Language Ideologies and Language Socialization: Case Studies of Italian Families in Calgary

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Language Ideologies and Language Socialization:
Case Studies of Italian Families in Calgary

by

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Abstract

The present study examines the language socialization practices and choices of four Italian families in Calgary. The study is examined through the lens of critical sociolinguistics with a focus on how language ideologies are embedded in the language socialization, identities, and discourses of the four families, as well as why and what consequences such ideologies could have on the linguistic future of the children.

The research focuses on the last generation of Italian immigrants, who have been leaving Italy over the last 15 years. Both parents and children of each family have been interviewed and a Critical Discourse Analysis approach has been used to examine the data.

Findings reveal contradictions and ambivalences around the Italian language, alongside ideologies that grant prestige to English and a standard and purist preference for using languages, in particular Italian. Such ideologies lead to different outcomes on the language socialization of each family and the Italian maintenance of the children.
Acknowledgements

My appreciation goes to the four participating families of the study, for their time and willingness to share their experiences.

To my supervisor, Dr. Sylvie Roy, my heart-felt thanks for her constant support, availability, patience, and insightful guidance, all through the project, stretching my knowledge and critical understanding of human beings and languages in society.

I also would like to deeply thank Anne Payne for taking the time to check my English and proofread the present thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my own family members, especially my parents and my husband for their understanding and constant presence throughout these past years.
Dedication

To my daughter, Giada, with the hope that my academic path of the last years will help me better accompany you in the multilingual journey of your life, acknowledging and appreciating all the challenges and joys ahead of you.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The large migration movements of Italians, which started in the second half of the 19th century and continued until the end of the 1970s, brought about 26 million Italians to migrate to other countries in Europe, and also to North and South America and Australia (Lorenzetti, 2002). Many Italians left Italy with the hope of improving their life and guaranteeing a better future for their children and families (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006).

Nevertheless, since the end of the 1990s, we can observe a new wave of Italians, who are gradually leaving Italy to emigrate both within Europe and outside Europe for professional reasons (Amato, 2010; Di Giorgio, 2003). One of the main differences from the other waves of Italian immigrants, although not in all cases, is that the majority of these Italians are highly qualified with masters or doctoral degrees in different disciplines (Amato, 2010; Di Giorgio, 2003). This emigration pattern has been often referred to as brain drain, because of the large amount of highly qualified people Italy is losing each year, along with their families (Amato, 2010; Di Giorgio, 2003). Italy has been unable, so far, to meet the professional demands of these highly qualified people (Amato, 2010; Di Giorgio, 2003). Moreover, the current economic crisis in the EU has badly affected Italy, and consequently, we should expect that more Italians will be leaving Italy over the next years in search of better professional and career opportunities.

Purpose of Inquiry

The focus of the present research is indeed on this new wave of Italian immigrants and on their language socialization practices within the family environment. By language socialization is meant those socialization processes that are enacted consciously or
unconsciously by the parents with the children to convey the linguistic and sociocultural conventions of certain languages, through the use and choice of these languages: When these languages are used, why, and how they are used, if, for example, specific strategies are in place, particularly in relation to the Italian maintenance with the children (Duff, 2007; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008).

Most of the sociolinguistic research on Italian immigrants has focused so far on the previous generations, who arrived after the Second World War and their subsequent second or third generations, as will be explained in more detail in the Theoretical Framework and Literature Review chapter. Moreover, most of this research has focused on Italians within very large and strong Italian communities, such as those of Toronto or Sydney in Australia (Bettoni, 2003; Bettoni & Rubino, 1997; Giampapa, 2004), but it would also be relevant to explore how families, who live in cities where their community is much smaller and more isolated, like Calgary, with no support from bilingual or immersion schools, handle their language practices and choices within the family environment and possible Italian maintenance. For these reasons, I have chosen to interview four Italian families, who represent this new generation and have arrived from Italy in Calgary within the last 15 years.

Furthermore, the position of Italian families in relation to language issues will be examined through the lens of language ideologies. By language ideologies, it is hereby meant in its broader sense all beliefs, assumptions, common sense notions around the use and practices of languages, what people think about languages in a given context, how they should be used, and more important what values and references such languages can index.
in people’s perceptions and how certain language varieties are, for example, associated in people’s mind with personality traits, such as being smart, educated, uneducated, and so forth (Blommaert, 2005; Riley, 2011; Woolard, 1998). Within the context as offered by Calgary, I wish to explore, therefore, how such language ideologies can have an impact on the language socialization practices and choices of these families, how these ideologies are embedded within their discourses and are linked to broader discourses at a global or national level, and finally how this relation between language ideologies and parents’ language choices can affect the maintenance of the Italian language from this new generation of Italian immigrants to the next one.

In the following sections, I will outline the reasons why I chose language ideologies, in the family domain, for Italian families.

Language Ideologies as a Field of Inquiry

As Woolard (1998) notes, a consensus around the meaning of language ideologies is difficult to find in the literature. Woolard (1998) actually argues how the study of language ideologies in social practices should go beyond issues of terminology in order to avoid restricting the inquiry and to encourage instead an analysis from different perspectives. Riley (2011) refers to language ideology in its broader sense, as defined by Kroskrity (2004), Silverstein (1979), and Woolard (1998), as “everything from unexamined cultural assumptions to politically charged dogma about the use and acquisition of language in general and the value of specific forms of language in particular” (as cited in Riley, 2011, p.493). In line with the above views of Riley (2011) and Woolard (1998), I would like, therefore, to expand the present inquiry beyond a specific definition of
language ideologies, in order to obtain a broader perspective on the topic. An inquiry on language ideologies may both include an analysis on how a language should be used and acquired as well as an analysis on the value and meaning of the different languages, especially in situations of languages in contact, such as the case of immigrants going to another country, whereby the value of their linguistic resources might have to be renegotiated and questioned against the new norms and rules of the new host society and its languages (Riley, 2011; Woolard, 1998). As argued by Blommaert (1999), an inquiry into language ideologies also implies a look into the historical context of what we say, of the history behind it. It implies acknowledging “the historical forces that made us speak, write, listen, read the way we do now” (p.5).

Nevertheless, who decides on how a language should be acquired and used and who decides on its value? To what extent are certain linguistic resources accessible? How do simple ideas and assumptions about languages and their speakers become ideologies, as questioned by Blommaert (2005)? Why? Ultimately, what are the consequences on people’s everyday lives? The inquiry brought forward in the present research wishes to approach the study of language ideologies mainly from a critical stance, keeping in mind the above questions and trying to find some answers. In situations where different languages and their speakers encounter each other, analysing assumptions and beliefs about how these languages should be used, acquired and analysing how valuable these languages are and who decides can become an interesting endeavour to unveil subtle inequalities among speakers and possibly bring some changes (Blommaert, 2005; Riley, 2011). As the present study shall reveal, these encounters are indeed hardly based on neutral assumptions.
These assumptions or language ideologies are not based on independent and abstract
concepts, but are constructed in social relations (Blommaert, 2005; Heller, 2007). These
social relations may be based on unequal power relations, which have often historical and
political origins and keep reproducing within a given society, very often in a subconscious
and subtle way (Blommaert, 2005; Heller, 2007). As Roy and Galiev (2011) claim, the
problem with language ideologies is that they are so embedded within a certain context that
we no longer know where they come from and they are often unconsciously reproduced
within the discourses of the people belonging to a certain community. They become
common sense, and behind this common sense of “ideas”, power and hegemonic attitudes
can shape the relations between languages and their speakers (Blommaert, 2005). It is this
common sense, this often uncontested and shared reproduction of ideas, beliefs, and
assumptions that led me to focus my inquiry on language ideologies, which can have
consequences on people’s life (Blommaert, 2005) within often a “hidden process”, as Jupp,
Roberts, and Cook-Gumperz (1982, p. 234) would also define it.

*The Family Domain*

Families represent very often the first point of departure for an individual to learn
and understand about society. As Arsenault (2008) underlines, the family “represents, in a
way, the first social, linguistic, and cultural reproduction agency”\(^1\) (p.263). It is where

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\(^1\) The original text in French is as follows: The family “constitue, en quelque sorte, le premier agent de
reproduction sociale, linguistique et culturelle” (Arsenault, 2008, p.263). Please note that all translations from
Italian and French, from this thesis and all others I cite, are my own.
“individuals acquire a sense of belonging to a group and their identity is shaped” (Arsenault, 2008, p.263). However, families do not live in isolation, but are embedded within a given social, political, and historical context. As Garrett (2011) claims, language ideologies can affect the “most intimate” relations between caregivers and children (p.516). Language ideologies can be so deeply entrenched in the dominant discourses of a given society that they can be reproduced within families as well. Therefore, especially in situations of languages in contact, analysing what happens within families in terms of language use and practices and their perspectives on these language issues, can become an interesting site to see how language ideologies are implicitly or explicitly reproduced and to examine what effects these ideologies have on people’s lives, especially in terms of heritage language maintenance (Garrett, 2011).

As Ahmad (2007) points out, “language change cannot be separated from language ideology” (as cited in Del Torto, 2008, p.28). As previous research (Del Torto, 2008; Garrett, 2011; Riley, 2011) has shown, whose insights are explained in Chapter 3, what happens within families, how families negotiate and position themselves vis-à-vis their heritage language or languages and the dominant languages of the host community may offer insightful perspectives in understanding heritage language maintenance or shift from one generation to the next one and may allow us in most cases, to reflect on how the local and micro interactions occurring within families are linked with larger and more global issues within a given context.

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2 The original text in French is, “C’est d’abord dans la famille que l’individu acquiert un sens d’appartenance au groupe et que l’identité se forme” (Arsenault, 2008, p. 263).
Italian Families

The decision to choose Italian families and not other groups is based firstly on the fact that not much of the sociolinguistic research on Italians has analysed in more detail this relation between language ideologies and language socialization practices within Italian immigrant families, with few exceptions (Del Torto, 2008), whose insights are explained in the Literature Review section of Chapter 3.

Secondly, such a decision is also related to personal reasons, being myself of Italian origins and having immigrated to Calgary in recent years, like the families of my study. Through this research, I felt the need to explore what ideologies surround the Italian language nowadays, what it means to speak Italian and be Italian in this new context of Calgary, how all that affects the language socialization practices within Italian families, what the future of the Italian language in this context can be, what Italian (e.g., standard, a regional variety, etc.), and what it means to value such Italian as a heritage language, if it is the case.

Leading Questions of the Research

My inquiry aims, therefore, to examine how the language socialization practices and choices of these families are influenced by the language beliefs, perceptions, and ideas they have in relation to Italian and English, where these ideas and perceptions come from, and how, in turn, these language perceptions and practices can have an impact on the

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3 By heritage language, it is hereby referred to as the language, which is “inherited from home and that is different from the language used in mainstream society” (He, 2011, p.587). In the present research, I will use the term heritage language in reference to Italian, as in my opinion this term better describes the concept of a language, which is inherited from Italy, from the home country of these families, a language that can be potentially inherited by subsequent generations of these Italian immigrant families.
transmission of Italian and/or English. Within the framework of critical theory (Blommaert, 2005, 2010; Bourdieu, 1991; Heller, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Roy, 2010), which goes to the heart of the relations between languages, power, and ideologies, the leading questions of my research are the following:

1. How do these families position themselves in relation to their home country, to Canada, their languages and cultures, in the present context of Calgary?

2. What language ideologies are embedded in the discourses of these families about the use, role, and value of Italian and/or English and about their language socialization practices? Where do these ideologies come from and why?

3. What are the perspectives of the four Italian families studied with regard to their language socialization practices at home and outside home? What is the impact of language ideologies on these practices and, in particular, on the linguistic future of the children, in terms, for example, of Italian language maintenance and which Italian variety? What are the consequences?

The first question aims at examining, both from the perspective of parents and children, the importance and value of speaking Italian, what it means to be Italian, what Italy represents to them, how they relate to the Canadian society and to its official languages, in this new context of Calgary.

The second question wishes to take the above analysis further by exploring the language ideologies which are hidden behind the language socialization practices and attitudes of parents and children and especially behind their discourses around the use, choice, and value of certain languages. Why are they saying what they are saying? Where
do certain positions and attitudes of the parents and children come from? How can we relate the family’s discourses and attitudes to broader discourses which happen at higher and more global levels?

Finally, in the third question, we will look at describing, in more detail, the language socialization practices, choices, and uses enacted in the family from their perspectives as well as the impact of language ideologies on these practices. As mentioned earlier, language ideologies have effects and consequences on people and language change (Blommaert, 2005). Is the family, for example, shifting to English and at what price? To what extent can we claim that? Why? Are there concerns and room for changes to preserve the Italian language and in what sense should an “Italian language” be preserved? Who are the actors involved in the process of language change and in the definition of certain language codes and norms, in the context of Calgary?

**Overview of the Research and Thesis Content**

From the start, I wish to specify that the underlying goal of my inquiry lies within a qualitative research methodology, which wishes to describe, to understand, and to analyse the whats, whys, and hows of social phenomena, phenomena that cannot be always defined and predicted within an objective and generalizable truth, as it could be more within the positivist tradition (Merriam, 1998). My objective is more to achieve what Creswell (2013) refers to as a “naturalistic generalization” (p. 200). By naturalistic generalization it is meant when readers or other researchers, who are interested in the topic, can learn from the findings of a study by comparing them with their own research or personal experiences, searching for similarities or differences with other settings (Creswell, 2013). This
approach can therefore contribute to broaden and enrich the understanding and perspectives of an inquiry, even when an absolute truth is not the objective.

As for the content of each chapter, Chapter 2 is devoted to providing a detailed context, looking at “Italians and Italian” from different perspectives and layers. One of the goals of Chapter 2 is to provide readers, who are unfamiliar with the Italian culture and history, with enough information to understand the findings and analysis of the present study. Acknowledging the context behind any inquiry is also essential to better understand language ideological processes, as outlined by Blommaert (1999, 2005). In this chapter, I present, therefore, a description of this new wave of Italian immigrants, who they are, and why they are leaving Italy. I also look into the main ideologies surrounding the Italian language existing nowadays in Italy, looking at how the past is connected to the present. Understanding what happens in the country of origin becomes a key to understand how immigrants position themselves and renegotiate their resources in the host country. Immigrants do not arrive in a new place with a blank frame of mind (Blommaert, 2010).

Another section of Chapter 2 is the description of the context, which is more specific to the Italian community in Calgary, and I shall refer, in particular, to the two institutions, which look after the promotion of the Italian language and culture, the Calgary Italian Club and the Calgary Italian School.

Chapter 3 presents first, an overview of the literature on Italian immigrants, as well as an overview of the literature on family language socialization. Secondly, the theoretical framework is described by looking first at a more general framework, which connects
language, power, and ideologies in a globalized world to finally focus on the relationship between language socialization and language ideologies in the family domain.

In Chapter 4, I clarify my ontological and epistemological stances, explaining how my data inform and help me find answers to my questions within a multiple case study methodology. As well as giving details on the participants and my positioning, on the process of data collection and analysis, this section focuses also on explaining why I use Critical Discourse Analysis, what I mean by it, and how I intend to approach it in the present research.

Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 are devoted to a description of the findings in line with the case study approach, which expects description to be an important part in the report of data (Creswell, 2013; Duff, 2008a). Each of these chapters refers to one family. Following the format of multiple case study design, as described by Creswell (2013) and Duff (2008a), a within-case analysis is provided, whereby each family is viewed as a case in itself. For each family a detailed description is given and this description develops within themes relevant to the leading questions of the research.

Following the findings for each family, a comparative cross-case analysis of the recurring themes is then carried out in Chapter 9 as a final discussion, looking at comparisons among the four families, with a particular focus on the dominant language ideologies, which emerge across the family discourses and how they affect language socialization practices and the linguistic future of the children (Creswell, 2013; Duff, 2008a).
Finally, the conclusive chapter provides a summary of the answers relevant to the inquiry along with a discussion on the implications of the research and the scope for future research.
CHAPTER TWO: THE CONTEXT

As Blommaert (2005) reminds us, “if we want to explain the way in which people make sense socially, in real environments, we need to understand the contexts in which such sense-making practices develop” (p. 43). This is the reason why I devoted an entire section of the thesis to analyse the historical, political, and social contexts of Italy, of Italians and of their emigrations from Italy, as well as the contextual background in Canada and Calgary for these Italians. What we say, how we say it, our communication practices need to be framed within a larger perspective than just the single event itself (Blommaert, 2005).

Sociolinguistic Diversity and Language Ideologies in Italy: A Look Into the Past to Understand the Present

When emigrants leave their country, their region, or their community, to start a new life elsewhere, they bring with them not only their personal belongings, but also a linguistic and cultural repertoire, which can be quite diverse, such as in the case of Italy. Such repertoire is enriched with personal and collective memories and is composed of several language varieties, which all have different values for these people. These are surrounded by certain beliefs and ideas about how they should be spoken and by whom, and can shape the linguistic and cultural experience in the new country. They have a history behind them and often these language varieties are intertwined with political decisions (Blommaert, 2005, 2010; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).
For historical reasons, whose explanations would go beyond the scope of this thesis, Italy has always been politically and socioculturally divided and fragmented (De Mauro, 2008). De Mauro (2008) notes how the history of Italy has been characterized, ever since pre-roman times, by a lack of a “centripetal force” (p.16) to give a sense of political, social, and economic unity. This unity was only officially achieved in 1861. Still nowadays, we can appreciate the sociocultural variety, which characterizes the 20 regions of Italy. Travelling through Italy and going through one region after the other, one almost has the impression these regions could belong to a different country or countries. This diversity is also reflected linguistically with the existence of several dialects, which have always been surrounded by controversial and ambivalent attitudes. In the case of Italy, a dialect is a “linguistic system, which is autonomous from the national Italian language and possesses therefore its own structures”⁴ (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006, p.158). Dialects are spoken within limited geographical areas, and it is worth mentioning that because of the fragmented and divided history of Italy, they can be so different from each other that one who comes from one region might be unable to understand the dialect of another region.

