2.78%)
Engl	n=127	15 (11.81%)	8 (6.30%)	103 (81.10%)	1 (0.79%)
Mix & Transf.	n=169	49 (28.99%)	13 (7.69%)	87 (51.48%)	20 (11.83%)

These findings point to a position of English as the dispreferred language in Anna's repertoire. Such dispreference can be identified in the trends presented above: English is the language that is spoken in response to other speakers' (generally the children) use of it, rather than by Anna's own initiative; furthermore, whenever it is used, it is never spoken for long stretches if the interlocutor is able to understand either Sicilian or Italian; finally, English is "kept out" more than Sicilian when Anna is speaking Italian, that is when she is out of her domestic patterns. All these findings give us useful insights concerning the position of English in Anna's speech repertoire, as will be discussed in the next part of this chapter.

### 9.3 Discussion of findings

#### 9.3.1 Major patterns in the contact

The data presented in this chapter have dealt with the way the three languages: Italian, Sicilian and English, enter into contact,

exploring the major patterns in contact at different linguistic levels as well as the specific role of English in the corpus.

The first issue that this chapter has dealt with is the identification of preferences of contact in situations characterised by different base languages. The analysis has shown that in an Italian base, contact occurs more frequently with Sicilian than with English, as demonstrated by the higher number of transfers from Sicilian, mixed clauses with Sicilian, and switches from and into Sicilian. On the other hand, from a Sicilian base, contact with English occurs more frequently than from an Italian base, at all linguistic levels analysed. A clear pattern of preferences in contact is thus identified, between Italian and Sicilian on the one hand, and Sicilian and English on the other. This trend was found in Anna's overall speech, in the situations characterised by clear base languages, that is, the formal and the family situations. It was also confirmed in the speech to the researcher (in the formal and in the informal situations), as well as to the children (in the family situation).

The preference shown from an Italian base language for contact with Sicilian can be explained if we consider the monolingual norm that regulates the formal situation, as discussed above (cf. 8.3.1). By drawing upon the language which is structurally closer (that is, Sicilian), the Italian speaker can reduce the effect of language alternation: switching between Italian clauses and Italian clauses with Sicilian transfers means departing from the Italian base to a lower degree than, for instance, switching between an Italian and an English clause. By resorting to Sicilian, Anna attempts to adhere to one language only. Likewise, Chapters 7 and 8 showed how general contact at every linguistic level is avoided in the formal situation. Anna's reluctance to move away from Italian as base language is therefore confirmed by these new results, which demonstrate again that her use of Italian brings with it a high degree of monitoring and carefulness, due to the fact that Italian is not the language used in the everyday, domestic context (cf. 8.3.3).

On the other hand, the preference shown from a Sicilian base language towards contact with English is also a confirmation of the higher degree of permeability of Sicilian compared to Italian

mentioned above (cf. 8.3.3). It also shows Anna's readiness to move away from Sicilian as base language, as a result of the domestic use of Sicilian, constantly exposed to and in contact with the English speech of the children.

Once again, a different treatment of Italian and Sicilian emerges from the data analysed, supporting our postulation of Italian and Sicilian respectively as High and Low languages in Anna's repertoire. Therefore such preferences of contact confirm the diglossic collocation of Italian and Sicilian presented above (cf. 8.3.3).

### 9.3.2 A note on mixing and transference

Another result that has emerged from the analyses in this chapter is the higher frequency of mixing between languages structurally related, that is, Italian and Sicilian (cf. 9.1.1.2). Although from a Sicilian base language contact tends to occur with English, it was shown that, in the case of mixed clauses, Italian-Sicilian mixing was more frequent than Sicilian-English mixing.

It was suggested above (9.1.1.2) that such higher degree of mixing between Italian and Sicilian can be explained on structural grounds, as the strong similarity between the two languages is a factor which favours such contact within the clause. Support for this explanation also comes from studies conducted by some Italian scholars (e.g., Berruto, 1989a, 1990; Alfonzetti, in press b) on Italian-dialect intrasentential switching, the category which partly overlaps with our mixing. They have shown that the strong affinity between the two languages at both phonological and grammatical level allows a total lack of constraints and the possibility of mixing the two languages at any point of the clause or sentence, given that the transition from Italian to dialect can also occur through a continuum of intermediate forms. Some scholars have even suggested that the notion of constraints does not apply in the case of languages so closely related. Others (e.g., Auer and di Luzio, 1983a, 1983b) have opted for a different term, "code shifting", to refer to Italian-dialect alternation, in order to distinguish it from switching. But our reasons for adopting the same categories for all three languages, in spite of the different

degree of relatedness between two of them, have already been mentioned (cf. 5.1.3).

The findings in this chapter also confirm the difference already noted between mixing and transference (cf. 8.3.2), in that the number of English transfers in a Sicilian base is higher than the number of Italian transfers. As noted above (9.1.1.2), this suggests that the insertion of single elements within a clause in a different language is an "easier" process than the juxtaposition of several elements, as the latter involves a higher degree of risk from a grammatical point of view.

Two interesting conclusions can be drawn from these findings. Firstly, these data indicate very clearly that mixing (or intrasentential switching) is more likely to occur between related than unrelated languages, as the process is eased by the structural affinity (cf. 8.3.2).

Secondly, the data confirm that a difference exists between multiple contact within the clause (mixing or intrasentential switching) and what we have called transference ("noun switches" for others). The insertion of a single lexeme from L2 within a clause in L1 is a distinct process both in grammatical grounds, as it is less risky, and in psychological terms, as in the speaker's perception the use of one word in a different language does not have the power to change the language of the interaction to the same extent as the use of several elements does. The speaker's different perception of these two different contact configurations seems supported by such elements as the fact that in an interview situation transfers occur more frequently than other contact configurations (cf. Bettoni, 1981; see also 8.3.2); or the fact that transfers ("noun switches") occur more frequently in speaking to a non-group than a group member (Poplack, 1981). Therefore these findings show the importance of keeping a distinction among the various contact configurations occurring at different linguistic levels, as done in this study.

### 9.3.3 The role of English in Anna's language repertoire

Another issue that was specifically dealt with in this chapter is the role of English as language in contact with Sicilian and Italian. The

data presented in this chapter have shown two major points in this regard.

Firstly, in our corpus English receives a different treatment from Italian and Sicilian: it does not occur as base language in any situation; it is not used for long stretches of talk, not even with interlocutors who use almost exclusively English (the children), as demonstrated by the high degree of variation at both interclause and across turn level; furthermore, it is the language that "tolerates" the highest degree of unreciprocity of languages across participants. Therefore, as noted above (cf. 9.2), English appears to be the dispreferred language in Anna's repertoire, since it is used mainly in response to other speakers' use of it.

The second point concerning the role of English in our data is that it is the language that penetrates upon a Sicilian base more frequently than on an Italian base.

These findings, together with other considerations based on my own observations, can help us understand the position occupied by English in Anna's repertoire in relation to Sicilian and Italian. Understanding the relative position of the three languages and the meaning that each of them has for Anna in turn yields some insights into the linguistic processes that are occurring within this family, as representative of a section of the Italo-Australian community.

In order to understand the collocation of English in Anna's repertoire, a first element to consider is how it became part of it. We must remember that, while Sicilian and Italian belong to the speech repertoire that Anna brought to Australia from her home country, English is the language that was added to it as a result of the migration process. English has entered Anna's repertoire gradually, increasing its role throughout the years and in coincidence with some particular moments in her life.

When Anna entered the Sicilian-Australian and the Italo-Australian communities in the Fifties, English was spoken by only a minority of people in her network. This network allowed migrants to operate in Australia relying mainly on dialect and Italian. At the same time it also made it possible for a young woman like Anna to grow up in the community maintaining her own dialect and - perhaps to a

lower degree - Italian, while learning English at the same time. Two groups of people today are the witnesses of this earlier phase in the life of the community: on the one hand, the aged members of today's Italian community (such as Anna's father and father-in-law), who spent all or most of their working lives in Australia but never learnt English; on the other hand, those people now in their forties who, like Anna, arrived in Australia quite young (or were born here), but became trilingual by maintaining both their dialects and their Italian simply by living within the community, while learning English through work or education.

Although in those early days English was kept out of the homes, where dialect was the language normally used, its dominant role must have been deeply felt by every migrant. English was seen as the language that needed to be learnt in order to advance one's position; it was the language of all institutions, particularly of the educational system that their children were attending; English was necessary if one did not want to depend on network members to access some basic services. Thus, although English was not actually inside the homes, its pervasive presence must have been perceived by all.

Throughout the years, the role played by English in both the life of the Sicilian and the Italian communities and in Anna's own life gradually increased, for a number of reasons.

With regard to the communities, English gradually became part of the repertoire of the majority of the Italian born population, as a result of a number of circumstances: among these, the most important was that the masses of youth who arrived in Australia from Italy in the Fifties and Sixties - like Anna - learnt it through the educational system or through their work environment. Furthermore, some Italians married outside their ethnic group, therefore English was needed to communicate. In the last decades, the few Italians who have arrived in Australia already know some English because of having studied it at school before leaving. Consequently, the number of people who do not know any English, not even at the most elementary level of comprehension, is greatly reduced compared to thirty years ago, and is now limited to the aged members. This partly explains the dominant - and often exclusive - use of English by the second and third

generations, whose real need for using Italian or dialect is extremely limited, given that few people now in their networks do not understand English.

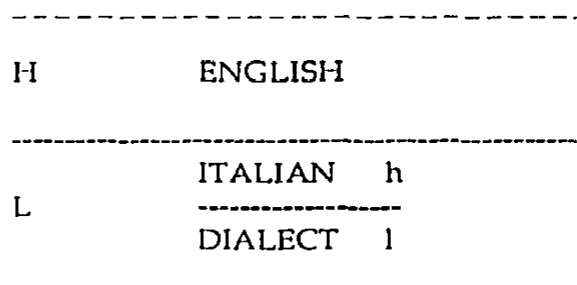
Thus, in the decades from approximately the Sixties to the Eighties, the migrant community moved from Italian-dialect bilingualism to a situation of trilingualism: Italian, dialect and English. The important element to underline is that, as a result of all these factors, the community in which Anna grew up as an adolescent after her arrival in Australia, has changed considerably in these forty years of settlement.