In 1861 with the unification of Italy, in the well-known climate of the European nationalisms, the Florentine dialect, because of the political, economic, and cultural power of Florence in the centuries before, was chosen by the newly formed government to represent the new nation of Italy (De Mauro, 2008). Nevertheless, in 1861 the Florentine variety was actually spoken by only 2.5 % of the population, with the rest of the population

⁴ The original text in Italian is, “Con il termine ‘dialetto’ intendiamo un sistema linguistico autonomo rispetto alla lingua nazionale, dunque un sistema che ha caratteri strutturali propri” (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006, p. 158).
still using their local dialects (De Mauro, 2008). The new Italian government was well aware of that. In line with the main ideologies of the nationalist movements at the end of the 19th century, the Italian language, in its Florentine variety, was imposed upon the entire country, hopefully to become a symbol of national unity, cohesion, and loyalty to the newly unified country, but at the expense of local, regional varieties, and dialects (Guerini, 2011; Savoia, 2004). As Bourdieu (1991) reminds us, the dominant group exercises its power not only through political unification, but also by means of a linguistic one, where the official language “imposes itself on the whole population as the only legitimate one” (p. 45), and the education system is often used as a tool to create the conditions for such linguistic legitimization and unification. Indeed, soon after the political unification of Italy, a commission within the new Ministry of Education was created to identify the means to linguistically unify Italy, for example, the creation of an official Italian dictionary or a project which sent Tuscan teachers throughout Italy to teach the Florentine variety (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Nevertheless, this imposition from above did not bring the linguistic unification as desired, not immediately at least. At the end of the 19th century, the social and cultural conditions for such unification were completely lacking (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Italy was still a country with the majority of people living in poor conditions, where education was not a priority for most of them (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Besides, such an idea of the Italian language belonged to an elitist vision of the language, which had been mainly codified by few intellectuals, who worked with the Italian government to spread the Florentine dialect nationally (De Mauro, 2008; Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that not all intellectuals refused the dialect; instead, at the end of
the 19th century, we witnessed that a few writers and scholars continued writing their works in their own dialects, such as Giovanni Verga in his work *Malavoglia*, where he writes in the Sicilian dialect or the writer, Remigio Zenna, who uses the dialect of the Liguria region (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). As Coveri (1997) well describes, in the long linguistic history of the Italian language, “every moment of unification from the centre has caused an equal and contrary reaction of centrifugal force”5 (p.43). At the end of the 19th century, we begin to experience the roots of ambivalent and contradictory ideologies around dialects and a standard and codified Italian, which, it could be argued, are still present nowadays. On one side, we find ideologies, which defend the idea of one codified and standard language, a prestigious variety to be kept separate from dialects representing the unity of the Italian nation (Guerini, 2011; Savoia, 2004). However, at the same time, dialects are not completely devaluated either (Coveri, 1997; Guerini, 2011). Nevertheless, despite the counter reactions, which still promoted dialects in the literary field, in the 19th and 20th centuries, the ideology in favour of a standard and codified Italian language was still the most dominant, as it was the one, which was supported by institutional discourses and by the education system (Guerini, 2011; Savoia, 2004). Dialects gradually become associated with the language of the poor and the uneducated, and this ideology entered the consciousness of people to the point that it remained quite strong at least until the 1980s and 1990s (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Furthermore, the ideology of a standard Italian to

5 The original text in Italian is, “Nella ormai più che millenaria vicenda linguistica italiana, ad ogni momento di unificazione dal centro ha corrisposto una reazione, uguale e contraria, di segno centrifugo” (Coveri, 1997, p. 43).
represent a united nation was reinforced by Benito Mussolini during the Fascist dictatorship (Guerini, 2011).

Nevertheless, when we arrive at the end of the Second World War, about 80 years after the political unification of Italy of 1861, the sociocultural and linguistic fragmentation, which had characterized the history of the Italian peninsula since pre-roman times, was so dominant that the first language for many Italians was still their own dialect (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006) to the point that even now, dialects are dominant in some regions. For example, Sobrero & Miglietta (2006) remark how, in the Italian region of Piedmont, the dialect is still used for writing fairy tales or recipe books without mentioning dialectal expressions. These are used regularly by people of that region along with standard Italian, regardless of the level of education. In the area of Salento, an area in the Italian region of Puglia, dialectal expressions or comments are used in local newspapers together with standard Italian (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006).

Consequently, shortly after the Second World War, Italian remained mainly a second language, frequently understood, but hardly spoken or written by the majority of people (Lorenzetti, 2002; Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). A unified system of the bureaucracy, the army, and the education system, implemented soon after the unification of Italy, surely has helped to spread Italian, but the process is slow (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006).

Moreover, before the Second World War, Italy was still a peasants’ poor country, where the education remained in the hands of a few middle and high class Italians (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Compulsory education was only for five years and it was not sufficient
to ingrain Italian as a first language (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). It is only after the Second World War that we start to witness a more rapid linguistic unification and the spread of Italian to all social classes. This was due to a series of sociocultural events, such as the radio, TV, the cinema, and internal migrations, especially from the poor South to the richer North, which brought many Italians of different regions into contact with each other and began the development of Italian as a lingua franca (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Moreover, in the 1960s and 1970s, the Ministry of Education implemented a series of reforms in the educational system, lengthening the years of compulsory education, making it accessible to the majority of the Italian population and reinforcing their use of the Italian language (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). This move to extend compulsory education needs to be understood within the context of those times. Italy was transforming from an agrarian country into a modern and industrialized country, in which education was seen as an important tool to achieve this goal (Cavanaugh, 2004). Therefore, standard Italian, as taught by the education system, began to indirectly index not only ideas of national unity, but also ideas of modernity and economic prosperity typical of an industrial society (Cavanaugh, 2004). These ideas are still dominant now, whereby only the correct knowledge and use of standard Italian, as opposed to dialectal and regional expressions, is perceived by the majority of Italians to guarantee socioeconomic and educational advancement and index positive personal traits, such as being educated or successful (Cavanaugh, 2004).

Interestingly, over the last few years, mainly since the 1990s, statistics and sociolinguistics report that dialects are starting to regain dignity and prestige among the
Italian population (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). There are several reasons for this change of attitudes. Now that linguistic unification has been achieved, dialects are no longer seen as a threat (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006), but more like a symbol of a lost past to regain (Cavanaugh, 2004). Besides, plurilingualism policies from the European Union favour languages other than English (Vedovelli, 2005), and separatist movements all around Europe are fighting against the standardisation of one language in a country (Hobsbawm, 1996). Nevertheless, the negative attitudes have not completely disappeared either, as a recent survey from Ruffino (2006) shows, whose findings reveal how Italian primary school children still consider dialects as a “vulgar and insignificant way of speaking” (as cited in Guerini, 2011, p.111).

Considering the variety of attitudes, quite ambivalent and seemingly contradictory, the future of dialects in Italy remains to be seen (Cavanaugh, 2004). Generally, statistics register a decline in the use of dialects, especially among young people; where a dialect is spoken, it is confined to the family domains (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). The linguistic unification, envisioned by the political authorities at the end of the 19th century, seems to have been finally achieved (Coveri, Benucci, & Diadori, 1998), but what Italian language are we actually referring to?

If we focus on the Italian language of today, mainly from a descriptive point of view, we can see that, in reality, the current Italian spoken language is not the standard and pure form, as codified by grammars and dictionaries, but it presents much variety (Coveri et al., 1998). Regional differences play an important role, in terms of lexical items, syntax, pronunciation, or even attitudes and discourses due to the strong influence dialects have
had in the history of the Italian language (Coveri et al., 1998; Lorenzetti, 2002; Stehl, 2005). Italian speakers can find themselves on a daily basis, passing through a diverse linguistic landscape based on the context and the people they are speaking with and in certain cases, sharing this variety with minority languages (Coveri et al., 1998; Lorenzetti, 2002; Stehl, 2005). This variety does not necessarily compromise comprehension and understanding among Italian speakers, but according to context, it can index regional provenance and, more importantly, social status and level of education (Lorenzetti, 2002; Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). A detailed description of the linguistic variety of the Italian repertoire would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Generally, the further we stray from standard codified Italian, the more one can be perceived as uneducated or coming from low social classes (Lorenzetti, 2002). The strong ideologies around a perfect and pure Italian language, which became more overt at the end of the 19th century, are still alive today (Guerini, 2011; Savoia, 2004). As Lorenzetti (2002) notes, although there have been discussions among linguistics about the vitality of this standard form or even to what extent such standard Italian really exists, especially in the spoken language, it surely still exists as an ideal, as an “irremissible” point of reference, when Italian is taught in schools, both as a first or second language in Italy, and as a foreign language abroad (Coveri et al., 1998, p. 17). In Italy, much emphasis is placed on teaching Italian grammar throughout the grades of school. Specific hours are dedicated on a weekly basis to the meticulous study of Italian grammar.

Currently, not only education seems to pursue ideologies to protect the ideal of a perfect language, but also some political authorities. In 2009, the Italian Parliament
approved the establishment of the High Council of the Italian Language (*Consiglio superiore della lingua Italiana*), whose objectives are to promote the Italian language and culture in Italy and abroad against any type of misuse (Savoia, 2004). Here are some excerpts, which accompany the bill for the creation of the Council and clarify the latter point:

The language is . . . a social good, which needs to be defended from the infiltration of all those incongruous and confusing expressions, which do not only derive from the indiscriminate use of foreign words, but also from incompressible neologisms and vernacular expressions.⁶ (as cited in Savoia, 2004, p. 2)

These protective attitudes need to be understood not only in light of the history of the Italian language and of the heritage of the nationalistic movements at the end of the 19th century, but also in relation to the role of the English language in the Italian society (Taglialatela, 2011). In fact, it is interesting to note that over the last few years, alongside ideologies that defend a correct and standard use of the Italian language, English language expressions and slang have entered the Italian language as well (Taglialatela, 2011).

Therefore, protective attitudes with regard to the Italian language need to be analysed, not only for the historical tendency to aim at the perfect language against dialects or low varieties of Italian, but also as a protection against the dominance of the English language (Taglialatela, 2011). It is quite common these days to read an Italian newspaper or watch

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⁶ The original text in Italian is as follows: La lingua è . . . un bene sociale, che va difeso dall’infiltrazione di tutte quelle espressioni incongrue e disorientanti per i più, che non provengono unicamente dall’adozione indiscriminata di parole straniere, ma anche da neologismi incomprensibili ed accentuazioni vernacolari. (as cited in Savoia, 2004, p.2)
TV, and notice an increasing number of English words, not only to express technical terms not existing in the Italian language, but also to express concepts, which could be easily translated into Italian (Taglialatela, 2011). As in many other countries, English is perceived as a prestigious language, reflecting economic success and even educational status (Blommaert, 2010). The University of Venice has recently introduced a compulsory criterion, whereby admission to its courses requires a certificate of English competence at B1 Intermediate level of the Common European Framework of Reference (Martellato, 2013). It is also not so uncommon to see middle or upper class parents hiring English native-speaking nannies for their children at an early age.

To conclude, in the current sociolinguistic landscape of Italy we can observe different language attitudes and ideologies, which may exist within the same speaker. These may range from a preference for an ideal standard of Italian to a more relaxed attitude about dialects, and although not shared by everyone there is also a strong attraction for the English language.

**Italians Around the World: The Italian Emigration in the Past and Present**

Since the unification of Italy, three migratory waves from Italy can be identified and the countries of destination tend to be generally North America, South America, Australia, and Europe (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). The first wave is normally identified as the period between the unification of Italy and the Second World War (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). The second wave of emigrants took place after the Second World War, mainly in the 1950s and 1960s and is considered to be the most considerable in terms of size (Bettoni, 2007). Finally, since the 1990s until now, we can identify a third wave of
Italian emigrants leaving Italy, although this last emigration is no longer a mass emigration. Indeed, the number of Italians leaving Italy is considerably smaller, due to more restrictive immigration policies in many western countries (Bettoni, 2007; Dumont & Lemaître, 2005; Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006).

The focus of the present research lies in the language practices and attitudes of the Italian families of the third wave, who have emigrated in recent years in Calgary. In this section, I will outline the main characteristics of this new wave of Italians along with an overview of the second wave of Italian immigrants as well. The reason for including these two generations is that the relations between these different generations in Calgary, as shown in my research, have an impact on the language practices and choices of the newly arrived Italians.

When we examine the linguistic attitudes of Italian immigrants outside Italy, generalizations are difficult to make, and so a study of the specific context becomes imperative. Several factors should be therefore considered: the linguistic repertoire of the emigrants when leaving Italy; their language attitudes; the linguistic policies of the host countries; the economic and cultural prestige perceived by the host country and by the Italians in relation to Italy; and the geographical and cultural distance between the host country and Italy, to mention a few (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Despite the particularity required in studies on migration, researchers have nonetheless identified some common features, which can be highlighted for these two waves of Italian immigrants.

The second wave, who left Italy soon after the Second World War, was mainly characterized by young adults, who generally came from the poorest areas of Italy at that
time, mainly from Veneto, Abruzzo, Salento, or Calabria (Bettoni, 2007). In Italy they were working mainly as farmers or artisans and they left Italy in hopes of improving their economic situation (Bettoni, 2007). The literature normally refers to a bilingual situation existing in their linguistic repertoire, whereby their first language tends to be the dialect, but Italian starts to be quite present in their life in Italy as well, especially in the forms of *Italiano popolare*, working class Italian, which tends to be perceived in Italy as a contaminated, low variety of Italian containing several regional and dialectal interferences (Bettoni, 2007).

Although one must be careful not to generalise, it must be noted that these Italians were leaving with a bilingual repertoire, dialect and *Italiano popolare*, neither highly valued by Italian society in general, along with almost no knowledge of English (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Therefore, when they arrived in the new country, the need for integration, along with a linguistic insecurity from their country of origin, might lead these generations to favour English instead of the dialect or their perceived low variety of *Italiano popolare*, especially for their children (Bettoni, 2007).

These attitudes, which favoured English over the dialects or Italian, were consciously and unconsciously conveyed in the family environment (Bettoni, 2007). Therefore, when the children of these generations started school, where again the need for integration might be high, children quickly assimilated English into their lives and gradually shifted from a bilingual or trilingual repertoire to being almost monolingual (Bettoni, 2007).
Nevertheless, what it is interesting is that many people, belonging to the second and third generation, now adults or young adults, have a more open attitude, and studies have shown that there is a growing tendency to relearn Italian, almost as a second language, once they have become adults, as I have experienced myself in Calgary (Tomassetti, 2006; Vedovelli, 2002). These second and third generations no longer have the pressure of integration like their parents and feel, instead, a strong desire to reconnect with their Italian origins and rediscover their Italian roots (Tomassetti, 2006; Vedovelli, 2002). Moreover, other factors may have contributed to have this generational re-approach to the Italian language later in life and to the appreciation of its value as a heritage language. From the 1970s, among scholars from the western universities, new ferments arose around the need for a more democratic education worldwide and, in the case of minority languages and bilingualism, new studies emerged (Cummins, 1978, 1979, as cited in Bettoni, 2007), which highlighted the advantages of multilingualism. Within this climate, the Italian governments began to be more receptive to the idea of promoting and preserving the Italian language abroad. As well, Italian immigrants themselves, especially the second generation, became more active in claiming their right to introduce Italian courses abroad, financed by the Italian governments, to preserve and maintain their cultural heritage (Bettoni, 2007).

At the same time, Italy has gradually become a fairly industrial country with a significant political and economic role, increasing its prestige worldwide. Its cultural and artistic heritage attracts many tourists each year (Bettoni, 2007). In 2000 and 2010, two large surveys, conducted by the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, assessed worldwide the reasons for the interests around the Italian language abroad. The surveys were conducted
among learners of Italian within different universities worldwide, as well as within the Italian Cultural Institutes, which are supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Giovanardi & Trifone, 2010; Vedovelli, 2005). Both surveys prove that there has been a growing interest worldwide over the last years for the study of the Italian language. In the North American context, the learning of Italian has been enjoying a fairly high prestige for its cultural heritage, such as for the art, music, literature, and history fields (Giovanardi & Trifone, 2010; Vedovelli, 2005). It remains to be seen to what extent these positive associations around the Italian language among Italian learners abroad are shared by the last wave of Italian immigrants and how much of this new prestige, which Italy has gained over the years, is entering the family domain, especially if we also take into account the economic crisis, which has badly hit Italy over the last four or five years. Vedovelli (2005) argues that this prestigious position is still in a fragile position, which needs to be renegotiated every time against the dominance of the English language, which often indexes an economic power that Italy, despite being an industrialized country, surely does not have.

We can see that the current context of the new wave of Italian immigrants is quite different from the one faced by the immigrants of the 1950s and 1960s. What are therefore the background and the sociolinguistic profiles of these new immigrants? Since the end of the 1990s, we can observe a new wave of young adults and adults, who are leaving Italy to emigrate both within Europe and outside Europe for professional reasons (Amato, 2010; Di Giorgio, 2003). One of the main differences of this wave of Italian immigrants from previous ones is that most of these Italians are highly qualified with master or doctoral
degrees in different disciplines, especially the ones emigrating outside the European Union (Amato, 2010; Di Giorgio, 2003). While within the European Union generally there are no restrictions for Italians to work and live in a certain country, other countries outside the European Union have stricter immigration policies. The USA and Canada are known to have quite restrictive and selective immigration policies, which tend to favour highly qualified immigrants (Dumond & Lemaître, 2005).

A study conducted by Morano Foadi (2006) outlines the specific reasons for this need to leave Italy over the last two decades, especially among highly qualified professionals, like the participants of the present research. These Italians feel disappointment and frustration for a country that offers low salaries not in line with professional qualifications, as well as low investments on research. They view the Italian academic and professional environments as corrupted, dominated by nepotism, bureaucracy, and networking (Morano Foadi, 2006). According to these professionals, such situations make it difficult for them to succeed in Italy and honour the years invested in education at university, hence the decision to emigrate abroad (Morano Foadi, 2006).

In terms of the sociolinguistic repertoire with which these Italians are leaving Italy, the literature underlines the fact that the majority of these Italians arrive in the new country with a knowledge of the Italian language very close to the standard norm, and very often with a passive knowledge of the dialect, meaning that they understand it, but they are unable to speak it or write it (Berruto, 1998; Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Furthermore, in contrast to the previous generations, these new Italians leave Italy with some knowledge of English (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Berruto (1998) also states that the new immigrants no
longer create strong and united Italian communities, as in the past. This trend seems to confirm the observations of Blommaert (2010), with regard to the new immigration patterns, whereby immigrants of different groups come into contact with each other, and it is difficult to identify, like in the past, stable and isolated immigrant groups. It will be interesting to observe to what extent this is the case also for the four participant families and the Italian community in Calgary, why, how it affects the language choices and practices of the families, and what kind of impact the linguistic repertoire so different from the previous generations can have on the language policy of each family.

**The Context of the Research: Italians in Canada and in Calgary**

Over the last century, Canadian statistics have recorded about 700,000 Italians, who entered Canada (Samperi Mangan, 2006). Based on Canadian census data, the Italian community is the fourth largest group after groups of English, French, and German origins (Samperi Mangan, 2006). Italians, who choose Canada as their destination now, are mainly attracted by the high reputation that Canada has among Italians in the research, professional, and scientific fields. Based on data from the Italian Embassy in Ottawa, the Italian language seems to enjoy a certain level of prestige, placing third among the most studied foreign languages in Canada, after Chinese and Spanish (Samperi Mangan, 2006). Generally, learners of Italian in Canada tend to associate Italian with positive images, which are related mainly to the Italian lifestyle, ideas around fashion, industrial design, music, art, literature, and history (Samperi Mangan, 2006). Among learners of Italian origins, the desire to rediscover their Italian roots, as mentioned previously, dominates as well (Samperi Mangan, 2006).
In the specific case of Calgary, the Italian community is relatively small in comparison with the larger communities, for example of Toronto or Montréal, and families, as the ones of the study, are scattered all over the city with no identification with a specific area of Calgary. Calgary is, in fact, lacking a specific district, normally identified as Little Italies, such as the ones in Toronto or New York, whereby many Italian businesses, shops, restaurants, coffee shops gather together within the same area and become an important meeting point and living space for the Italian community. Nevertheless, there are two institutions, the Calgary Italian Club and Calgary Italian School, which represent the Italian community and are devoted to the promotion of the Italian culture and language in Calgary, with whom I had formal interviews with some of their representatives to obtain further information on the context of the Italian community in Calgary. The Department of Italian at the University of Calgary is also very active in the promotion and teaching of the Italian language and few years ago decided to hire new faculty members to teach the language. Because the focus of my research is Italian families with small children, the next paragraphs provide a description mainly of the Calgary Italian Club and the Calgary Italian School, which work more with families and their children.

The Calgary Italian Club defines itself as an ethnic cultural centre with about 1600 members, which finances itself through fundraisers and government grants from the Canadian government; no assistance is provided by the Italian government (personal communication, November 18, 2013). The Calgary Italian Club, as it is known today, came to life officially in 1952 and since then, it has been highly active in organizing social and cultural events, such as movie nights, dinners, parties, wine tasting events, and so forth,
which addressed not only Italians, but the whole community (Calgary Italian Club, 2012). Indeed, as confirmed to me during the interview, many members belong to first generations of Italians, who arrived after the Second World War and their second or third generations, but 20% of members are also non-Italians, who are fascinated by the life style Italy represents (personal communication, November 18, 2013). In fact, it is clearly specified in their website that “it was never the intention of the Calgary Italian Club to remain an ethnic enclave” (Calgary Italian Club, 2012, para. 24), and as further clarified during the interview, it was explained to me that this is still the case, underlying the importance of integrating with the host society (personal communication, November 18, 2013). This positioning seems to be in line with what was mentioned earlier in the previous section, whereby previous generations of Italians felt strongly the need for integration (Bettoni, 2007). It will therefore be interesting to analyse to what extent the families of the present study follow also this positioning, why, if, for example, the activities of the Club are integrated or not in their new life in Calgary.

The second cultural institution, which is engaged in the promotion of the Italian language and culture in Calgary, is the Calgary Italian School. The Calgary Italian School, which is actually partly financed by the Calgary Italian Club itself and also by the Italian Government as well as by school fees, looks after the promotion and teaching of the Italian language in Calgary and thus becomes an interesting site to analyse in relation to the language practices and choices of the four families and their perspectives. The school frames itself within an institution that offers Italian as a Second Language within the Alberta Curriculum (Calgary Italian School, 2013a). Nevertheless, as clarified to me during
the interview, the school could still offer valuable help and support in maintaining the Italian language, especially, if children coming directly from Italy are quickly shifting to English (personal communication, November 16, 2013). As explained in their website in the “About” page, on Saturday mornings “the Calgary Italian School offers instruction in Italian to students from 5 years old to grade 12”, who are divided in classes according to age (Calgary Italian School, 2013a, para. 1). About 200 children enroll each year and, as confirmed to me during the interview by one of the representatives of the school, the majority of them belong to the third and even fourth generation of Italians arriving after the Second World War (personal communication, November 16, 2013). Finally, as indicated in the “History” document in the website, since 2006 the Calgary Italian School has been successful in introducing Italian courses as a Second Language in two mainstream regular schools in Calgary within the Calgary Catholic Board (Calgary Italian School, 2013b).

Again, it will interesting to analyse if the Italian taught in the Calgary Italian School is considered to be a valuable resource for the families of the study or not and why.
Overview of Previous Research on Italian Immigrants

Several authors have studied Italian immigrants in the sociolinguistic field, such as Bettoni (2003, 2007), Cavallaro (2010), or Rubino (2000, 2011), who worked extensively in the Australian context, as well as Iacovetta (1992) or Wood (2002), who focussed their studies on North America. In this section, I will focus mainly on the contributions of sociolinguistic research in the North American context, offering insights from Giampapa (2004), Del Torto (2008), Vizmuller-Zocco (1997), and Haller (2012). Their contributions to the present research concern primarily issues centering around identity and language maintenance, as well as the perceptions and role of the Italian language in contemporary American society.

Giampapa (2004) analyses in particular, issues of identity, that is what it means to be Italian Canadian for young males and females, who were born in Canada of Italian parents, who immigrated to Canada between the 1950s and 1970s and who now live in the Toronto area. For Giampapa (2004), identity is not fixed and stable, but rather a multiple, changing, and contradictory entity. Her findings reveal that these young people have multiple identities and struggle in finding a total identification with the criteria imposed by the Italian or Canadian centers over periphery. Such concepts of center and periphery refer to the criteria (e.g., middle class, white, etc.) imposed by the dominant groups of a given society, leaving other groups marginalized at the periphery (Giddens, 1984, as cited in
Giampapa, 2004). However, these young people manage to somehow challenge these centers through the use of their language repertoires, finding their own space and renegotiating their identity within what it means to be Italian Canadian for them. Although the studies of Giampapa (2004) do not refer specifically to the family domain, their contributions surely show how issues of language cannot be separated from issues of identity and how this relation between identity and language entails contradictions, struggles, and changes, especially in contexts where different languages come into contact with each other.

Another important contribution to the sociolinguistic field of Italian immigrants in North America is offered by Del Torto (2008), who examines the Italian language shift and maintenance through three generations of Italian families in Border City, Ontario, a city at the border with the United States. The first generation of these Italians arrived in the 1950s, and Italian is still their dominant language (Del Torto, 2008). Her study reveals that the second generation is bilingual, speaking Italian and English, while in the third generation, English is, in fact, the language that is used the most both in the family and outside, although some third generation members can understand some Italian and try to relearn it through language courses or at university.

An interesting contribution of Del Torto (2008)’s work revolves around the concepts of language maintenance and shift. Del Torto (2008) argues that a dichotomous view of language maintenance and shift, whereby a language is either getting lost or maintained, is inappropriate in the specific context of Italians, as analysed in Border City. She suggests, instead, how the concepts of language maintenance and shift should be
referred as processes, to underscore the dynamic and interactive features of what happens when different languages encounter each other, and speakers can experience contradictory pressures to maintain more than one language. The contributions of Del Torto (2008) lie in her focus, not so much on what has been lost in this immigration context, but more on how these three generations of Italians, in particular the second and third generations, creatively use their own linguistic resources, suggesting a different way of looking at language maintenance or shift, which goes beyond the native speaker model.

In line with Del Torto (2008) and her alternative perspectives in relation to concepts of language loss and maintenance, Vizmuller-Zocco (1997) criticizes the tendency of sociolinguistic research in the field of Italian immigrants to use negative terminology when analysing the Italian spoken by immigrant communities abroad, such as “low variety”, “sub-standard”, or “non standard” (p.100). The tendency is to examine the speakers’ sociolinguistic profile in comparison with the perfect standard Italian, as it is supposed to be spoken in Italy, and then study what is lacking. Instead, Vizmuller-Zocco (1997) invites us to look for examples of the similarities between the Italian spoken by communities abroad and the Italian spoken in Italy, valorizing the Italian these communities already have and not always focusing on what is missing.

Finally, another important contribution in the North American context comes from Herman Haller, who has extensively studied Italian speech varieties in the United States, particularly dialects and regional varieties. In one of his recent conferences at the University of Calgary, “Italian in a Global Perspective: Varieties, Roles, and Perceptions Beyond the Peninsula” that I had the opportunity to attend in October 2012, he discussed
the role and perceptions of the Italian language in the North American context, specifically in New York, through a content analysis of signboards, where Italian words were appearing (e.g., in restaurants, stores of various kinds, etc.) and of New York Italian daily newspapers, as well as other sources, such as Italian menus. What is noticeable over the last few years is that the Italian language in the North American context has developed a more global sophisticated Italian identity. Italian is being perceived not only as an ethnic language related to an Italian community, often surrounded by a linguistic insecurity due to the presence of dialects, but also as a global language, which indexes a good quality of life, sophisticated design and art, and ideas about good quality food (Haller, 2012). Although this new role can be a strength in light of the prestige and value of Italian against the dominance of the English language, Haller (2012) argues that the Italian language in the North American context still has to struggle against attitudes whereby choosing a language, for a language course at university for example, is mainly linked to utilitarian and business needs, such as to its usefulness in finding a job or improving the professional career.

The above studies have greatly contributed to the understanding of the sociolinguistic trends of Italian immigrants after the Second World War, and each of them offers a different perspective on how to look at identity issues, language maintenance, and the role of Italian in the North American context. However, a critical sociolinguistic perspective and a focus on family language socialization are still lacking.

**Review of Research on Family Language Socialization**

Language socialization as a field of inquiry has mainly centered on the family domain (Schecter & Bayley, 1997; Schieffelin, 1985, 1990), but other fields have also been
analysed, such as academic and school environments, extensively examined by Duff (1995, 2010) or even workplaces (Roberts, 2010). In this section, I wish to focus on the contributions of those authors, who work in the family domain, especially in situations of languages in contact (Garrett, 2011) or immigration contexts (Guardado, 2010; Li, 2006) whose contributions lie in highlighting the relationships between language socialization processes, language ideologies, and identities, as further explained in the Theoretical Framework section of this chapter.

Garrett (2011) analyses the family language socialization practices and ideologies in the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, whereby the local language Kwéyòl is spoken alongside English, the official language of the island since 1814. Nevertheless, Garrett (2011) observes a gradual shift from Kwéyòl to English, in which the young children tend to speak mainly English, although they seem to understand some Kwéyòl. The parents of these children are bilingual, English and Kwéyòl, but they tend to speak mainly English to the children. Garrett (2011) explains, how, in the last years, St. Lucia has been very active in exploiting its tourism industry at the international level. These changes are affording more power to the English language, which is needed for this sector and offers the possibility for the St. Lucia people to improve their economic and social situation by knowing English (Garrett, 2011). Consequently, parents would reproduce this ideology in the family practices, by using English with their children instead of Kwéyòl to guarantee them a better future. Children are, thus, socialized into the idea that English is more worthy, especially in terms of economic value and prestige (Garrett, 2011). Kwéyòl is only used with children for scolding or mocking, reinforcing the negative views around the
Kwéyòl language and indirectly placing more value on the English language (Garrett, 2011).

However, as Garrett (2011) observes, although the English language enjoys a dominant status in St. Lucia, parents and grandparents expect their children to learn the Kwéyòl language somehow. They assume that they will learn it as adults, almost automatically and actually negatively regard those children who cannot speak Kwéyòl. From this perspective, Garrett (2011)’s study is relevant to show how language ideologies can be embedded in the language socialization practices of families and reproduced without the awareness of the people involved, resulting in ambivalent and contradictory attitudes. His contributions also illustrate that what is happening globally—St. Lucia’s economy becoming more internationally oriented—can affect local language practices even at the family level.

Another study by Guardado (2010) examines the relationships between language socialization and language ideologies with Spanish speaking families in Vancouver. However, contrary to Garrett (2011)’s study, Guardado (2010) observes how, in some situations, language ideologies can also positively affect language socialization practices in the family environment. Thus, the less dominant language can negotiate an alternative space alongside the dominant one. Indeed, the findings of Guardado (2010) reveal how the maintenance of Spanish in these families is related not only to feelings of nostalgia for their country of origin. The Spanish language, as well as any other languages, are also seen by the parents as a positive and enriching resource and tool for the children to become citizens of the world, cosmopolitan, and more open minded towards other cultures. Speaking
Spanish will allow them to see the world from another perspective, not possible by being only monolingual. Through such discourses and attitudes, Spanish speaking parents are therefore socializing the children into a positive ideology around multilingualism, which also favours the maintenance of Spanish even beyond the common discourses about the economic advantages brought by knowing Spanish in the North American context (Guardado, 2010).

Nevertheless, in situations of languages in contact or immigration contexts, an analysis on the relations between language ideologies and language socialization must also take into account the role played by identity or better by the identification and positioning processes undergone by the family members and how such identification processes are intertwined with language ideologies and socialization practices. In particular, a study from Li (2006) on Chinese families in Vancouver is relevant to show how the parents’ attitudes and perceptions towards the heritage language or any other languages involved, as well as how parents identify themselves with the new country and their country of origin, play a key role in the language socialization processes of the family, with consequences on the children’s linguistic future. Li (2006) reports the case study of a Chinese family, who positively identifies with their Chinese heritage, feeling pride of their Chinese sociocultural background and language and perceiving themselves as great contributors to the Canadian society. Such positive identification translated into active socialization practices that successfully favoured the maintenance of Chinese with their daughter alongside English (Li, 2006).
Nonetheless, despite the contributions of these studies in analysing the links between language socialization, language ideologies, and identities, what is still lacking is a sociolinguistics of globalization perspective, as suggested by Blommaert (2010) and further explained in the sections that follow. In a sociolinguistics of globalization, social interactions are analysed through several spatial and temporal frames, taking into account the links between what is happening locally and globally, in the past and present, while bringing into play the historical, sociocultural, and political contexts from which people come or speak (Blommaert, 2010).

Languages and Power in a Globalized World

A Critical Sociolinguistic Perspective

What are languages? How are they acquired or conveyed? If one examines the language dynamics as analysed in the previous chapter with regard to the past and the current sociolinguistic situation in Italy, whereby speaking standard Italian is also related to the history and politics of Italy, one can notice that acquiring or conveying a language, being our first, mother tongue language, or any others, goes beyond acquiring a repertoire of grammar rules or lexical items. Heller (2007) argues how languages should be seen as “a set of resources which circulate in unequal ways in social networks and discursive spaces, and whose meanings and values are socially constructed within the constraints of social organizational processes, under specific historical conditions” (p.2). In fact, it is interesting to observe how, in the case of Italy, as examined in the previous Context chapter and literature review on Italians, politics and history are deeply intertwined in the language experiences and practices of the Italian speakers. Different language varieties might
circulate unequally in the Italian context. These varieties might enjoy different power and prestige with one another, and history and politics have somehow “constructed” the idea that some Italian varieties are inferior to others (Bourdieu, 1991; Heller, 2007). In other words, what happens at micro levels, in our everyday interactions, is also connected with historical, political, and economic issues at higher levels (Blommaert, 2005; Heller, 2007).

In line with this framework linking language to power, Bourdieu (1991) offers a point of departure to better understand how languages and power are related. According to Bourdieu (1991), languages represent indeed a symbolic capital unequally distributed within society, whose value is determined by a dominant group within specific historical and political contexts. Symbolic capital is all of the linguistic resources, practices, or expressions performed by an individual, which assume a certain value based on criteria as established by a dominant group, creating a symbolic market of languages or linguistic resources (Bourdieu, 1991). The concept of symbolic market refers to a situation in which communication exchanges and interactions are not neutrally conceived, but the individuals’ linguistic competences are valued according to the linguistic criteria as established by a dominant group (Bourdieu, 1991). For example, one dominant group could exercise its power not only through political unification, but also by the means of a linguistic one, where the official language “imposes itself on the whole population as the only legitimate one” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 45). From this perspective, the dominant group has the power to legitimize or delegitimize a certain language consciously or not. Consequently, if the official language imposed by the dominant group becomes the only legitimate one through influence of the more powerful people, those who do not speak that language, do not have
many alternatives apart from investing in that language, if they want to have access to the symbolic market created by the dominant group and to have some returns (Bourdieu, 1991).

The only problem with Bourdieu (1991), as acknowledged elsewhere (Martin-Jones, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) is that he seems to leave little room for changes and resistance. Martin-Jones (2007) argues that “for him, symbolic power saturates consciousness and remains uncontested” (p.172). Bourdieu (1991) presents a more static view of power relations among a given society. Meanwhile, Heller (2007) offers a more critical framework, which envisages changes and which analyses language and power relations in a more dynamic perspective. Within this symbolic market, people can still create and recreate “alternative market places”, which could resist, challenge, or negotiate the dominant power, as described by Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004, p.11) in relation to Heller (2007)’s critical theory in sociolinguistics, and as it was previously seen in Giampapa (2004)’s or Guardado (2010)’s studies.