As to Anna's own life cycle, the crucial moment in the increased role of English was the arrival of her own children. As admitted by Anna herself - and as by many other migrant parents - ever since her older child, Rino, began attending school, his use of Sicilian gradually declined and English started to penetrate in the home and become part of the domestic repertoire, in constant contact with Sicilian.

Thus, both in the life of the community and in Anna's own life, English has been moving from the periphery towards the core of the speech repertoire. While in Anna's youth English was dominant but distant, it now surrounds her everyday life, by being present in her own house through her children.

As a result of these changes, then, what is the collocation of English in Anna's speech repertoire now, compared to Sicilian and Italian?

In discussing the relative position of Italian, dialect and English in the Italo-Australian community, Bettoni (1990b: 48) talks of a situation of diglossia. Following the terminology introduced by Fasold (1984: 52-53), she distinguishes between the "big" diglossia of English as the High language and the ethnic varieties (both Italian and dialects) as Low languages, and the "little" ethnic diglossia of Italian and dialect. Bettoni illustrates the two relationships through the following diagram (1990b: 48).



Bettoni argues for a diglossic relationship among the three languages on the basis of two factors: a) the three languages are commonly used for different sets of tasks and circumstances; b) they enjoy different prestige. Furthermore, she identifies clear signs of breakdowns in both of these diglossic relationships, on the basis of the two features identified by Fasold (1984: 54) for such cases: leakage in function and mixing in form. The dotted lines in the diagram indicate that the High language, English, is invading domains that were once the prerogative of the Low languages (e.g., the home), while dialects are infiltrating Italian domains, as shown by the second generation using more dialect than Italian in public places. This latter point is, however, debatable (cf. 8.3.3). Bettoni herself recognises that more research is needed on this last issue but concludes that Italian is under attack from both ends. With regard to mixing in form, Bettoni notes that the data available from previous research clearly show the intrusion of English onto Italian.

Two points are to be noted with regard to Bettoni's position: firstly, she is adopting what can be called a "minimalist" definition of diglossia (cf. 8.3.3), as she is using it as a general term to refer to two different language situations, while adopting a typology of diglossic relations ("big" diglossia and "little" diglossia). Secondly, Bettoni comes close to Fishman's description of migrant contexts as speech communities characterised by bilingualism without diglossia (cf. 2.1).

On the basis of my own findings and observations, I would like to argue instead the following points: firstly, that the notion of diglossia, taken in a more restrictive or maximalist sense (cf. 8.3.3), does not apply to the relationship between migrant language(s) and the host language, at least not in the language situation under

investigation in this study. Secondly, that the relationships between Italian, Sicilian and English are of a quite different nature and cannot be grouped together in one single model. Finally, that the view of migrant contexts as bilingual communities with or without diglossia often does not take into the right account the linguistic development of the communities.

Let us then examine the relationship between English on the one side and Italian-Sicilian on the other, to find out whether they are in a diglossic relationship, according to the definition adopted in this study. In order to do so, the three main elements included in the classic notion of diglossia will be taken into account, as previously done to explore the Italian-Sicilian relationship: the question of language relatedness; the features associated with High and Low languages; and functional differentiation (cf. 8.3.3).

With regard to the first point, a diglossic relationship between Italian-Sicilian and English is excluded from the start since they are not related languages. As to the second point, the features traditionally associated with the High language (prestige, literary heritage, pattern of acquisition, standardisation, and so on) do not seem to fit with English. It must be remembered that many migrants do not acquire the host language through the educational system, nor do they associate it with formal contexts or its literary heritage. Their early experience with the host language is one of slow and painful acquisition at work, through other work mates. Furthermore, it is a process of acquisition which generally involves some stigmatised variety of the host language.

Even with regard to prestige, there seems to be a difference with the prestige enjoyed by Italian. This was shown by our data on the different treatment of the three languages, where English appears as the dispreferred language in Anna's repertoire. In spite of the constant presence of English in the home, a sense of "strangeness" towards it still remains, as revealed by many elements: English is "funny and hard to write", is Anna's comment while the children are doing their homework; what her children are required to do at school is always considered with a mixture of curiosity and criticism, as it was never

experienced by her in the first place; Australians are still looked upon as "them", although her children are Australian themselves.

The different prestige of English and Italian is also confirmed in the study by Bettoni and Gibbons (1988: 25-28), where the attitudes elicited by the two languages show some important differences. Italian speakers are liked and judged very favourably by the informants, who regard them as prestigious, competent and sophisticated; furthermore, the use of Italian is considered a marker of Italian identity, although to a lower extent than the dialects. As to the English speakers, they are regarded as successful and prestigious, but they are neither liked nor disliked. As Bettoni and Gibbons (1988: 28) say, the positive evaluation of English

peak(s) on the sophistication/prestige factor, which may reflect the social value of English in the community.

Therefore, rather than with the prestige associated with a High language in the meaning referred to by Ferguson, as the language that is associated with the most formal and official situations in the community, in a migrant's speech repertoire English seems more associated with connotations of power and social success.

The third feature to identify a diglossic relationship is functional differentiation. Whenever this issue is brought up with reference to migrant contexts, one important point is generally overlooked: when functional differentiation exists between the host language and the migrants' languages, often the reason is the migrants' lack of knowledge of the host language rather than a clear, rigid and stable societal distribution of the two languages, as the notion of diglossia would imply. In the early stages of the Italo-Australian community, what might have appeared as a functional differentiation between the two languages, that is, Italian and English, was due to the fact that a large section of the community did not know English. Therefore at that stage the community displayed neither (Italian-English) bilingualism nor diglossia. In fact it could be argued that the community then was not even part of the broader Australian speech community given that the two groups did not share any language variety. Throughout the years, as described above, large sections of the

Italian community became bilingual (or trilingual with the dialect), and the use of English rapidly expanded to many spheres of life, including the domestic environment. While the present situation in the Italo-Australian community can be described in broad terms as bilingual (or trilingual), I feel that it is not justified to describe it in terms of breakdowns in diglossic relationships, as a functional differentiation between Italian and English never existed in the past as a societal and clear distribution of the two languages according to the formality or informality of the situation.

On the basis of all three criteria we can conclude therefore that the relationship that links English with Italian/Sicilian is not one of diglossia. Furthermore, it is a different relationship from the one existing between Italian and Sicilian. English is not for Anna a High language, at least not in the same way as Italian is, as it has different connotations and different features associated with it. English is not a language that surrounded her from childhood, and that was allocated a very specific and important space in her home country. It is a language that comes from the outside, from the host country, and that for years has played only a small role in her life in Australia. It may also have ambivalent connotations: while it is associated with power and prestige in the host country, it probably also evokes the pain and suffering of the first years of migration.

Having established that English is not the High language in Anna's repertoire, and that Italian is the High language of the Italian/Sicilian pair, there remain some important issues to discuss. In the course of the analysis it was noted that, while English is used almost constantly by the children, one third of Anna's speech is in English. A process of language shift is clearly occurring within the family as the parents' own languages (Sicilian and Italian) are being replaced by English. The questions to which we wish to attempt an answer in the next sections are the following: why is the home language then becoming English, in spite of Anna's dispreference for it? Why can't Italian counteract the pressure from English and be used at home, given the high status that it enjoys in Anna's repertoire? Finally, why, of all three languages present in Anna's repertoire, is

English the only one that is successfully learnt and used by the children?

In order to understand the process of language shift occurring within the family, a whole range of elements need to be taken into account: the insights presented so far with regard to the collocation of the three languages in Anna's repertoire; Anna's own attitudes towards each language; the functions that each language plays both in Anna's life and in the community; some relevant socio-economic factors.

In the next sections all these factors are discussed in relation to English and Sicilian first, and English and Italian afterwards.

### 9.3.3.1 Understanding the shift from Sicilian to English

The data in our corpus have shown that English is the dispreferred language in Anna's repertoire and her sense of identification still lies with Sicilian. Nonetheless, in spite of Anna's attitudes, English is increasingly occupying her domestic space, while the role of Sicilian seems to be destined to decrease.

In order to understand this apparent contradiction, one element that should be considered is the function played by each of these language: English and Sicilian, within the house. A functional perspective to language maintenance can help us explain the shift from Sicilian to English that is occurring within Anna's home. The main tenet of this perspective is that, in order to survive, a language must have a function.

In dealing with the issue of language maintenance among Australian Aborigines, McConvell (1986, 1991) developed a model with three main functions. According to him, multilingualism can have a basic communication function, which has to do with conveying a message; a social function, where the use of the different languages is explained with the need to express social meanings, by "making comments on social factors using linguistic markers" (McConvell, 1986: 113); and a cultural function, which contrasts different world views linked to distinct cultures.

Leaving aside the cultural function (particularly relevant in the case of the Aborigines and of their system of knowledge, but not in our situation), the other two functions seem to be appropriate to explain the situation which is under investigation here. To the question: "Why is Sicilian not surviving in this family?", a possible answer is that Sicilian is gradually losing its functions.

In terms of the basic communication function, mother and children can communicate in English very well, as Anna's competence in English allows it. As to the older members of the family, it was shown how the children have developed certain strategies to avoid speaking Sicilian (cf. 4.3.4): in the presence of the grandparents who do not speak English, the children do not address them directly but resort to their mother; alternatively, they simply don't communicate. All their other relatives (uncles, aunts or cousins) speak English, so the communication can operate in English all the time. It is to be noted that during our first encounter, when asked specifically about language use at home, Anna answered that they speak *tutto mischiato* ('all mixed up'), but that her husband and herself speak more "our language, Sicilian" especially because the grandparents do not speak English and the children have to use Sicilian to communicate with them. Thus it seems that Anna herself recognises a reduced role for Sicilian in purely communicative terms, as the language that is needed only for those few family members who do not know English. Therefore, within the home, the communication function of Sicilian seems very weak indeed. On the contrary, as said before, the need for Sicilian must have been much stronger when Anna herself was growing up, as many more people in her network then could not speak English.