In sum, a critical sociolinguistic perspective leads us to examine language practices by bringing into play the role of power, as well as the role of the social, historical, and political contexts that surround language practices (Bourdieu, 1991; Heller, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). More specifically, such a perspective leads us to answer questions, such as where certain language practices come from, who has the power, how power is created, negotiated, but also challenged within a given context, how our everyday language practices are connected with broader issues, and finally what consequences such power relations have on individuals’ life (Heller, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).
A Sociolinguistics of Globalization

In line with the above framework, which connects languages to power and takes a look at how micro interactions are related to broader historical and political contexts, Blommaert (2010) offers further clarifications on these connections between the micro and macro levels and invites us to also examine how globalization forces are impacting our daily interactions and language practices, which need to be studied from different spatial and temporal perspectives. Here, he proposes an “aggiornamento of our theoretical and methodological toolkit” (Blommaert, 2010, p. xiii), an update in the field of sociolinguistics by proposing a sociolinguistics of globalization, that is a sociolinguistics of mobility, of “language-in-motion, with various spatiotemporal frames interacting with one another” (Blommaert, 2010, p. 5).

As Blommaert (2010) clarifies, globalization is generally intended as “flows of capital, goods, people, images and discourses around the globe, driven by technological innovation . . .” (p.13). From that perspective, he argues that globalization should not be necessarily seen as a new phenomenon. What has been changing in the last 20 years is the “intensity, the scope, the scale” (Blommaert, 2010, p. 1) of the globalization processes, where people now move faster and more intensely than before from one country to another, from one region of the globe to another. This means that people with different origins come into contact with each other more than ever, in a faster and more immediate way. In these diverse and multifaceted situations, which globalization promotes, Blommaert (2010) invites us to reflect on what still “counts as language in particular contexts” (p.12). In a globalized world, Blommaert (2010) challenges this idea of language as related to a
specific territory or country as being an ideological and institutional construct, but invites us to reframe the concept of language in terms of specific linguistic repertoires in specific contexts, paying attention to the details of the languages involved, such the role of accents, specific registers, genres, or modes of communication (e.g., writing or speaking).

Therefore, when I refer to the participants in my research, I cannot treat them simply as “Italians” coming from “Italy”, who speak “Italian”. My inquiry needs to look at the Italian language in its specificity, in its variety, and in its history as well.

Moreover, in a globalized world of people and goods in motion, sociolinguistics too must acknowledge these movements. Such approach implies examining language practices not only in the specific context of the local and of the present, but also adopting a larger view, which takes into account at the same time of the local and the global, of the present and the past, and of all the links between these spatiotemporal scales (Blommaert, 2010). In short, he suggests adopting a view that takes into account the mobility of linguistic repertoires within several contexts as well as the effects of such mobility. What would that mean in practice in the context of my research? An approach as suggested by Blommaert (2010) invites me to look at the language practices of these families, by examining not only what I now see in Calgary, but also from other historical and spatial perspectives. One spatiotemporal frame to consider is the sociolinguistic situation of Italy in the present, as well as the history and politics behind it. How do the values and ideas around this being and speaking “Italian” transfer back and move into the language attitudes and perceptions of these families in the context of Calgary? How are these values and ideas renegotiated, challenged, or reproduced in the families’ discourses? What are the links between the
language attitudes and perceptions of these families and what is happening right now and what happened politically, historically, and sociolinguistically in Italy? Finally, what are the effects of these links between past and present, local and global on the language transmission and identification processes within these families and on the linguistic future of the children? Everything is connected. What we are now, our language choices, our linguistic repertoires, our identities are the result of personal trajectories melted into the historical, political, and social contexts we have encountered in our life (Blommaert, 2010). As Blommaert (2010) claims, “someone’s linguistic repertoire reflects a life, and not just birth, and it is a life that is lived in a real sociocultural, historical and political space” (p.171).

In line with the above, a sociolinguistics of globalization and mobility also implies looking at the position of the state within various spatial and temporal levels, at the worldwide or national level for example, a position, which can affect local practices (Blommaert, 2010). By state is meant in its broader sense, the political and governmental institutions that define, constitute, and represent, in the case of the present study, the nation of Italy (Blommaert, 2010). As Blommaert (2010) notes, it could be argued that with globalization, states are losing their power, especially financially or economically. While this could be true to some extent, Blommaert (2010) argues how states are still powerful in very important domains which affect people’s lives, such as immigration, education, media, or language policies, and the way a state positions itself against the various political actors at a worldwide level has consequences on our daily life. The Context chapter described how English enjoys a certain prestige among the Italian population of today, an
attitude that, to some extent, also seems to be a reflection of the pro-American politics of several Italian politicians since the Second World War (Taglialatela, 2011). As Taglialatela (2011) remarks, “the language is normally the mirror of the politics of a country”\(^7\) (p.70).

To sum up, in the diverse and complex reality of our globalized world of languages in motion, a sociolinguistics of globalization, as framed by Blommaert (2010), aims at looking at language practices in their specificity, in their locality, and at the same time in their movements within several historical, political, and social contexts, linking the local with the global, the present with the past. Nonetheless, it could be argued that there is nothing so new in this approach. For instance, the concepts of linking the micro interactions with what happens at macro levels, as well as looking at the political and historical contexts of interactions, have already been framed by other authors in the field of critical sociolinguistics, such as Heller (2007) or Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), as mentioned earlier. In my opinion, one of the main contributions of this approach lies in its emphasis in analysing more in depth and in detail these links between the micro and macro levels, and how these various levels are actually interconnected one another, taking into account not only where people are moving to, but also where they come from.

**Language Ideologies and Family Language Socialization**

While in the previous sections I provided a more general framework within the critical sociolinguistic perspective, the present section analyses more specifically what is meant by language ideologies and how they can be intertwined in the language

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\(^7\) The original text in Italian is, “La lingua é di norma specchio della politica di un Paese” (Taglialatela, 2011, p.70).
socialization practices and choices of immigrant families. I will also be looking at the role of identities in such practices.

Language Ideological Perspectives

As argued by Silverstein (1979), language ideologies can provide us with “an additional tool and level of analysis” (as cited in Kroskrrity, 2000, p. 3) to link local practices, personal trajectories, and histories to wider political, social, and economic issues, adopting a “language ideological perspective” (Kroskrity, 2000, p.1).

Language ideologies are hereby defined in their broader sense, as ideas, beliefs, perceptions about the use and acquisition of language, in general, as well as about the value and prestige of certain language forms (Riley, 2011). These ideas, assumptions, beliefs are reproduced, challenged, or contested within the dominant discourses of groups within a given society. Indeed, discourses become an interesting site of analysis for the reproduction or contestation of language ideologies (Blommaert, 2005). Discourse is hereby defined as a “contextualised language” (Blommaert, 2005, p.235), which “comprises all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural, and historical patterns and developments of use” (Blommaert, 2005, p.3). Analysing discourses becomes a starting point to better understand how language ideologies enter our daily life, and our lives are framed within a social, cultural, and historical context (Blommaert, 1999, 2005).

In the Introduction, I mentioned how language ideologies have been defined in several ways by researchers, and a consensus around their meaning has been hardly reached (Woolard, 1998). My stance is that of analysing language ideologies in their broader sense, going beyond issues of terminology, which could restrict the inquiry and
prevent me from gaining a broader perspective on the topic. Therefore, as defined by Kroskrity (2004), Silverstein (1979), and Woolard (1998), language ideologies can be considered as “everything from unexamined cultural assumptions to politically charged dogma about the use and acquisition of language in general and the value of specific forms of language in particular” (as cited in Riley, 2011, p.493). Woolard (1998) explains also how language ideologies can be seen as “representations whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world” (p.3). Therefore, language ideologies can be seen as a link between the way we talk and “social forms”, such as identity, gender, race, child socialization, morality, and so forth (Woolard, 1998, p.3).

Again, any language issues, language practices, or language choices within any given context are not just about language alone. As Blommaert (1999) adds, an analysis of language ideologies should also go hand in hand with an analysis of the “historical forces that made us speak, write, listen, read the way we do now” (p.5).

Nevertheless, as Woolard (1998) notes “the point is not just to analyse and critique the social roots of linguistic ideologies but [also] to analyse their efficacy, the way they transform the material reality they comment on” (p. 11). As Woolard (1998) adds, “ideology creates and acts in a social world while it masquerades as a description of that world” (p.11). Indeed, one of the main problems with language ideologies is that they can be so embedded within the dominant discourses of a society that they are often taken for granted, left unquestioned by speakers (Garrett, 2011; Roy & Galiev, 2011; Woolard, 1998). Language ideologies lead us to simplify and see a situation only from one perspective (Blommaert, 2005). They are hidden behind common sense notions and they
can be reproduced in the discourses of language speakers, often without much awareness from the speakers (Blommaert, 2005).

Why, therefore, do certain ideologies become more dominant than others to the point that they affect the way we think and act and we may even perceive people as “uneducated” simply because of an accent or variations against a standard form (Lippi-Green, 1997)? As Kroskrity (2000) argues, “language ideologies represent the perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group” (p.8). However, Blommaert (2005) notes, how, in order for this specific social or cultural group to become successful, an idea “become[s] ideological as soon as it is picked up by power-regulating institutions . . . and inserted into the ideological reproduction system they organise” (p. 163). These power-regulating institutions are generally represented by the state, but the media, the education system, the church, and interest groups can be powerful institutions, which can reproduce discourses to support the state or can produce counterdiscourses against or as alternatives to the ones reproduced by the state (Blommaert, 2005). As Blommaert (2005) argues, “ideas themselves do not define ideologies; they need to be inserted in material practices of modulation and reproduction” (p.164).

This leads us to some reflections on the possibility of changing dominant language ideologies and to what extent we are not totally passive and socially determined by our political and historical contexts. As Kroskrity (2000) would argue, “members may display varying degrees of awareness of local language ideologies” (p.18) and as argued by Silverstein (1979) “when speakers rationalize their language they take a first step towards
changing it” (as cited in Kroskrity, 2000, p. 21). Analysing and interrogating ourselves about where these ideologies originate, why they exist, who has the power, and rationalising our daily language practices is the first step in creating counterdiscourses. This process can help us examine language phenomena from different perspectives and not just the one imposed on us, as the sociolinguistics for change (Roy, 2013; Roy & Dalley, 2008) would also highlight. Blommaert (2005) explains that hegemonic attitudes are often counteracted by “hidden transcripts” (p.168), practices and views, which challenge and contest the dominant discourses. For example, as explained in the Context chapter on dialects in Italy, although the Italian state attempted to impose a standard form of Italian after the unification, at that time, some intellectuals contested this position by writing in the dialect and reaffirming its prestige (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006).

This possibility of change, of creating counterdiscourses against dominant language ideologies, also shows how language ideologies are not fixed (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Language ideologies are not something a speaker has or possesses as a thing; language ideologies should be seen more as a “social process involving struggles among multiple conceptualizations and demanding the recognition of variation and contestation within a community as well as contradictions within individuals” (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p.71). The same speaker can display different discourses based on apparently ambivalent attitudes, and these may change over time. This is clearly the case when, in the Context chapter, I examined the contradictory and ambivalent attitudes about what it means to speak and be “Italian” nowadays in Italy. For example, the same speakers might feel attached to their region, showing an interest for the dialects, as well as attracted by
ideologies that might consider English as a language of economic power and future success (Stehl, 2005; Taglialatela, 2011). At the same time, these speakers may want to speak a perfect Italian language, which normally indexes a high level of education in people’s perceptions (Lorenzetti, 2002). All of these ideologies might therefore move into the context of Calgary and be renegotiated, challenged, or reproduced through different discourses in the family environment. That is why, going back to the sociolinguistics of globalization, we need to look at all of the different spatiotemporal frames and how they are linked: the history of Italy; what is happening there now; and what is happening in the family environment in Calgary (Blommaert, 2010).

**Ideological Language Socialization**

In the field of language socialization, Riley (2011) specifically refers to an “ideological language socialization” highlighting links between language ideologies and language socialization practices in several types of interactions, not only in the family domain (p.193). Traditionally, language socialization theory has examined both first language and second language contexts in order to explore “the process[es] by which novices or newcomers in a community or culture gain communicative competence, membership, and legitimacy in the group” (Duff, 2007, p.310). The word *novice* can have different meanings in the language socialization field and depends on the context we analyse; novices can be the children, who are acquiring their first language or languages in the family domain or even foreign students at university, who are socialized through and into a second language by their peers or teachers for example (Duff, 2007). These processes of socialization occur, in fact, through the use of language. However, language is
also a goal for novices and newcomers, which would allow them to have access to the resources offered by this new community (Duff, 2007; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008).

Nevertheless, as clarified by Riley (2011) language socialization processes are not neutral; they reflect power relations among languages and are intertwined by ideas, beliefs, or assumptions about how a language should be acquired or used and how certain language forms (e.g., written vs. oral forms, dialects, code-switching codes, etc.) are valued within a given community. She argues that language ideologies influence language socialization processes, and language ideologies are “also among the many cultural values socialized through language use” (Riley, 2011, p.493). In the specific domain of the family, through the use of a certain language or languages at home, children learn about what language to use or not to use, how to use them, and with whom. At the same time, dominant ideologies, as perceived by parents about how or which languages should be spoken, as well as their value and prestige as perceived by parents, have an impact on children’s language choices and practices and eventually on their linguistic future (Riley, 2011).

**Language Socialization and Identity Issues**

Although the focus of this thesis is on language ideologies and language socialization practices, identity issues are inevitably intrinsic to language socialization processes and ideologies, and a net separation is hard to establish.

What is meant by identity? As He (2011) suggests, and I concur, identity is hereby defined as a process of “identification” (p.595), which is constructed through ongoing interactions, rather than a fixed attribute of people. He (2011) treats identity as follows:
Identity is treated not as a collection of static attributes or as a mental construct existing prior to and independent of human actions, but rather as a process of continually emerging and becoming, a process that identifies what a person becomes and achieves through ongoing interactions with other persons. (p.595)

Therefore, identity is not something one possesses or is fixed, but goes hand in hand with the daily interactions we have, within the different sociocultural and historical contexts of these interactions, and when we move from one country to another, from one context to another, even more identity issues come into play (He, 2011). As I described in the Context chapter, what means to be “Italian” and speak “Italian”, hides, in reality, a variety of linguistic and cultural repertoires, which, in turn, can index different identities and different processes of identification, from more local and regional to national positioning (Cavanaugh, 2004; Stehl, 2005).

Such reflections invite me to go deeper on what is meant by this process of identification and positioning. Who identifies whom? Who positions whom and based on what criteria? Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) refers to identity as an interplay between the way we position ourselves and also how others position us, according to the specific context we analyse. No matter how I position myself, the belonging or not to an identity will be finally determined by others, and as Berlinguette and Roy (2010) state, “we feel accepted in a group as long as the others do accept us”8 (p.143). These reflections link this process of identification to hierarchy and power issues, whereby identity can be

8 The original text in French is, “On se sent accepté dans un groupe à condition que les autres nous acceptent” (Berlinguette & Roy, 2010, p. 143).
constructed along criteria established by a dominant group, in which ideas, values, ideologies about certain languages play a significant role in establishing these criteria. As specified by Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), particular identities can be linked to specific languages or linguistic forms and can be legitimized or devalued accordingly.

Such processes of devaluation or legitimation of identities and languages enter and occur also in the family environment in the way parents identify themselves and express their sense of belonging to their country of origin or their new environment, and what they think about the languages involved. Such identification processes influence the language socialization practices of the family and can shape children’s identity formation and their linguistic future (Guardado, 2010; Li, 2006). As Guardado (2010) claims “language is the chief tool that members of social groups use in order to transmit their values and beliefs to individuals, which helps form the individual’s emerging identity” (p.330). As Arsenault (2008) further specifies, the family is indeed “where individuals acquire a sense of belonging to a group and their identity is shaped” 9 (p.263).

Moreover, in the specific context of immigration and family language socialization, He (2011) invites us to look more closely at this sense of belonging in terms of ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is intended as a sense of belonging to the heritage cultural group of the place of origin (He, 2011). We mentioned earlier in reference to the research conducted by Li (2006), how the parents’ sense of belonging to China affected the heritage language learning of the children, whereby the parents, who were proud of their Chinese

9 The original text in French is, “C’est d’abord dans la famille que l’individu acquiert un sens d’appartenance au groupe et que l’identité se forme” (Arsenault, 2008, p. 263).
origins conveyed these positive attitudes to their child, who, consequently, developed a
desire to maintain Chinese along with English.

Of course, when we refer to identity, especially in the context of immigration,
whereby several worlds come into contact with each other through their languages, issues
around identity can never be so straightforward, but as Norton Peirce (1995) claims,
identity issues become a “site of struggle”, which is “multiple, contradictory, and changing
over time” (p. 15). In the Context chapter, I explained how there could be multiple,
contradictory, and changing identities behind what it means to be “Italian”, according to
the social, political, and historical context of the interaction. Indeed, Blommaert (2005)
warns us against framing identity around concepts of ethnolinguistic identity, in which the
sense of belonging to an ethnic community equals a sense of belonging to a language
community, for example, belonging to Italy simply implies the belonging to the Italian
community. However, the problem is that these references, which equate the sense of
belonging to a country and to a language community simplifying the variety of our daily
interactions, are still very much alive in the minds of people and are often related to
standard language ideologies (Blommaert, 2005). These simplifying attitudes can affect our
local practices and the acquisition and transmission of languages.

I would like to conclude this section with a final remark on terminology. It has been
noticed from the previous paragraphs that the word *identity* has been associated with
various terms, such as “sense of belonging”, “positioning”, or “attitudes”. I believe that
identity issues are an extremely complex matter, and trying to abide to a specific and
precise definition of identity would deny the complexity of such processes of identification.
In this thesis therefore, identity will be acknowledged in its broader sense in conjunction with the language socialization processes and with its relations with language ideologies.