Sicilian may still be used within the household as a social function, "in order to identify the speaker, listener or both with a particular social group" (McConvell, 1991: 150). In a social function, therefore, Sicilian would be used with the children in an attempt to convey, reinforce or allude to their Sicilian identity. It seems legitimate to assume from Anna's part the wish to convey her own cultural heritage and language to her children, given her strong ties with Sicilian and her maintenance of a strong Sicilian identity, as a

result of a secluded life in a secluded Sicilian community when she was growing up.

Nonetheless, there are two important factors which undermine the social function of Sicilian: on the one hand, Anna's recognition of the Australian identity of her children; on the other, her awareness of the low status of Sicilian.

Like many other migrant parents, Anna clearly acknowledges and accepts the fact that, by being born and brought up here, her children will have an Australian identity, which will inevitably be different from her own as it develops on a series of experiences that are completely unknown to her. There is a term which is commonly used by Italo-Australian parents to refer jokingly to their children, and that is *cangaruni*, from "kangaroos". This term is a clear sign of recognition of the deep cultural diversity between parents and children. Jokes about the different identities of parents and children and the term *cangaruni* are quite frequent in Anna's household, as I noticed.

While the children develop their Australian identity, more and more throughout the years English becomes an indispensable tool for the parents to follow them in their new experiences, as English is the language of the dominant external environment that the children deal with every day. While my study has taken place when the children are still at a young age, it is possible to envisage that, the more the children develop their own personalities, the more the domestic space will be occupied by their identities and interests, that is, by all those elements of the external reality that they will bring home, all of them experienced in English. Should the parents wish to counterbalance in Sicilian the enormous new input that the children receive outside the home, both in linguistic and conceptual terms, a high degree of linguistic sophistication - together with a higher degree of education - would be needed.

Therefore, even the social function of Sicilian seems to rest on very weak grounds, as the children's Australian identity develops and the parents' own links with the Sicilian networks, the home country or the *paesani* become weaker and weaker, due to new situations and commitments, the death of close relatives or friends, the lack of

renewed input (for example, a trip to Sicily) and simply the passing of time. Also in this regard the situation today is very different from the years when Anna herself was growing up, when much more time was spent with *paesani* or relatives. In this sense too, the influence of the wider Australian society has become much more pervasive upon the home than it once was.

A second important factor that undermines the social function of Sicilian and makes its survival even more vulnerable is Anna's awareness of the low prestige of Sicilian, as discussed above (8.3.3). In this sense we agree with Bettoni and Gibbons (1988: 18) who maintain that the speakers' negative attitudes towards the dialects is a factor which accelerates language shift among Italo-Australians. It must also be considered that in several discussions it emerged that Anna is aware of the shift from dialect to (regional) Italian that is taking place in Italy itself: friends and relatives returning from trips to Sicily often comment upon the fact that young Sicilians now tend to speak more Italian than Sicilian.

A further point that needs to be taken into account to explain language shift in this family are some social factors, as they are closely linked to the loss of functions of Sicilian. Firstly, the socio-economic status of the family, as the lack of opportunities to go back to Sicily, to renew or keep contacts with the relatives there has a definite impact on the interest that the family takes in the region and its language. A second factor is the limited educational level of the parents, which does not give them the possibility to counteract in their own language the wealth of experiences that the children are receiving outside.

Therefore, the shift from Sicilian to English can be explained with a range of factors: speaker's attitudes, functions and status of the two languages, socio-economic factors and changes in the Sicilian and Australian communities. Furthermore, on the emotional level, English has now become part of the most intimate family moments, as it is the children's language. On the practical level, since the children are going to spend the rest of their lives in Australia, English is the important tool that they need to work and thrive in this country.

Against this range of factors promoting the use of English, Sicilian could survive only if there was a strong motivation for it. But

in this family - as in many other Italo-Australian families - a real strong reason for the maintenance of Sicilian seems to be missing, nor is it provided by their Sicilian network. When the grandparents are no longer household members, in this family Sicilian also seems doomed to gradually fade away.

### 9.3.3.2 Understanding the shift from Italian to English

A second question remains to be answered: why can't Italian, the other language in Anna's home repertoire, counteract the pressure from English and become the domestic language?

Many factors would seem to be playing in favour of Italian. As discussed above, Italian is the High language in Sicilian-Italian diglossia, enjoys prestige and high status, is linked to Italian identity and elicits positive attitudes from dialect speakers. Furthermore, Italian occupies a restricted but important role in the community (cf. 8.3.3). As a result, Italian also comes into contact with English much less than Sicilian does. In the interactions in Italian a high degree of language monitoring and the attempt to avoid English have been noted, for example, in our data from the formal situation, and in the interview data of previous research (cf. Kinder, 1987).

Even from a functional perspective, Italian seems to enjoy a better position than dialect. Italian serves an important communication function within the Italo-Australian community, for example, in its contact with the Italian authorities and the many Italian visitors coming to Australia for a wide range of reasons (cultural, educational, political, bureaucratic, commercial, and so on). Neither English nor dialect could be used in the same role. As to the social function, Italian is the language generally used with other Italo-Australians from different regions, in recognition of the common ethnic identity. This is confirmed in the data collected in the Rubino and Bettoni survey (in progress), where 97 out of 100 first generation Italians answered that upon meeting a new Italian person they would use Italian.