**Filling the Gap in Research**

Previous sociolinguistic research has focused on the generations of Italians who arrived after the Second World War and their subsequent generations. The present study could represent, therefore, a first step in exploring what is happening within newly arrived Italian families, bringing a focus to the role of language ideologies in language socialization practices, which has been often overlooked in previous research and in studies of other ethnolinguistic groups in Alberta as well.

Furthermore, with the exception of Del Torto (2008), most research has analysed the linguistic situation of large Italian communities, such as Toronto, New York, or the large Italian communities in Australia (Bettoni, 2003; Cavallaro, 2010; Giampapa, 2004). Not as much is known on studies where the Italian community is underrepresented and scattered all over a city, like in the case of Calgary. In Calgary, there is no Little Italy or other large Italian communities, geographically represented within the city. In Calgary, the areas of Inglewood and Bridgeland were originally home to previous generations of Italians, who arrived at the beginning of the 20th century, but new generations of Italians have found their homes in different parts of the city, without identifying themselves with a specific area. This situation seems in line with the observations of Blommaert (2010), who describes how new immigrants no longer tend to establish isolated, stable, and fixed communities. Moreover, apart from the Saturday Italian lessons offered by the Calgary Italian School, there are no Italian immersion or bilingual schools, which could more
extensively support the families if they wish to promote Italian with their children. It is, therefore, interesting to analyse how these new Italian families in Calgary find their way in this situation. From these perspectives, the findings of the present research can become valuable also for other languages, which are not represented by large communities or are not supported by extensive bilingual and/or immersion programs, as the Italian language in Calgary.

Finally, the framework as offered by Blommaert (2010) within a sociolinguistics of globalization can provide us with an alternative and a new perspective to analyse social interactions and languages, a perspective that has so far been less explored in depth by sociolinguistics.

Summary

The framework of reference for the present thesis lays its foundations within a critical sociolinguistic perspective in a globalized world. Within this perspective, language practices are not neutrally conceived, but are often embedded in power relations within a symbolic market (Bourdieu, 1991), and Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) further specify, “the value of a particular language variety in a symbolic market place derives from its legitimization by the dominant group and the dominant institutions, in particular schools and the media” (p. 10). Therefore, questions such as who has the power, why, what are the consequence should be the starting point of the inquiry and lead us to frame language interactions within specific social, historical, political, and economic contexts in which interactions take place (Heller, 2007).
Blommaert (2010) presents the above concepts in more depth and suggests a sociolinguistics of globalization. In a globalized world and in the diversified contexts of immigration and of languages in motion, our analysis of language practices needs to take into account not only the specific context of the present and of the local, but also must present a wider perspective, which takes into account the local and the global, the present and the past, as well as the links between these spatiotemporal scales (Blommaert, 2010).

These links can be further explored and understood by analysing how language ideologies are intertwined in the dominant discourses of society.

More specifically, in this thesis language ideologies will be analysed in relation to language socialization practices within the family environment. Riley (2011) refers to an “ideological language socialization” highlighting such links between language ideologies and language socialization practices (p.193). Language uses and choices among family members are not neutrally conceived, but are often loaded with ideologies, sometimes ambivalent and contradictory about how a language should be used, with whom, and when (Garrett, 2011; Riley, 2011). Finally, these ideologies may have consequences on the linguistic future of the children and the heritage language maintenance (Garrett, 2011; Riley, 2011).
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part of the chapter will focus on the methodology from a more theoretical perspective, outlining the reasons for a case study methodology, the choice of interviews as main research method, as well as the role of Critical Discourse Analysis. In the second part of this chapter, I will describe the methodology by highlighting the practical aspects of the research which guided the data collection and analysis processes.

Methodology: Theoretical Perspectives

A Case Study Approach

Generally, as outlined by Duff (2008a), if the objective of a study is to understand and explore in-depth the complexity of a specific entity or phenomenon (e.g., a family, an individual, a community, etc.) from different perspectives, as it is the intent in the present research, a case study research would be a suitable methodology. Besides, as mentioned by Yin (1989), if our research is dominated by “how” and “why” questions (p.18), whereby the event we want to analyse is so complex that it is not possible to separate variables to test against hypothesis, a case study would be also helpful. Language ideological processes might be contradictory, ambivalent, and context dependent, and surely it would be hard to identify specific variables to separate from the study (Yin, 1989). Therefore, by focussing on few cases, a case study approach would allow me to avoid generalisations and to look at the specificity and singularity of each case, acknowledging and valuing all these contradictions and ambivalences.
More specifically, depending on the objectives and research questions, case studies can be framed in various ways. A case study may be mainly descriptive when the focus is on providing a detailed descriptive account of the findings (Merriam, 1998). Case studies can also be explorative (Merriam, 1998). As mentioned in the literature review, not much sociolinguistic research has been conducted on the last wave of Italian immigrants leaving Italy. In that sense, the case studies, which are presented in this thesis, can be considered descriptive, as well as explorative.

So far, case studies have been defined as an approach to be used when researchers wish to describe, understand, or explore in-depth a phenomenon, but it could be argued that those objectives can also be achieved using other methodologies, such as ethnographic research or research action just to mention a few. As explained by Merriam (1998), what distinguishes a case study approach from other research methodologies lies in the focus on a single and specific entity (e.g., a family, an individual, an event, etc.), which is bounded and closed. More precisely, in the present study, each single unit of analysis, each “case” is defined by the four families, who have been arriving in Calgary in recent years from Italy. The cases are bounded by place: Families are now living in Calgary and the parents were all born and raised in Italy. The cases are also bounded by time: Families have been living in Calgary for no longer than 15 years and are representative therefore of the last wave of Italian emigrants. More specifically, this “family” entity refers to the parents and their children who were interviewed, and not to the extended family, although references to the role of grandparents or other family members are mentioned by the participants during the interviews.
So far I have referred to case studies without mentioning what the “perfect” number of cases should be. Since case studies involve an in-depth analysis of a specific event or entity, as Creswell (2013) notes, researchers would normally choose between four to six cases maximum. For atypical and unique situations, single cases are also an option (Creswell, 2013). In the present study, a multiple case design has been chosen. The reason for choosing a multiple case design with four families instead of one lies in the need to have different perspectives on the topic and have more elements for comparison among the cases and with the existing literature (Duff, 2008a). According to Yin (1989) “the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust” (p.52). From this perspective, it could be argued that a multiple case study design would be suitable to achieve a certain level of generalizability, whereby the results of a study can be applied to other situations (Merriam, 1998).

However, as mentioned in the Introduction, the way I perceive generalizability differs from a positivist approach, which seeks to find universals and provide readers with a generalizable truth applicable to the same situation. Although the choice for choosing more than one family provides me with more compelling and stronger evidence to support my findings (Yin, 1989), as Merriam (1998) clearly states, a case study approach in qualitative research is selected “precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular, in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many” (p.208)

Along with generalizability, reliability is another criterion, which is conceived differently from traditional positivist paradigms, when evaluating case study research. Generally, as explained by Duff (2008a), reliability refers to the possibility of our findings
to be replicated and to obtain the same results if the study is repeated. As clarified in the Introduction, I start from the assumption that reality, our social world, and human beings are not things, which can be defined in an objective and straightforward manner (Merriam, 1998). My perspective starts instead from the assumption that human behaviour can be unpredictable and ever-changing. As Merriam (1998) notes, “in the social sciences, simply because a number of people have experienced the same phenomenon does not make the observations more reliable” (p.206).

The way I see reliability is more along the lines of Lincoln and Guba (1985), who refer to concepts of “dependability” and “consistency” (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 206). Merriam (1998) further explains such concepts of dependability and consistency by specifying that, “the question . . . is not whether findings will be found again but whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (p.206). A way to ensure reliability in that sense is to provide readers with a detailed and rich account of how researchers have arrived at their results and conclusions, describing in detail the social contexts and the processes and decisions behind the data collection (Merriam, 1998). Such details are provided in the second part of this chapter, where I highlighted the practical insights of my research. The Context chapter contains further details that can help readers understand how my interpretations and results are consistent and connected with the data collected.

Moreover, when using interviews as the main method within a case study approach, a detailed transcription of the interview accounts, including pauses, hesitations, or silences, as I did for this study (see Appendix E for transcript conventions), is also essential for accuracy and reliability in the data analysis (Creswell, 2013).
Finally, a concern that has been highlighted with regard to case study research refers to ethical issues (Duff, 2008a). Case study research involves an in-depth analysis of very few cases, with a high level of contextual description. It could be argued, therefore, that the privacy and anonymity of participants might be at risk, especially in the case of the Italian community in Calgary, which is fairly small. Pseudonyms have been used in the present study to guarantee the anonymity of the participants and protect their privacy. Moreover, in some of the cases, I personally discussed with the participants the disclosure of information, with regard to age or professions for example, in a way to protect their identity. Ethics approval has been granted by the Research Ethics Board for the interviews with the Calgary Italian Club and Calgary Italian School. However, the anonymity of the representatives of such institutions has been kept for privacy concerns, in agreement with the Research Ethics Board and with the representatives of the two institutions.

*The Value of Interviews*

In general terms, depending on the research design, interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or open ended (Merriam, 1998). In the present section, I will mainly refer to semi-structured interviews, which have been used in the present research with parents, children of the families, as well as with the representatives of the Calgary Italian Club and the Calgary Italian School. By semi-structured interviews is meant a type of interview, in which the researcher has prepared, in advance, a list of open-ended questions or key words to guide the conversation, allowing at the same time the possibility for the participants to freely elaborate and express their thoughts or beliefs with regard to a topic (Duff, 2008a). Appendices A and B contain the list of questions that I asked the families, while
Appendices C and D contain the questions that I used for the Calgary Italian Club and the Calgary Italian School.

Interviews can represent a valuable tool to access the social world we wish to explore. Miller and Glassner (2011) argue that the way we see the world, what we say, what we think about this world is framed by previous cultural and social framing. We are not isolated subjects, and even if we can argue that interviews are an artificial moment of an interaction, interviews do not exist in a vacuum, but rather, within a social world (Miller & Glassner, 2011). As Glassner and Loughlin (1987) argue, “the ways of viewing self and world come from and build into the social world itself” (as cited in Miller & Glassner, 2011, p. 135). Wortham, Allard, White, Lee, and Mortimer (2011) support this stance by arguing how certainly interviews are a form of artificial interaction, but they are also “embedded in and continuous with habitual discursive action” (p.43). Very often what emerges in interviews refers to discourses that people would normally also reproduce outside the apparently artificial setting of the interview (Wortham et al., 2011). As Holstein and Gubrium (2011) argue, in an interview “meaning is neither predetermined nor absolute unique” (p. 156). Interview is a “knowledge construction” process, an on-going interactive process between two or more individuals, which is somehow unique, surely created in that present moment of the interview, but at the same time, people in such interaction construct their knowledge and try to make sense of each other on predetermined knowledge, which comes from the historical, sociocultural backgrounds they are inevitably part of (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011, p.156). As De Fina and King (2011) further specify, “interviews constitute occasions in which people make sense of their experience by building upon
common ground and shared understanding. Interviews can be seen as sites for re-elaboration of the ideologies and of common sense understanding” (p.167). This means that interviews can represent a valuable tool to connect the micro levels of the interview to the ideologies surrounding this common sense and shared understanding (De Fina & King, 2011), though quite often not so shared.

Moreover, if interviews involve a meaning-making process, whose insights “come out of worlds that exist outside of the interview itself” (Miller & Glassner, 2011, p.137), this means, in practice, that not only what the person says during the interview needs to be acknowledged, but the meaning-making process itself, why people say something in a certain way, where it comes from, the historical and sociocultural contexts behind what is said, how individuals position themselves during the interview in relation to the interviewer, to the topic, or to themselves require attention as well (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011). This could mean noticing any contradictions that could emerge from the interview data and not only the contradictions emerging from the interviewees (Tonkiss, 1998). As suggested by Tonkiss (1998), those contradictions that question the very assumptions of the researchers themselves need to be acknowledged as well.

In sum, as Holstein and Gubrium (2011) suggest, interview data need to be treated for their “whats”, meaning their content, but also for their “hows” (p.157).

**Critical Discourse Analysis**

In the present thesis, my approach with Critical Discourse Analysis mainly follows the insights of Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982) and Blommaert (1999, 2005, 2010),
whose contributions, in my opinion, lie in their emphasis on the importance of context and on history, going beyond the “here-and now of communication” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 37).

As Tonkiss (1998) notes, it could be argued that Critical Discourse Analysis represents a method of data analysis, which is quite complex to define in specific terms. Various disciplines from psychology to sociology, politics, cultural studies, sociolinguistics, and so forth have approached Critical Discourse Analysis in different ways, and a “hard-and-fast rules of method” might not be applicable in the case of Critical Discourse Analysis (Tonkiss, 1998, p.26). Blommaert (2005) also warns us against the tendency to lock Critical Discourse Analysis into the idea of a “school” to avoid “objectification” (p.22) of such an evolving and dynamic movement.

Nevertheless, within Critical Discourse Analysis some common features can be identified that make it distinctive from other disciplines. First of all, in general terms the point of departure of Critical Discourse Analysis lies in an analysis of language, which becomes a window through which to analyse the social world (Blommaert, 2005). One of the objectives, which is shared by Critical Discourse Analysis, is to analyse the language of talk and/or written texts to unveil and question how people produce meaning, how they make sense of their social world, and more importantly, how our common sense notions, shared understanding, and ideologies, which are reproduced or contested through discourses, might be grounded in power relations and inequality and might be related to broader issues than just the local interaction of the communication (Blommaert, 2005). In that perspective, we can argue that Critical Discourse Analysis has a linguistic departure through a detailed analysis of talk and text, but with links to critical social theory too, as

In the present thesis, discourse implies an analysis of “language-in-society . . . The shape in which language-in-society comes to us is discourse” (Blommaert, 2005, p.16). This implies not only an analysis of language in its linguistic elements, but discourse “comprises all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural, and historical pattern of use. . . What is traditionally understood by language is but one manifestation of it” (Blommaert, 2005, p.3). A picture can be part of a discourse, the way we dress, the non-verbal aspects of the language—all that might need to be taken into account in an analysis of talk. As Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982) note, “communication cannot be studied in isolation” (p.1) and “discourse is what transforms our environment into a socially and culturally meaningful one” (p.4). Discourse is what makes us define something as beautiful, inappropriate, successful, or common sense (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982). In that sense, discourse can be based on “tacitly understood rules of preference, unspoken conventions as to what counts as valid and what information may or may not be introduced prevail” (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982, p.9). These “tacitly understood rules of preferences and unspoken conventions” might be surrounded by certain ideologies within a given society, dominant ideas and assumptions about what could be considered acceptable or not in a given situation (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982, p.9).

Along those lines, Gee (2011) makes a further clarification by distinguishing between discourses with a capital “D” and discourses with a little “d”. Discourses with a capital “D” involve a full recognition within a given context in terms of what is said, of the
actions involved, of our identity, of the ideologies and values that surround our interactions. Discourses with a little “d” might lack this total recognition and social acceptance within a given context and might simply refer to “conversations” or “stories” (Gee, 2011, p. 34).

Critical Discourse Analysis can become a valuable tool in research to help better understand the origins and consequences of language ideologies, thanks to the key role that context plays in Critical Discourse Analysis. Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982), refer to contextualization “conventions” (p.18), whereby in order to make our communication meaningful, we constantly refer to non-verbal, tacit contextualization cues, which help us communicate successfully, understanding what we need to understand, and ensuring hence the fluidity of communication. Blommaert (2005) goes even further by claiming that “context is not something we can just add to text—it is text, it defines its meanings and conditions of use” (p.45).

There are two main points in relation to context that have been brought forward by Blommaert (2005, 2010) and have been useful in helping me analyse the interview accounts and the discourses that arise from the interviews. The first point refers to the different levels of context, in which discourse can be analysed going into the history of data; the second point refers to the movements of discourses from one context to another and to the lack of sharedness among such contexts.

Blommaert (2005) notes how context can be approached on various levels from the “infinitely small” to the “infinitely big” (p.4), meaning that we can look at an utterance in its links with other utterances in the text, but we can also go further and examine the
sociocultural or political context behind it and, more importantly, the history of what is said.

Blommaert (2005) states that very often we talk only from one point in history. We tend to talk from the present, from the “here-and-now of communication” (p.37), only from our historical perspective, but this view leads us to ignore or simplify the complexity and the diversity of an event, leading to misunderstandings or inequalities. He argues how even analysts can fall into this trap of not going further into the historical contexts of an event, examining it only from their perspectives, taking for granted power relations, for example that “politicians always and intentionally manipulate their constituencies; doctors are by definition and always the powerful party in doctor-patient relations” (Blommaert, 2005, p.51).

The second point regarding the way of treating context in Critical Discourse Analysis relates to the sociolinguistics of globalization, as outlined in the Theoretical Framework chapter (Blommaert, 2010). It was explained how in the diverse and complex reality of our globalized world of languages in motion, a sociolinguistics of globalization, as framed by Blommaert (2010), aims at analysing language practices from several spatiotemporal frames. Such approach inevitably has an impact on how we should analyse discourse. In a sociolinguistics of globalization, we also need to pay attention to how discourses move from one context to another within the historical and sociocultural framing of our interactions, and what the consequences are, especially in situations of immigration, like the ones in this thesis (Blommaert, 2010). So far, I have discussed how shared notions of common sense and understanding guarantee the smoothness of
communication, but as noted by Blommaert (2005, 2010) and by Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982), the focus of Critical Discourse Analysis should also be based on the lack of sharedness of those tacitly understood rules and shared common sense notions, often entailing communication failures or inequalities. More specifically, Blommaert (2005, 2010) observes how discourses that might be valued in one context might not be valued the same way in another context, and that has consequences on people’s life. Critical Discourse Analysis needs to pay attention to such movements (Blommaert, 2005, 2010). How do the Italian linguistic repertoires move from the context of Italy into the new one of Calgary in the perceptions of parents and children? Are the parents assessing the Italian language of their children in relation to the one imposed by the standard of Italy or are the parents open to variations or code-switching in the children’s linguistic repertoire, in the new context of Calgary? From what historical perspectives are the participants speaking and what is the impact of such attitudes on the language socialization of children?

On a final note, as Blommaert (2005) states, Critical Discourse Analysis “should not start, so to speak, as soon as people open their mouths. It should have started long before that” (p.67).

Methodology: Practical Insights

Case Selection and Sampling

The four Italian families were recruited through my personal contacts as well as by a snowball method. As explained by Duff (2008a), case selection and sampling can involve different strategies. Within a multiple case design, researchers can choose a sample with cases, whose features are very similar or quite different; such variations depend on the goal
of the research and on the research questions (Duff, 2008a). In the present study, I purposely selected four families, who all had to meet the following criteria:

- All parents were born and raised in Italy and came directly from Italy.
- At the time of the interviews, the families had been living in Canada no longer than 20 years and for at least two years.
- At the time of the interview, children were attending school in Calgary, at least from Grade 1.

I opted, therefore, for what Merriam (1998) refers to a “purposeful” and “typical” sampling (p.62). In line with the goal of the research, I purposely selected families, who typically represented the generation of Italians who left Italy in recent years (see tables below in the Context and Background Information of the Families section). Nonetheless, as it can be seen above, level of education was not a criterion that I used, even though, in the end, my sample was composed of families representing the phenomenon of the so-called brain drain: a whole generation of highly qualified professionals leaving Italy in search of better professional and career opportunities (Amato, 2010; Di Giorgio, 2003). Initially, it was my intention to use a sample with a more varied educational background, and, for this reason, I personally contacted my potential participants in other fields as well, such as Italian restaurants. However, very likely because of restricted immigration policies in place in Canada (Dumond & Lemaître, 2005), the families who contacted me, mainly belonged to the category of highly educated professionals in line with this brain drain phenomenon. Moreover, I purposely searched for families whose children were attending at least Grade 1 to be able to interview them and also to obtain their perspectives, not only the parents’. In
that sense, it was also important for me to analyse children’s perceptions and points of view with regard to the education system and to understand to what extent these perceptions were having an impact on the language practices within the family.

Therefore, each family was selected by applying the same criteria with little variation among the families. One advantage of this homogenous sampling lies in the possibility of obtaining sufficient elements for analysing similarities and differences among the four cases, comparing the cases among each other (Duff, 2008a).

The only element of variation is represented by Luigi’s family (see Table 4 p. 78), in which Luigi is a single father. His children were born in Calgary, while the children of the other three families spent the first few years of their childhood in Italy, coming to Calgary at kindergarten or primary school level. The reason for including Luigi’s family, despite slight variations in comparison with the others, lies in my interest in seeing how a single parent can manage, by himself, the language socialization of his children, and what differences and similarities with the other families could emerge in relation to the children being born in Italy or in Canada. Any difference or similarity among the cases might lead to advance some possible hypothesis that might be tested in future studies. As Yin (1989) argues, case selection and sampling might change during the course of the study as long as the purpose and the objective of the study are not changed to fit the new case.
Context and Background Information of the Families

Table 1: Anna and Nicola’s Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Members</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Year of Immigration</th>
<th>Number of Years in Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna (Mother)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicola (Father)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella (Daughter)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulmine (Son)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anna and Nicola’s family arrived in Calgary at the end of 2009 from Italy and before coming to Canada, used to live in a town in the North East of Italy along the Adriatic coast of the Italian region, Emilia Romagna. Nicola was originally from a city in that same region, while Anna was born in Rome, but spent a good part of her life in Milan, in the North of Italy, in the Italian region of Lombardia.

Both Anna and Nicola were 47 years old at the time of the interview. Anna has a degree in Chemical Engineering from the Polytechnic of Milan, while Nicola took his degree in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Bologna. Both of them successfully took extra exams in Alberta to obtain the suitable qualifications to practise the profession of engineering in Alberta. Nicola also obtained qualifications that allow him to work as a project manager in Alberta. Both of them had the chance to learn English before coming to Canada through private courses and at university in Italy.
Anna and Nicola have been both working as engineers for the same Italian oil company, which, over the last five years, has started to invest in Alberta and sends employees and their families to live and work here in Alberta, often for an undefined period of time, as in the case of Nicola and Anna. Despite the company’s plans, Anna and Nicola specified to me that their desire was to experience life abroad and were very pleased by the opportunity offered by the company to come and live in Calgary for a while.

As for the children, Isabella was 13 years old at the time of the interview and was attending Grade 8, while Fulmine was 10 and was attending Grade 4. In Italy, Isabella attended the beginning of Grade 5, while Fulmine only the beginning of Grade 1. When they were in Italy, they had a nanny from England, so that the children could learn the English language.

As for their visits back to Italy, the family manages to go back at least once year, but they complained that it is no more than two or three weeks. The parents also lamented the fact that the grandparents are unable to travel and therefore cannot visit them. They try, however, to Skype with the grandparents at least once a week.
Table 2: Thea’s Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Members</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Year of Immigration</th>
<th>Number of Years in Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thea (Mother)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>2005 (From 07/2007 to 09/2008 in Italy)</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Not Interviewed</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>2005 (From 07/2007 to 09/2008 in Italy)</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica (Daughter)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>2005 (From 07/2007 to 09/2008 in Italy)</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin (Son)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>2005 (From 07/2007 to 09/2008 in Italy)</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos (Son)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>2005 (From 07/2007 to 09/2008 in Italy)</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thea’s family arrived in Canada in 2005, where they stayed until July 2007. Afterwards, they returned, briefly, to Italy, where they remained until September 2008 because of the husband’s job. Finally, they returned to Calgary, where they settled and have been living since then. The family moved to Canada mainly because of the husband’s job, and so far the family does not plan to go back to Italy. At the moment, they feel that Italy cannot offer any stable future, especially for the children. This is mainly because of
the difficult economic situation that Italy has been facing over the last years, as pointed out by Thea.

Before arriving to Canada, Thea and her family were living in Italy. Both Thea and her husband come from the same city and have a high educational background. Thea’s husband holds a PhD, while Anna holds two Master degrees from Italy.

As for the children, Monica, the youngest one, spent most of her life in Canada. She was only about one year old when she first arrived and had no exposure to the Italian education system. Carlos is the oldest one and managed to attend Grades 1, 2, and 3 in Italy. Then, he attended Grades 4 and 5 in Canada. When they had the one-year break in Italy, Carlos attended Grade 6 in Italy. Benjamin arrived in Canada when he was 5 years old and only attended Grade 3 in Italy during the break they had.

The family seems to struggle to go back to Italy regularly. At the time of the interview the last time they had visited Italy had been two years previously. Thea mentioned how difficult it is for her to get time off for some holidays. Besides, she pointed out, the two oldest sons have now their needs and no longer want to spend the holidays with the parents. However, at least once a week, they call their grandparents in Italy.
Table 3: Sara and Diego’s Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Members</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Year of Immigration</th>
<th>Number of Years in Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sara (Mother)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Professional Stager</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diego (Father)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josha (Son)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domenico (Son)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sara and Diego’s family arrived in Fort McMurray in August 2010 and lived there until August 2012, when they moved to Calgary where they have been living since then. Before coming to Canada, they used to live in Rome, where both parents lived for more than 20 years. When Diego was a child, he also spent some time in Israel with his family, where English at some point, became his main language.

Sara and Diego initially arrived in Canada through Diego’s job as an engineer for an Italian company, which had projects in Alberta. However Diego managed to obtain another job directly with a Canadian company, along with all the qualifications required to work as an engineer in Alberta. Their intention is to live in Canada permanently, and they specifically chose Calgary for the quality of life they perceived to be quite high.

Sara has also a degree in Engineering from Italy and she works now in Calgary as a professional home stager in charge of making private properties aesthetically more
attractive for the real estate market. She mentioned how she was never actually interested in pursuing a career in engineering and once in Calgary took a course to become a professional home stager, a job that she enjoys and allows her flexibility with her family life.

As for the children, at the time of interview, Domenico was attending Grade 3, while Josha, Grade 1. They both started primary school in Canada, with no experience of formal schooling in Italy.

Thus far the family has managed to go back to Italy once a year, but Sara mentioned to me how their intention is now not to return to Italy for the next four or five years. This is for financial reasons, having just bought a new house. For this family as well, the grandparents are quite present in their life. They regularly try to Skype with them, at least every two weeks, and the grandparents intend to regularly visit the family in Calgary. A visit was indeed planned for a few months after my interview.
Table 4: Luigi’s Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Members</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Year of Immigration</th>
<th>Number of Years in Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luigi (Father)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>1998 (From 2003 to 2005 in Italy)</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francy (Daughter)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Born in Calgary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elena (Daughter)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Born in Calgary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Luigi arrived in Calgary in September 1998 to work in the research field. In 2003, after a few years in Calgary, he returned to Italy, where he had been living since birth. However, he missed Canada and after one year and a half in Italy, he finally decided to return to Calgary, where he settled and obtained a more stable professional position.

As for the children, at the time of the interview, Francy was 9 years old and attending Grade 4, while Elena was 7 years old and attending Grade 2. Contrary to the children of the other three families, Francy and Elena were born in Canada and have been living in Calgary since birth.

The family visits Italy at least twice a year and relatives visit quite regularly. During my visit, the children’s maternal grandfather, was indeed there.

*The Researcher and the Families*

As for my personal relations with the four Italian families, except for Thea’s family that I knew before starting my Master programme, I met the other three families only for research-related matters and I did not know them before. I had the opportunity, however, to
informally meet Diego and Sara’s family a couple of months after their interview at an informal occasion during Canada Day.

Moreover, as for my personal background, I arrived in Calgary in 2009 from Italy, where I was born and raised, like the parents of the families under study. From this perspective I could argue I “belong” to the same group and generation as these parents. I, as well, arrived in Calgary in recent years for family and for professional reasons. The fact that I belong to the same group as my participants, at least that of the parents, has brought me advantages and disadvantages during the research process.

One of the positive aspects of sharing the same personal, generational, and ethnic background was related to the possibility of easily understanding the language and culture of my participants without relying on interpreters or informants. The parents spoke to me in Italian, my first language, and the children, in some cases Italian, and in others English, a language which is also familiar to me because of my personal experiences in English-speaking countries. Fontana and Frey (2008) note that when the researcher is not a member of the same group under study, the lack of a shared language and sociocultural background can easily create misinterpretations. Moreover, interviews, like many other forms of communication, are based on tacit rules in the way they are handled (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982). These tacit rules are often socioculturally determined. Belonging to the same group helped me handle and manage the interviews with the families in a way that made them feel at ease and, at the same time, avoid intercultural misunderstandings or misleading answers (Fontana & Frey, 2008; Miller & Glassner, 2011).
Another advantage relates to the fact of being quite familiar with the context of the topic, as well as with the context surrounding the families. Because I come from Italy and I have been living in Calgary for few years, I felt I had enough background information of the field, which helped me analyse and interpret more thoroughly the data of the interviews and compensate for a lack of prolonged observation and engagement in the field (Creswell, 2013).

Nevertheless, it could be argued that such closeness to the context of the families of my study and the fact of belonging to the same group could create biases and assumptions, on my part, that could challenge the validity and credibility of my analysis and interpretation, preventing me from looking at the topic from other perspectives than just the ones offered by my participants. When I started this research, my positioning was indeed close to the ones of the family participants, in particular that of the parents, as I tended to reproduce similar discourses as theirs. One of my main initial assumptions was to reproduce purist and standard language ideologies in similar ways as the parents of the research. For example, the idea of speaking two or more languages in a perfect way, with no mistakes, without allowing code-switching, was considered by me to be normal. By code-switching is meant the alternation of two or more languages or language varieties within the same conversation and it is a common and normal practice in multilinguals speaking to other multilinguals (Grosjean, 2000; Roy & Galiev, 2011). I was not aware that in contexts, such as that of immigration, in languages in contact, especially for the children, language perfectionism and purism might be unrealistic and can undermine the confidence of the children in keeping all the languages (Grosjean, 2000; Roy, 2013).
Another assumption relates to the relations with the Calgary Italian Club and Calgary Italian School. Similar to the parents of the study, my initial tendency, especially as soon as I arrived in Calgary, was to consider these two institutions and their members as belonging to a generation which was “backward” and “old”, who could not speak a “proper” Italian or only the dialect. I was applying negative judgments, simplifying the historical and political contexts behind their history, and more importantly, not appreciating the sociolinguistic and cultural diversity Italy represents through these two institutions.

In order to develop a more nuanced and detached view of the topic, I was helped by the insights of critical sociolinguistics, as outlined in Chapter 3 (Blommaert, 2005, 2010; Heller, 2007; Woolard, 1998). Critical sociolinguistics forced me to go to the heart of the hidden process behind language ideologies and question whether that which is normal or common sense might hide a history of inequalities, focusing on the role of the sociocultural and historical contexts, which surround our interactions. This focus on an analysis based on different layers of contexts, as outlined by critical sociolinguistics, keeping in mind how people make sense of what they say, why, and where it comes from, forced me to look at the topic from different angles, enlarging my perspectives and going back to the history of the Italian language, as well as of the Italian immigration. This approach also led me to analyse the community of Italians in Calgary from different perspectives other than just mine or of my family participants, such as that of the Calgary Italian School and Calgary Italian Club. Indeed, I first analysed the websites’ documents of these two institutions and
finally, I formally interviewed them, thereby obtaining a triangulation of perspectives (Creswell, 2013; Duff, 2008a).

Moreover, case study methodology has been often criticized for containing subjective biases more than any other methodologies (Flyvbjerg, 2006). However, it is indeed this in-depth immersion in the context of the topic of research, as required by case study methodology, that gradually helped me question and challenge such taken-for-granted assumptions (Flyvbjerg, 2006). As Flyvbjerg (2006) claims, “the proximity to reality, which the case study entails, and the learning process that it generates for the researcher will often constitute a prerequisite for advanced understanding” (p. 236).

Nevertheless, despite the above mentioned attempts at keeping a detached view, for example through the help of sociolinguistics and a triangulation of perspectives, some of the ideas and assumptions I had before starting the research have inevitably influenced, to some extent, the research process. Indeed, my personal attachment to the Italian heritage and the desire to valorize the Italian language at family or educational levels have led me to write a thesis that directly or indirectly support this view and encourage, for example, the maintenance of the Italian language from one generation to the next one.

Data Collection

The data collection took place between March and May 2013 and involved mainly the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews with the four families along with observation during the home visits scheduled for the interviews. Each visit lasted approximately two to three hours and took place at the home of each family. In November 2013, interviews were also held with the Calgary Italian Club and the Calgary Italian School.
Interviews

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out at the families’ homes with children and parents to obtain both perspectives on the topic. The structure of the interview was based on four parts with a total of 34 questions for the parents and 23 questions for the children (see Appendices A and B for questions). The first part aimed at obtaining some background information on the personal history of the family. The second part of the questions concerned the family’s perceptions and positioning, vis-à-vis Italy, the Italian language, English, and Canada. The third part of questions aimed at looking at the language practices and choices of the family. Finally, the fourth part focussed on questions about the role of external factors (e.g., the Calgary Italian Club, the Calgary Italian School, and the education system) on the transmission of the Italian language to the children, from the perspectives of both the children and the parents. These four domains were applied both for questions to parents and to children. Depending on the replies and on the situation of each family, not all questions, as outlined in Appendices A and B, were asked.

Each family was interviewed once, and each interview was also tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview with Thea and her children took place on the afternoon of March 17, 2013, from 2:00 - 4:30 p.m. The interview with Sara and Diego and their children occurred on March 22, 2013, from 4:00 - 6:30 p.m. The interview with Anna and Nicola and their children took place on the afternoon of May 5, 2013, from 2:00 p.m. until approximately 6:00 p.m. Finally, Luigi and his children were interviewed on April 6, 2013, from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
The interviews with the Calgary Italian School and the Calgary Italian Club were held respectively on November 16th, 2013, and on November 18th, 2013, with one representative for each institution, with a total of 11 questions for the Calgary Italian Club and 12 questions for the Calgary Italian School (see Appendices C and D for the specific questions). The focus of these interviews was more on the content, on the whats of the interviews, even though attention to the hows, that is, for example, how the interviewees were making sense of what was said and why, has been also paid in the analysis (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011). In this case, as these two institutions were neither the focus, nor the main participants of the research, a verbatim transcription of the interviews was not carried out. However, interviews were tape recorded, and a semi-structured model of interview was followed, allowing the interviewees to freely elaborate the content of their answers.

Observations

Although observation was not the main method of the research, during the home visits for the interviews, my attention focussed on observing and taking notes on the language practices I could notice during my visits, the family members’ interactions, what language was used, how, with whom, and when. Even though such observations were limited to the few hours spent for the interview and were not carried out in a systematic way as expected by an ethnographic study, they still proved to be valuable in providing me with contextual information on the language practices of the families, complementing the interview accounts. Soon after each interview, I also recorded all the observations, impressions, and reflections that arose during the home visits.
Websites Documents

After having interviewed all four families, it became obvious that I needed to gather a more nuanced and in-depth knowledge of the context in which the families were situated and to also obtain the perspectives of the main institutions in Calgary that support the promotion and maintenance of the Italian language. Therefore, I began by analysing the websites’ documents of the Calgary Italian Club and the Calgary Italian School to complement the analysis and interpretation of the interviews with the families.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

In the process of making sense of data and finally reporting the findings in writing, Wolcott (1994) distinguishes among three processes that I found useful in approaching and managing the data of the present research: description, analysis, and interpretation.