As the High language of the diglossic pair brought from home, as a language which has maintained a high status in the migrant

community and is generally kept separate and free from contact with English, to the eyes of many Italian migrants Italian enjoys a status which is equal to the dominant language, English, although within the more confined space of the Italo-Australian community.

However, while Italian seems to have ensured for itself a solid space at community level, it is not being used and transmitted within the homes, as this study has shown. For the great majority of first generation dialectophone migrants, Italian is not and cannot become the language of the home environment. It is the language of community events, the language that they aspire to, the language that their children may be studying at school (as in Anna's case), but not the one that they use at home. In spite of the commonly heard complaints among first generation migrants about the new generations not speaking Italian, anecdotal evidence and my own observations show that even when the children have learnt or "revived" Italian by studying it and/or by living in Italy for a certain period of time, the home language generally remains the dialect, as domestic language patterns are very difficult to readjust.

In Italy several decades and some major changes have been necessary for a variety of Italian to become the home language of more than half of the population (cf. 3.1.3). In Australia a similar process of italianisation in the homes of dialectophone migrants is much more difficult given the dominance of an English speaking environment and completely different circumstances. However, it can still be possible should the family members be very involved in community matters (for example, a national association, a welfare committee or a particular social group), or should they move in Italian - rather than regional - networks. But this is not the case in Anna's family, nor in many other Italo-Australian families, who take part in community events or activities only occasionally and have almost exclusively regional contacts.

While the high status of Italian has kept it "freer" from contact with English compared to Sicilian, it has also, as a reverse side of the coin, hindered, or made more difficult, its use in the domestic environment. In this sense then we must agree with Bettoni and Gibbons (1988) in saying that the diglossia that the Italo-Australians

brought from their home country can be considered a factor accelerating the shift to English, in that it has fragmented the community and has also caused a mismatch between language use in the homes and at community level (as well as in schools), without the possibility of the two reinforcing each other.

## CHAPTER TEN

### CONCLUSION

This chapter, through some concluding remarks, attempts to draw together the main findings of this thesis.

The first section summarises the major findings concerning some specific linguistic aspects of the research. The second section focuses upon a major area dealt with in the study, that is, fieldwork methodology. It presents the main insights that have emerged from this thesis with regard to the researcher's role in linguistic research and her relationship with the informants. Finally, some concluding considerations are raised concerning the main issue of this research, that is, the process of language shift as it is occurring in a migrant context, more specifically, a Sicilian Australian household in contemporary Sydney.

#### 10.1 General findings

This thesis has provided some insights into the following areas: attitudes towards multilingual speech in a specific migrant context; language contact; the effect of situational factors on language use.

With regard to the first issue, it has been shown that in the Italo-Australian community multilingual speech (in our case, bilingual and trilingual speech) is treated by the speakers as a censored type of behaviour, to be used only in informal situations and with familiar interlocutors. This finding, therefore, confirms results which have emerged in other migrant contexts and more generally in other bilingual communities (cf. Romaine, 1989: 258-269).

With regard to some specific aspects of language contact, three main results have emerged from this thesis.

(i) Different modalities of contact were found between related languages (Italian and Sicilian) as compared to unrelated languages

(Italian or Sicilian versus English). Contact between related languages is characterised by a higher degree of mixing, which can be considered a result of the structural affinity. Hence, language distance seems to have an impact on type of contact.

(ii) In my data contact occurs more frequently at higher constituent level, that is, above clause level, than within the clause, thus confirming results reported in other studies (e.g., Poplack, 1980; Huerta-Macias, 1981). This finding has been explained in the light of structural considerations, as in the case of all three languages dealt with in this study higher constituents seem to represent good sites for the transition to another language.

(iii) My data confirm the different status of lexical transference (in particular noun transference) as an "easier" and grammatically less risky type of contact compared to other linguistic levels. This result points to the necessity of analysing contact at word level as separate from other linguistic levels.

As to the effect of situational factors on linguistic patterns, it was found that in my corpus single situational factors such as interlocutor, topic and tone, were not sufficient to explain the selection of a particular language. Rather than with a single factor, linguistic patterns could instead be explained by looking at the more general situation and its level of formality.

This result is particularly interesting with regard to the interlocutor's role. While in other studies the interlocutor has often been found to be the crucial element in the use of a particular language(s), in this study it was shown to have a more indirect effect. It is not so much the interlocutor's identity that determines linguistic patterns but the degree of familiarity and friendship existing among participants and the type of situation that such a relationship defines.

## 10.2 Fieldwork methodology

A major area to which this thesis offers some insights is fieldwork methodology, particularly in the following aspects: firstly, the choice of a suitable fieldwork methodology; secondly, the issue of the researcher's role in linguistic research and her relationship with the informants.

With regard to the first issue, this study has indicated the necessity of adjusting any given methodology to suit the cultural and social norms of the community under investigation. While an existing model was taken as a starting point for this research, the norms and conditions of the Italo-Australian community forced me to modify it in some of its fundamental aspects, such as the strategies of access to the informants.