By description, Wolcott (1994) refers to the reporting of findings by remaining as close as possible to the data. Questions such as, “what is going on here” (p.12), guide a descriptive account. Analysis represents the next step and involves the identification of key factors and relationships among the data (Wolcott, 1994). “How things work and why” are, for example, some leading questions of analysis (Wolcott, 1994, p.12). According to Wolcott (1994), interpretation goes some steps further than analysis and might be more speculative, going beyond factual data. Questions such as, “How does it all mean?” and “what is to be made of it all?” dominate interpretation (Wolcott, 1994, p.12). Along similar lines, according to Creswell (2013), interpretation implies going beyond the main codes and themes developed from the data, linking our intuition and questioning to the existing literature on the field.
Although boundaries among these three phases, where one starts and the other ends, might be blurry at times, keeping them in mind has been valuable in organising and making sense of my data from the start (Wolcott, 1994). Moreover, during my research, data analysis was an inductive process, whereby as mentioned by Merriam (1998), data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously, and “analysis begins with the first interview, the first document read” (p.151). This is what occurred during my research process. In that perspective it was helpful for me to keep, from the beginning, a research journal, as suggested by Duff (2008a), where I could note my first impressions, reflections, details, emerging themes, short summaries of observations and home visits, all such steps contributing gradually to a more refined analysis of the data. Furthermore, the detailed transcription of the interview data was another important phase of data analysis, which helped me reflect on possible recurring themes and interpretations of data (Creswell, 2013; Duff, 2008a).

As for the organisation and reporting of the findings in the study, I first carried out what Merriam (1998) refers to a “within-case analysis” (p.194), where I described and analysed the findings for each family as a case in itself. This within-case analysis implies the detailed description and analysis of each family within three domains in line with the research questions: (a) issues of identities and ideologies in relation to Italy and Canada, (b) attitudes, beliefs, ideas around Italian and English, and (c) the language socialization practices within the family and the impact on the heritage language maintenance.

In the Analysis and Discussion chapter, I carried out what Merriam (1998) refers to a “cross-case analysis” (p.194), whereby a more refined analysis, as well as an
interpretation and discussion of the recurring themes across the cases is provided. As Yin (1994) observes, in the cross-case analysis, “the researcher attempts to build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in their details” (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p.195). In the identification of the recurring themes, I followed Creswell (2013)’s approach by identifying key concepts and ideas on a first reading of the data. This led me gradually to classify and interpret data within a list of tentative codes that were finally classified into three main themes, which try to answer my initial research questions.

*Procedures in Data Collection and Analysis*

Firstly, I contacted each family by phone, whereby I had the chance to explain to my potential participants the content and purpose of my research. After the phone call, I sent the families an email along with the consent forms approved by the Research Ethics Board. This step was taken so that the families could have further information on the research and better acknowledge in writing the implications of the research. When the families consented to be interviewed, an appointment at their home was taken. Even though interviews were tape recorded, as mentioned in the previous Observations section, I was taking notes during the interviews in order to note down any observations that could be relevant for this research. Soon after each interview ended, I also wrote down my personal reflections and impressions on each visit. Finally, in order not to lose any details which could have been potentially useful for the analysis, I transcribed the interviews soon after the interviews ended.
As for the specific steps which I took in the codification process, data were codified following the procedures as indicated by Creswell (2013). Before proceeding to the actual coding of the data, I started with a first reading of the data reflecting and noting down any major ideas or thoughts that emerged (Creswell, 2013). Secondly, I read several times the data, breaking them down into tentative codes (Creswell, 2013). About 20 tentative codes were originally developed, which were gradually combined and reduced into the three main themes presented in this thesis, with one theme, “Purism and Standard Language Ideologies”, further divided into four sub-themes.
CHAPTER FIVE: ANNA AND NICOLA’S FAMILY

“When we are in a multicultural environment, one speaks the predominant language that is English” – Anna

Background Information of Interview

The interview started with the children, Isabella and Fulmine, followed by their parents. During the interview, although most of the children’s answers seem to reproduce similar discourses as their parents, as will be noticed in the following sections they still had the chance to speak first and elaborate their thoughts independently. In the interview with the children, mainly Isabella, who seemed to most enjoy answering the questions, provided me with detailed explanations. Fulmine, probably because of his young age—10 years old—seemed to be less engaged. Although I posed the questions separately to both, most of the times Fulmine had the tendency to provide me with a similar answer as his sister. The parents were also present at the interview with their children and they occasionally intervened to clarify some questions for the children or to add some extra information not provided by the children, without being too invasive.

As for all the other families, when the language used by the participants is Italian, a translation is provided for each excerpt. If the excerpts are presented only in English, this means that the participants were using English only in those occasions. I personally translated into English all Italian excerpts.

Issues of Identities and Ideologies

In this section, I analyse how parents and children position themselves in relation to Italy or Canada and what it means to be Italian now in their new situation, as well as any
related ideologies intertwined in their discourses. I will first present the parents’ positioning and then that of the children.

*The Parents’ Positioning*

When I asked Anna and Nicola what it means to be Italian now that they are in Canada, Nicola immediately communicated a sense of pride and attachment to his Italian roots. Despite the underlying lack of organisational skills in Italy in comparison to Canada, he felt that Italians can greatly contribute to Canada, especially in the employment sector. While referring to his identification with Italy, Nicola repeated the noun *pride* several times, especially with reference to his working field, where he felt very proud to be Italian. However, his sense of pride was not only limited to the work domain; Nicola also referred to the cultural and artistic aspects that Italy can offer compared to Canada.

Nonetheless, these positive attitudes, which Nicola displayed with regard to Italy and his Italian identity, were soon challenged by his wife, Anna, who showed a more controversial position. Soon after the above Nicola’s comments, I asked Anna the same question I asked her husband: What does it mean for you to be Italian now in Calgary? This was her answer:

*A: Ma, io non so, forse ho una percezione un po’ diversa, nel senso che da un lato quando sono venuta qui, il fatto di essere italiana mi ha fatto sentire in difficoltà, l’accento, quando qui, l’accento italiano, anche alla televisione, é preso abbastanza in giro ((Risate)).*  

Being Italian made her feel uneasy at the beginning of her stay in Calgary, and she was conscious of her Italian accent. She felt that the Italian accent is often ridiculised,
especially on TV. Later on, she mentioned that no matter how well she knew English, the fact of having an accent was perceived as a difficulty. When I asked her why she felt that way, if it was just her impression or she had received some specific comments, she replied that her children have been mocking her for speaking English with an Italian accent. Soon afterwards, Nicola challenged her negative comments by stating that her English is very good and that the only one who speaks bad English is Nicola. This attitude, which puts the learning of a language as being either good or bad against some accent-free standards, seems to reflect a perfectionist language ideology, where no matter how well one can speak a language, a non-native speaker will always be in a disadvantage (Lippi-Green, 1997; Llurda, 2009). Soon afterwards, this attitude was also mentioned by Nicola, who pointed out that having an Italian accent, in the working field, might be a limit. According to Nicola, there are working situations, where it is better that one “dimostra di essere canadese / proves to be Canadian,” and for him an English language without an accent might be of a help. The idea of “proving to be Canadian” seems to be therefore associated with speaking the English language without an Italian accent.

It is relevant to see how, in the above conversation when I asked Anna about what it means for her to be Italian now she is in Calgary, she immediately raised the issue of her Italian accent as a problem. Apparently, her answer does not seem to relate to my question. What I am beginning to see is that being of a certain nationality or belonging to a certain group can become a language issue, and in the case of Anna and Nicola, the perfect knowledge of the language, which must be accent-free, can be a marker of ethno-community identity (Bourdieu, 1991; Lippi-Green, 1997). Nonetheless, Anna specified
that she had those feelings only at the beginning of her stay in Calgary. In the end, she managed to challenge these initial issues by relying on her perception that Canada is a multicultural country with people from every part of the world and that everyone has an accent. This idea was expressed also by some of the other participants, where, in Canada, diversity is seen as the norm and is welcomed. Such positioning almost contradicts what she mentioned earlier about the accent being an issue. However, soon afterwards she felt the need to further clarify that she never felt particularly proud of being Italian, as Nicola did; instead she was happy to leave Italy. When she left Italy, Anna almost wanted to forget being Italian and she claimed, “Stavo male in quel momento in Italia / I was feeling bad in that moment in Italy.” She wanted to go abroad and experience something different. In her perceptions, Canada was a country of possibilities, optimism, and diversity, in contrast to Italy.

Although feeling proud of being Italian, Nicola also supported Anna’s enthusiasm about Canada, claiming that Canada is the country where everything is possible and achievable. The interview continued with Anna and Nicola highlighting enthusiastically the positive aspects of Canada, which Italy does not have: the strong economy, the professional and job opportunities, an honest job market, and a meritocratic society.

However, despite these positive attitudes and enthusiasm towards Canada, continuing with the interview, Anna and Nicola also specified to me that they deeply miss Italy. While Italy, in the perceptions of Anna and Nicola, is synonymous with complications and lack of professional opportunities, at the same time the country is synonymous with family bonds, art, culture, beauty, which they deeply miss, illustrating
ambivalent attitudes. Anna specifically mentioned that they deeply miss the grandparents, whose role is perceived to be vital for the children’s future development. Another aspect they miss about Italy is the perceived lack of cultural stimuli in Calgary, as mentioned by Nicola at the beginning of the interview. All of this attachment to family and to the aesthetical and cultural sides of Italy is so strong that they even question their choice of leaving or staying in Canada. It is interesting to note that at the beginning of the interview when I asked them if they would like to go back to Italy one day, they initially answered “No”, that for the whole family and for the children it was better to stay in Calgary, because of more opportune professional opportunities for everyone, but later in the conversation, their position slightly changed, whereby Anna pointed out that actually for them leaving Italy forever is a difficult choice and that they have not made a final decision about staying.

*The Children’s Positioning*

When I asked what Italy represents for Isabella and Fulmine, the first reference they made was with their parents and their family back in Italy, “the casa/ the home,” because the “radici della famiglia/ family roots” are still there. This positioning seems to be in line with the parents’ positioning, where Italy is strongly associated with their family roots. Furthermore, when asked what they like and do not like about Italy, like her parents, Isabella made a reference to the weak economic position of Italy as a negative aspect, but soon afterwards she mentioned her appreciation for the historical and cultural sides Italy can still offer. The love for the Italian history and culture was raised again indirectly, when I asked what they like and do not like about Canada. For Isabella, Canada represents a
country of opportunity, a noun that is repeated several times in her interview when referring to Canada. This is an aspect that was voiced on several occasions by her parents as well. However, Isabella again referred to history and a perceived lack of history in Canada and in the American continent in contrast to the historical background of Europe. When I asked the same question of Fulmine, the first word that came to his mind was also opportunity and he also made some references to the artistic side of Italy, mentioning that in Canada there are no art works, like the Coliseum.

The children’s appreciation for Italy and its cultural heritage was expressed on two other occasions—first, when I asked them if they would have liked to have more opportunities to share something about Italy, and secondly, when I asked what their friends and teachers think about their cultural heritage:

I: Probably ((Incomprehensible speech)). Yes, because also I like, I like very much talking ((Incomprehensible speech)) about Italy with my friends because I find that it fascinates me so much that I need to let everybody know where I am from and the history of where I am from.

The above excerpts highlight how Isabella feels very proud of her Italian roots, which she is very happy to share with anybody. Then, I asked her if she had received any comments from friends and teachers about her Italian background. At this point, she mentioned that she is now studying the Renaissance at school and she is very proud of the contribution of her country in that historical period. I asked more specifically if she received any negative comments:

I: Almost ((Incomprehensible speech)) never, no, because the school, everybody is from somewhere different, everybody at least knows two languages, so nobody ever, like, judges based on where you are from usually.
Isabella seems to perceive her school environment as diverse and open minded; she feels that her Italian heritage is accepted and can easily cohabit with any other ethnic group or nationality.

However, despite this sense of pride about Italy, when I asked more specifically about the intention of going back to Italy one day, if they would like it, the answer was more of a “probably.” Italy is seen as a point of reference, but not necessarily a place to settle. The same applies to Canada. Isabella expressed a desire to travel, see new places, and not to settle somewhere specific. This seems to remind me of a hybrid attitude, whereby their pride and attachment to Italy can cohabit with other possibilities, at least at the moment.

**Language Attitudes, Values, and Ideologies**

This section aims at describing how the parents and their children position themselves more specifically with regard to the different languages, what attitudes, how they value them, and what ideologies could be hidden behind what is said. As in the previous section, I will first outline the parents’ perspectives and secondly, those of the children.

*The Parents’ Positioning*

When I asked Anna and Nicola how they value the Italian language now that they are in Calgary, Anna seemed to greatly value the Italian language, especially for family communication:

*R: La lingua italiana che valore ha per voi adesso?*
*A: Ma::, enorme, nel senso che comunque é la lingua ((Risate)) che psicologicamente*
In the above excerpts, Anna and Nicola express a strong need to use Italian at home. They also seem to take for granted the fact that the English language dominates their children’s communication. According to the parents, English is the most natural language for the children, as they think in English, while for the parents, it is the Italian language that plays such role.

In order to further understand what value they grant to the Italian language, I asked what advantages the children would have knowing the Italian language, and again references to the cultural heritage of Italy were made, as in the previous section on identity issues. According to them, the Italian language gives access to a cultural heritage through books, films, or documentaries; that is considered by them a “privilegio / privilege.”

As for the value they grant to the English language, the positioning of the parents is particularly evident to me when I asked them what language the family tends to use in the presence of other people, who do not speak Italian. English is the language they prefer to
use among each other, in presence of non-Italian speakers, but significantly Anna mentioned that she feels the pressure to switch to English at work with her Italian colleagues, because according to her, non-Italian speakers at work do not appreciate the use of Italian, highlighting a nexus of power between Italian and English, where, in the market of languages of the workplace, English is perceived by Anna to be more powerful in status and prestige (Bourdieu, 1991). When I asked why it would be an issue to use Italian, even among Italian colleagues, Anna and Nicola think that their non-Italian colleagues would feel excluded from the conversation, and more importantly, Anna added as follows:

*A: È anche comprensibile sinceramente, anzi cerchiamo di limitare il più possibile ((L’uso dell’italiano)), cioè quando siamo in un ambiente multiculturalè si parla la lingua predominante che è l’inglese.*

A: It is also comprehensible honestly, actually we try to limit as much as possible ((The use of Italian)), that is when we are in a multicultural environment one speaks the predominant language that is English.

Italian might be the language of a great culture and beauty or family bonds, but English is considered to be the “predominante / predominant” language in a multicultural environment. From the above discourses, it seems that a multicultural environment cannot, therefore, be multilingual and cannot go hand in hand with linguistic diversity. In the above excerpts, *multicultural* seems to be associated with the monolingual and dominant status of English (Roy & Barrett, submitted). Hence, diversity from a linguistic point of view is perceived more as a problem than a resource (Bourdieu, 1991). However, the issue is not so much if what they say is true or not; their comments seem also to be a reflection of dominant language ideologies in Italy that grant prestige to the English language, as mentioned in the Context chapter (Taglialatela, 2011). When people travel, they bring with
them ideologies from their place of origin based on their personal trajectories (Blommaert, 2005).

The Children’s Positioning

When I asked what language they like the most to speak and the one they feel more at ease, the children’s answer was “probably English.”

I: Now, probably English, because I have to speak it, because you know, when you go to school, when you go out, it’s the language that now I am using the most. But I feel like, it depends on which country you are at, for example if I went back to Italy, my main language would be Italian, so I would be speaking that the most. So it really depends on where I am living.
R: E per te? ((And for you?).)
F: (.) Come la Isabella. ((Like Isabella)).
R: Ok. Anche per te ((Also for you)), you too, English, it’s more comfortable, ok. E quindi come vi sentite con l’italiano adesso? ((And how do you feel now with Italian then?).)
I: Right now, it’s just the language I would speak really at home to communicate, to keep kind of the roots and keep our language, because I would never want to lose Italian, because you know it’s my home language. Yeah.

Therefore, although Italian is the home language that they do not want to lose, English is the language they feel most comfortable with to speak. English becomes the most comfortable language, because it is the language of the country they live in, according to them. If they were living in Italy, it would be Italian, highlighting a bilingual use of the languages based on the different contexts and needs (Grosjean, 2000). Therefore, I asked the children how they feel about their Italian at the moment and how they evaluate it:

I: It’s not as strong as it was before. For example, you know, like verb conjugation, or different vocabularies. It’s getting harder for me already, because I am forgetting, because in English it’s not, you don’t do that, so I am kind of losing those (. ehm, that learning experience that in Italy is very valued, like I remember the verb conjugation was so strict. I spent like the whole grade just repeating, repeating, repeating to the teacher, and then interrogation and it was very strict.
Isabella seems to place her evaluation against the standard Italian as imposed by the Italian school system (Bourdieu, 1991). She even made references to an idea of “forgetting” and “losing a learning experience that in Italy is very valued.” Against the language standards imposed by the Italian education system, there is no place for compromise or other more nuanced perspectives: The Italian language is getting lost, even if it is still valued for Isabella as her home language. Moreover, Isabella complained that her parents “correct me all the time because I am not speaking properly.” In this case, the word *properly* is used to describe the best way to speak the language according to the standards imposed by the specific norms of the Italian school system and society in general (Bourdieu, 1991). When I asked the parents more specifically how they see the linguistic future of their children, Anna even forecasted a “totale disastro / total disaster” referring to the tendency of the children to use more and more English at home despite the children’s desire to keep the Italian language. This is described in more detail in the next section on language socialization practices.

**Language Socialization Practices and Heritage Language Maintenance**

In the previous sections, I have reported those findings that illustrate how the family members position and identify themselves against their country of origin and Canada as well as against the languages involved. However, how do such perspectives and positioning translate into language socialization practices, language choices and uses in the family? What language ideologies are embedded in such choices and practices and what could be the impact on the linguistic future of the children?
When I asked Anna and Nicola what languages they use at home, they initially claimed that they tend to use Italian between the two of them. This is also what I observed during my visit of four hours. The two of them used mainly Italian, also with me. Moreover, at least during my stay, no dialect was used. It must be noted that the parents come from two different regions of Italy, and any use of the dialects would have made the communication difficult to understand between me and the parents, and also between the two parents.