With regard to the second issue, this study clearly showed that the impact of the researcher's presence on the linguistic data was greatly reduced by the intense and prolonged contact with the informants, which allowed the development of mutual trust and friendship. The capacity to collect the linguistic patterns typical of the domestic environment that were the focus of the research, was due mainly to the development of such a relationship. This finding therefore exposes the shortcomings of those data collection methods which rely on only one contact with the informants. It also confirms the importance of choosing a fieldwork method which is most appropriate for the collection of a particular set of linguistic data.

The experience of my fieldwork also confirms the importance of the right choice of fieldworker, for example in terms of such social factors as gender, ethnicity or social class. While it is essential that certain features of researcher and informants be shared (e.g., in my case, gender), the fieldworker does not have to necessarily match the informants: in my study, for instance, certain differences in social class, educational levels and language patterns which initially seemed to be an obstacle, in the end could not only be overcome but also proved to be beneficial to the data collection.

### 10.3 On language shift

Finally, the major concern of this study has been the investigation of the process of language shift. The first consideration to be made is that from our analysis language shift appears to be a highly complex process, which needs to be explained as a result of the interaction of various factors at the psychological, social and historical levels.

With regard to Sicilian, the main factors which can explain its gradual abandonment in favour of English in the domestic environment are the following: the lack of a specific function of Sicilian within the family; language attitudes, more specifically, Anna's perception of the low status of Sicilian; the parents' acknowledgment of the Australian identity of the children; the socio-economic status of the family; the parents' educational level.

With regard to Italian, the shift can be explained with the dialectophone nature of the community and the fact that Italian is the language used at community level, but not within the domestic environment. Hence, the Italian-dialect diglossia also contributes to the shift from Italian.

With regard to both languages, other factors accelerating the shift are the sociolinguistic changes that the Italo-Australian community has undergone in its forty years of post World War II settlement, but particularly in the decades from the Sixties to the Eighties, when more and more bilingual (and trilingual) Italo-Australians became part of the broader Anglo-Australian speech community. Therefore the history of the ethnic community is another element to be taken into account in analysing shift, as a bilingual person will have different linguistic opportunities according to a particular historical moment in the life of the community.

Personal factors can also contribute to language shift. For instance, shift may coincide with a particular phase in the life of an individual (Clyne, 1982: 58), as in Anna's situation with the children's arrival. Nonetheless, even in this case external circumstances do play a prominent role: it is not the mere presence of the children which triggers the shift, but raising them up in a particular historical and socio-cultural context.

Another consideration concerns the fact that the process of shift proceeds in stages. This thesis has analysed some of its early phases,

which are characterised by bilingual conversation and the retention of receptive skills by the children.

This study also offers some insights into the role of the domestic environment in language shift. While the home domain has often been considered as the one where language maintenance is strongest (Fishman, [1964] 1966; Clyne, 1982: 57), this research clearly shows that, on the contrary, the home domain cannot be taken in isolation and can be the very locus of language shift. Two main reasons are given below to explain why this can happen.

The first reason is the more powerful influence of external reality, as today more than in the past the boundaries between the outside world and the domestic environment are much harder to keep separate. Hence, domains cannot be conceived of as completely separate entities; in today's society the domestic domain increasingly interacts with, and is deeply affected by, the broader socio-cultural context (a simple example of this would be the use of the television, for several hours a day).

The second reason, which is closely linked to the first, is that the children themselves become the mediators of this pervasive and powerful reality into the household. As we have seen, through the children the host language becomes part of everyday family life, and this is accompanied by the increased intrusion of the host society into the household. Consequently, by shifting to English Anna is attempting to be part of the world in which her children are growing up, to follow them along their path in the broader Anglo-Australian society of which she has always been on the margins. The important role of the children in promoting language shift in the speech of first generation migrants is thus fully exposed in this study.

A further consideration concerns the position of older relatives in the domestic environment. Their presence does not necessarily act as "stimulants to language maintenance" (Clyne, 1982: 58), as they can often be marginalised within the family, as is the case in my study.

One specific point that has been dealt with in this thesis concerns the influence of diglossia on the process of language shift. It was maintained that the diglossia that the Italo-Australians brought with them from their home country is a major factor in causing the shift to English in the domestic context, for two major reasons: firstly, language attitudes, as

dialect speakers are imbued with a sense of the low prestige of dialects, in spite of the respect and emotional attachment that they show towards them; secondly, language use, as a mismatch often exists between language use in the home and in the community, without the possibility of the two domains reinforcing each other.

In my data the diglossic collocation of Italian and Sicilian in Anna's repertoire was manifested in the higher degree of permeability of the Low language (Sicilian) to contact with the host language. My results therefore confirm what has been noted by other scholars with regard to diglossic situations and language shift. Firstly, diglossia is a factor which may promote language shift, particularly as a result of the speakers' perception of their language (cf. Pauwels, 1986; Bettoni and Gibbons, 1988). Secondly, in a situation of diglossia, the Low language is more vulnerable and in a more threatened position than the High language, hence it tends to disappear before (Clyne, 1982: 31).

More research is needed on this specific issue in relation to the Italo-Australian community. While my investigation was conducted among dialect speakers, it would be interesting to have similar studies undertaken in households where Italian is the language normally spoken by the parents. In this way it would be possible to further verify whether use of Italian - rather than dialect - as the home language makes a difference in the process of language maintenance, as a result of different language attitudes and reinforced use at home and in the community.

From the findings of this study a gloomy picture emerges with regard to the future of the languages currently spoken in the Italo-Australian community, that is, dialects and Italian. With the disappearance of the older generations dialects are disappearing from the domestic environment while English - rather than Italian - is taking their place as the home language. Italian, on the other hand, while enjoying high status and prestige among dialect speakers and being the language of public functions and events, finds it hard to penetrate into the homes and become the tool of everyday domestic communication.

Given this situation, one is left to consider whether those second and third generation Italians who keenly wish to revive their family background and choose to learn, re-learn or just improve their Italian, will be able to ensure the maintenance of at least the national language - if not

the dialect - for future generations. It is within this context that research in Italo-Australian linguistics now needs to focus its attention more on language maintenance or - acquisition - of Italian among second and third generation Italo-Australians.



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## APPENDIX I

### TRANSCRIPTION CRITERIA

This Appendix sets out the criteria adopted in the transcription and presentation of the excerpts.

The figures preceding each excerpt indicate first the chapter and then the progressive numbering of the excerpts. The letters on the left indicate the speakers. The names used are not the actual informants', but have been changed to preserve anonymity. They are as follows:

- A = Anna (the mother)
- C = Carlo (the father)
- R = Ring (eldest child)
- G = Giorgio (younger child)
- N = Nina (the researcher)
- F = the grandfather (Anna's father)

In order to differentiate among the three languages, different characters have been used: Italian is transcribed in plain text, Sicilian in italics, English in small caps.

In transcribing Italian and English, the normal spelling is used. However, with regard to Italian, typical regional (Sicilian) phonetic features, such as doubling of consonants or assimilation of cluster consonants, have been noted in the transcription.

In transcribing Sicilian I have followed the notations used in the Sicilian dictionary edited by Piccitto (1977) and by Tropea (1985, 1990) with regard to use of accents and *raddoppiamento sintattico* ('syntactic doubling'). Retroflex [d] has been underlined when it

occurs on its own but not in consonant clusters, as in these contexts it always occurs as retroflex (cf. Piccitto, 1977).

It is to be noted that all morphologically integrated transfers have been transcribed using the characters of the recipient language. For easier comprehension, sometimes the original word is added in square brackets, as in the following examples:

c'è il BASSO [BUS] che viene  
*pigghia* u-BBUCCU [BOOK]

Other signals used in the transcription are the following:

- [ overlapping turns
- : :: :: lengthened syllables
- latching
- (...) undecipherable

Other notations regarding the participants or the situation are given into square brackets. Doubtful words are followed by question marks and are also included into square brackets.

Each excerpt is followed by the English translation. In excerpts where some turns are in English, the translation of Italian or Sicilian turns is given immediately afterwards.

**APPENDIX II**  
**FURTHER TABLES**

**Table 1: Language variation across turns in speech addressed to Rino**

**Formal situation**

3 occurrences, with the following distribution. They are reported only for the purpose of completeness.

	CI in prec turn	Ital	Mix & Transf.
Base cl			
Ital		1	1
Engl		1	

**Informal situation**

	CI in prec turn	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=8	4 (50.00%)	--	1 (12.50%)	3 (37.50%)
Sicil	n=2	1 (50.00%)	--	--	1 (50.00%)
Engl	n=7	3 (42.86%)	2 (28.57%)	--	2 (28.57%)
Mix & Transf.	n=15	5 (33.33%)	3 (20.00%)	2 (13.33%)	5 (33.33%)

**Family situation**

	CI in prec turn	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=3	1 (33.33%)	2 (66.67%)	--	--
Sicil	n=22	3 (13.64%)	13 (59.09%)	6 (27.27%)	--
Engl	n=18	1 (5.55%)	8 (44.44%)	6 (33.33%)	3 (16.67%)
Mix & Transf.	n=8	--	2 (25.00%)	5 (62.50%)	1 (12.50%)

**Table 2: Language variation across turns  
in speech addressed to Giorgio**

<b>Formal situation</b>					
	Cl in prec turn	Ital	Sic	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=2	2 (100.00%)	--	--	--
Sicil	n=--	--	--	--	--
Engl	n=7	3 (42.86%)	--	1 (14.28%)	3 (42.86%)
Mix & Transf.	n=4	2 (50.00%)	--	--	2 (50.00%)
<b>Informal situation</b>					
	Cl in prec turn	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=1	1 (100.00%)	--	--	--
Sicil	n=9	--	3 (33.33%)	1 (11.11%)	5 (55.55%)
Engl	n=14	--	6 (42.86%)	3 (21.43%)	5 (35.71%)
Mix & Transf.	n=22	4 (18.18%)	5 (22.73%)	4 (18.18%)	9 (40.91%)
<b>Family situation</b>					
	Cl in prec turn	Ital	Sicil	Engl	Mix & Transf.
Base cl					
Ital	n=3	--	2 (66.67%)	--	1 (33.33%)
Sicil	n=8	1 (12.50%)	5 (62.50%)	--	2 (25.00%)
Engl	n=5	--	4 (80.00%)	1 (20.00%)	--
Mix & Transf.	n=4	--	1 (25.00%)	2 (50.00%)	1 (25.00%)