As for the languages they use with the children, the parents claimed that sometimes they use English because the children speak in English, but based on their claims, the whole family easily switches to Italian. At least during my visit I observed that the parents had the tendency to speak Italian with the children. However, Anna also complained that the children have the tendency to speak English. Indeed, what I could observe during my visit was the tendency of the children to use more English than Italian. Very interestingly during the interview with the two children, Isabella and Fulmine started with Italian, but after about three minutes of conversation, Isabella switched to English only, and she maintained English through the remainder of the interview. Contrary to what is claimed by Anna, at least during my stay, I did not observe that the children switched easily to Italian with me. Despite my attempts to ask almost all questions in Italian, they kept answering to me in English. Although I did not ask them specifically why they kept using English, despite the opportunity to speak Italian with me, their attitude reminded me of what Isabella mentioned earlier that English is the language she feels more comfortable with and more at ease, while she feels that she is losing Italian.

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What, therefore, are the reactions of the parents about the tendency of the children to use English? When I asked what normally occurred, they claimed to insist that the children switch to Italian. However, during my visit, the parents never reacted against the use of English from the children despite their claim to do so. After all, my visit could have represented an occasion to practise such Italian. On such an occasion, it could be argued, that by not reacting to the use of English, the parents indirectly socialize the children into an ideology that tends to give more space to English, despite claiming to greatly value the Italian language. Moreover, the children speak English only among each other, as I could observe and as it was also confirmed to me by the parents and by the same children.

Another issue that emerged and that seemed to be in line with socialization practices that might indirectly discourage the use of Italian, is the tendency to correct directly the children, highlighting the need for a perfect language:

N: Sì, insistiamo, poi a volte li correggiamo anche perché sbagliano i verbi. N: Yes, we insist, then sometimes we correct them, because they get the verbs wrong.
N: ((Risate)). N: ((Laughs)).

This aspect was raised earlier by Isabella, who mentioned how she does not like to be corrected all the time, claiming that the parents do that because she does not speak proper Italian according to them. It should be noted that direct corrections might be felt by the children as devaluing, and, instead of feeling encouraged to continue with the language, they might feel challenged by the high level required by the parents; eventually, this approach might indirectly lead them to shift to English instead (Garrett, 2011; Riley, 2011). Moreover, based on studies on the acquisition of Italian as a second language (Ramat,
2007), the use of the subjunctive, as mentioned in the above excerpts, is the last verbal mode to be learnt by the most advanced learners and it normally indexes a high level of Italian knowledge. However, in the spoken language, the subjunctive is regressing and as Durante (1981) claims “the subjunctive is a superfluous luxury, and therefore its regression is explained by being a redundant structure”\(^{10}\) (as cited in Berruto, 1998, p.71). Again the standards expected by the parents might be felt to be quite high by the children.

As for specific situations that involve the use of Italian, the parents mentioned that Italian is used with the grandparents at least once a week, when they speak on Skype, underlying the importance of Italian as a language to keep the family roots. Moreover, when I asked when Italian is used at home, I was told mainly at dinnertime, when all the family gathers for supper and also for school related issues. However, when I asked Isabella about specific activities such as reading or watching films, she prefers English, because she claimed to find Italian “harder” than English now. Also Fulmine confirmed to me that he is not involved in any specific activity that involves the use of Italian.

When I asked parents if they use specific strategies to maintain the Italian language or if they teach them Italian in a structured way, for example reading or writing in Italian, the parents claimed that they mainly rely on speaking Italian at home and a little bit of TV. Anna complained that they do not have the time to invest more on the Italian language at home, despite claiming that they want to emphasise Italian. This, again, sends a mixed message, where Italian is valued in theory, but not worth a great investment of time from

\(^{10}\) The original text in Italian is, “L’uso del congiuntivo é un lusso superfluo, e pertanto la sua decadenza si spiega in quanto struttura ridondante” (as cited in Berruto, 1998, p.71).
parents in terms of structured activities at home. On a couple of occasions, Anna specified that the Italian language is a “lingua estremamente complessa / extremely complex language,” and asking them to work on it, for example with literacy activities, is too much considering the activities the children already have. By displaying this approach, the parents might indirectly socialize the children into the idea that the Italian language is a complex language. However, as seen before, the idea of a “complex” language tends to be set against high standards, whereby the children receive frequent direct corrections they do not like, because they cannot speak it “properly.” Against such high standards, keeping the Italian language becomes an almost impossible task, where even the parents feel that they have to surrender.

The tendency to favour the knowledge of a perfect language is also shown when the parents had to decide if their children should attend the Saturday Italian School. I asked them if they had considered the Calgary Italian School, considering the parents’ claimed interest to do something for the Italian language, but they decided not to, because they said that the level of Italian taught in the school is “basso / low” and is not suitable for children, like Isabella and Fulmine, who have Italian as their mother tongue. Having interviewed one of the representatives of the Calgary Italian School to gather more information on the activities of the school, it was confirmed to me that the Italian classes they offer are within a second language curriculum (personal communication, November 16, 2013). It could be argued, therefore, that the situation of Fulmine and Isabella is slightly different, as Italian was their first language before arriving to Calgary. However, during the interview with the Calgary Italian School it was also mentioned to me that the school can still offer valuable
help to children from Italy, who after few years start to struggle with the Italian language (personal communication, November 16, 2013). Nonetheless, despite the complaints from the parents to keep the Italian language with the children—Isabella claiming to have difficulties in speaking Italian or reading Italian books—the Calgary Italian School is not considered a viable resource by these parents. Moreover, as the school is on Saturdays only, they mentioned that Saturday is not a good day, because they want to keep it for other activities. Anna, reporting the advice of Nicola, stated that it was better for the children to do something else instead of “fargli fare male l’italiano / making them do a bad Italian.”

The refusal to consider the Calgary Italian School as an option to keep the Italian language, despite the “total disaster” as foreseen by Anna, might indirectly socialize the children into the idea that only standard and perfect Italian are acceptable, legitimizing at the same time that standard. It is better to do something else rather than learning a “bad” Italian, as claimed by Nicola. Once again, aiming at such high standards might indirectly lead to a linguistic future for the children, where Italian can hardly cohabit with English. The issue is not so much that the children should attend the school or not; it is more the parents’ attitude, what they say, and how it is said, in relation to the school, that indexes a purist ideology that can be conveyed to the children, setting certain standards on how a language should be spoken. Of course it could be argued that children can react against such attitudes and challenge all of that (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004), but still the initial premises imposed by the parents with their purist attitudes might imperil an easy and peaceful cohabitation of different languages in the children’s mind, unless the two languages are perfectly spoken (Garrett, 2011).
In the end, Anna suggested that she would have liked to see an international Italian school sponsored by the Italian embassy and government and she also expressed her deep disappointment with the lack of support from the Italian embassy as far as having Italian education in Calgary. The Italian government and the Italian education system seem to represent, in the eyes of Anna and Nicola, the only institutions that legitimize the teaching of Italian and how it should be taught. It is as if the standard Italian spoken in Italy is seen as the reference, the norm, against which the Italian taught at the Calgary Italian School is compared, and value judgments, such as “bad” or “low level”, are applied (Blommaert, 2005; Bourdieu, 1991).

Finally, in terms of socialization practices, I also asked what their relations are with the Italian community in Calgary that is represented mainly by the Calgary Italian Club. The participation in their activities might highlight some elements with regard to how parents socialize their children in terms of Italian maintenance. Anna and Nicola do not seem to show a great interest and, interestingly, at the end of the interview, when I asked them if they would like to add something, Nicola felt the need to make some comments with regard to the Italian community in Calgary, referring to the previous generations of Italians:

N: La comunità, diciamo, si riferisce agli anni Cinquanta e quindi é:: (. ) li ho visti molto ((Enfasi su molto)) fermi ecco, anche per come erano vestiti ((Risate)). È un po’ buffo se uno li guarda:: Quindi diciamo é come se il tempo si fosse fermato.

N: The community refers to the fifties and so:: (. ) I saw them very ((Emphasis on very)) stuck, also for the way they were dressed ((Laughs)). It’s a little bit funny, if one looks at them :: So, it’s like the time had stopped.
Nicola continued, adding that the new generations should gather and create new activities for the Italian community, such as a band or a choir. Anna reminded him that the Calgary Italian Club already has a choir, but Nicola laughed and added that their choir is “old style”. Instead, a network of “persone, appunto un filino, fresche/ people, let’s say a little bit fresh” should initiate such activities. Nicola seemed to use quite a sarcastic tone expressing how, in his opinion, the Calgary Italian Club and the Italian community, with the exception of the new arrivals, represent an Italy that belongs to the past. The sarcastic tone used by Nicola in the final part of the interview clarifies a position in which he detaches himself from the previous generations of Italians, mainly associated by him with the Calgary Italian Club. This detachment, however, does not seem to me quite neutral. The use of a sarcastic tone suggests almost a sense of superiority, where two generations are juxtaposed. On the one hand, “the new arrivals”, the new generations, are fine; on the other hand, the generations participating in the events of the Calgary Italian Club are “old style” and lack “freshness.” As will be shown in the next excerpts, the other three families in the study, without necessarily using sarcasm, will also tend to establish a net division among generations—the new generation being perceived as more educated and speaking better Italian than the previous generations, who are apparently less educated and speak an Italian that contains dialectal interferences.
CHAPTER SIX: THEA’S FAMILY

“The Italian language is losing power, is losing some space also” – Thea

Background Information of Interview

The interview started with Thea and soon afterwards her children were interviewed. Thea was also present at the interview with her children, as per her request. She mentioned she does not often talk about language related topics and identity issues with them, so she would like to hear her children’s perspectives. During the interview, she intervened few times, mainly to help the youngest daughter Monica and add few comments to what the children mentioned during the interview. It was mainly Benjamin and Carlos, who provided me with the most elaborate responses. Monica, probably because of her young age—9 years old—seemed shyer and more reluctant to answer, but still some of her answers provided me with interesting insights on the topic. The father was not present at all during the interviews.

Like the case study of the previous family, the findings will be presented by analysing first the identity issues in play, secondly, language values and ideologies, and finally, the perspective will focus on the language socialization practices and their impact on Italian maintenance in the family.

Issues of Identities and Ideologies

The Parents’ Positioning

One of the first questions I asked at the beginning of the interview with Thea was what it means to be Italian for her now that she lives in Canada. There are three elements
that connect her with Italy and her being “Italian”. First of all, she made a reference to her specific history and origins; she claims, “sono italiana perché sono nata in Italia / I am Italian because I am born in Italy.” This answer underscores the link between Italian identity and the idea of territory and biological roots. Despite globalization, such identification seems to prove that the power of a state, in this case of the Italian state, in defining one’s identity is still strong and has historical and political reasons; it seems to be a legacy of the nationalist waves so strong at the end of the 19th century in Italy and in Europe, where one’s identity is constructed at the state level and defined only within its national territory (Blommaert, 2005, 2010; Bourdieu, 1991).

Soon afterwards, being Italian is immediately associated with ideas of Italy as a country of art, history, and culture:

T: L’essere italiana per me vuol dire, e:: (.) vuol dire più che altro:: (.) la cultura, diciamo questo interesse per la cultura, per l’arte, per:: la storia.  

T: Being Italian for me means, and:: (.) it means more than anything :: (.) the culture, let’s say this interest in the culture, in the art, in :: the history.

These are elements that were raised also by Anna and Nicola’s family. Finally, Thea made a specific reference to being Italian for family reasons. Being Italian implies a commitment to “mantenere i contatti con anche la mia famiglia, con quelle che sono le mie origini / keep the contacts also with my family, with my origins.”

This sense of belonging became even clearer when I asked if Thea intended to obtain the Canadian citizenship one day and she strongly said she has no intention to obtain it, at least for now. At the moment, the whole family has a Residence Permit, but they can potentially apply for the Canadian citizenship. Apparently, among the family, she seems to
be the only one who does not want to receive the Canadian citizenship. She does not feel Canadian and she still feels very homesick. According to her, having the Canadian citizenship only to obtain some practical benefits would be incoherent with her Italian identity. Although I did not ask her specifically why, this positioning reminds me of her previous comments, wherein she links her Italian identity to an idea of national territory, a legacy of the nationalist movements of the past, whereby the state was and can still be a “crucial actor” in defying who we are (Blommaert, 2005, p.219). From such a perspective, it would be challenging, therefore, to contemplate multiple identities. In an informal conversation, Thea mentioned to me that getting the Canadian citizenship would mean for her to “tradire/betray” Italy. At this point, one must note that according to the current legislation, an Italian person can have and maintain dual citizenship, Italian and Canadian (Ministero Affari Esteri, 2013). Therefore, obtaining the Canadian citizenship does not imply renouncing the Italian one. However, for Thea, her sense of an Italian identity and her homesick feelings seem to be so strong that no compromise is acceptable at the moment. At the same time, however, she is aware that going back to Italy cannot be an option, especially for the career options of her husband and also for the future of her children. Despite these homesick feelings, on a few occasions during the interview she still expressed her appreciation for the Canadian country and, in particular, for the education system that she admires in contrast to the Italian one.

We mentioned in the Context chapter how being Italian also needs to acknowledge the regional and local variety of the Italian sociocultural landscape (Stehl, 2005). We saw that Anna and Nicola come from two different regions of Italy, and their tendency is to
identify with a standard and purist ideology that surrounds Italy and its languages. In the case of Thea, the meaning she confers on Italy also emerges in her comments with regard to the Calgary Italian Club, as seen with the previous couple. I asked her what the family relations are with the Italian community in Calgary and she mentioned immediately her disappointment with the Calgary Italian Club:

*Thea: Quindi tutto questo Club d’Italiano non è proprio l’Italia, è proprio anzi se devo proprio essere sincera, l’impressione che ho avuto è che, quando sono andata là, è l’Italia, la Sicilia, che mio papà è siciliano, di quarant’anni fa, in Italia, perché adesso nemmeno la Sicilia è così. E quindi purtroppo per i giovani come noi, per le nuove emigrazioni, perché ormai l’emigrazione italiana è immigrazione di persone (. ) altamente diciamo con delle lauree, istruite, altamente istruite, qualificata e tutto e quindi non ci si trova in questi ambienti qua.*

T: So all this Italian Club is not really Italy, it is, actually, if I have to be honest, the impression I had, when I went there, it’s the Italy, the Sicily, because my father is Sicilian, of 40 years ago, in Italy, because not even Sicily is like that now. And, so unfortunately for young people like us, for the new emigrations, because by now the Italian emigration is emigration of people (. ) with university degrees, educated, highly educated, qualified and so one cannot find oneself at ease in these environments.

Thea is from the North of Italy and emphasizes the fact that the Calgary Italian Club represents only the Southern part of Italy. She cannot find anything in the Calgary Italian Club that relates to her regional origins. The Calgary Italian Club, she says, is not really Italy, just a part of it. Moreover, she made a comment similar to Nicola’s. The Calgary Italian Club belongs to the past, creating a net division with the new emigrants who are highly qualified and educated, and “non ci si trova in questi ambienti qua / one cannot find oneself at ease in these environments.” Therefore, when Thea strongly expressed her sense of belonging to Italy and to her Italian roots, this attachment refers not only to Italy in general, but congruently also to that part of Italy where she originates, underscoring how
the regional and local differences of Italy are still a strong element in the process of identification (Stehl, 2005).

The Children’s Positioning

When I asked them what Italy represents for them and what kind of association they normally make with regard to Italy, references to how Italy represents the roots of their own culture are soon made:

- B: Ehmm, I make an association, that it is my culture and that’s where I come from and that’s what I usually speak at home.
- C: Religion. My point of view and mostly, most of my values come from there, my values.
- M: My family and the culture and the environment ((Incomprehensible speech)) difference.

Not only the family, but the roots of their values and of their so-called “culture” belong to Italy. For Carlos, there is even a strong reference to the Catholic religion; it is actually the first word that comes to his mind. It must be noted that, so far, none of the other families of my study has made this association. In informal conversations I had with Thea in other occasions, I had the chance to observe that Thea’s family is actually quite attached to the Catholic religion. They regularly attend masses and respect the traditions of the Catholic religion. Therefore, Carlos’s comments need to be looked in that perspective, as well as from the viewpoint that in Italy the Catholic religion has played, historically and traditionally, an important role in people’s decisions about spiritual matters.

Another reference that shows a fairly strong sense of belonging to their Italian roots is evident when I asked them about their nationality. Without a shadow of a doubt they all clearly identify themselves with an Italian background. In particular, Benjamin made the connection with language and sense of belonging, as also noticed in Thea, whereby one’s
identity becomes an historical and political construct as well (Blommaert, 2005; Bourdieu, 1991); he claims, “I’m Italian. I come from Italy. Speak Italian.”

Besides, even Monica, who spent all her life in Canada, identified being Italian as her nationality. It could be argued, however, that her young age made her reiterate the response she just heard from her brothers. Family belonging is also another element that contributes to shape children’s identity, especially when they are so young (Guardado, 2010). In the analysis of the above answers, it must be taken into account the fact that technically, from the point of view of immigration laws, their nationality is Italian and not Canadian. As seen earlier with Thea, the family has been discussing the possibility of obtaining Canadian citizenship, but at the time of the interview, none is officially Canadian. Nonetheless, it could be also argued that such situation reinforces the sense of belonging to their Italian roots.

Nevertheless, the process of identification is not so black and white, as it might seem above. When I asked if they would like to go and live in Italy one day, they immediately showed more distance, negative grimaces, and even started to laugh. For them, Italy is still a nice place to visit, for family reasons too, but, as mentioned previously by Thea, they immediately mentioned the economic problems of Italy and the fact that returning cannot represent an option for them in the future. Moreover, Carlo clearly specified that now, “We kind of adapted to the North American life style so, we don’t wanna keep on changing.” This positioning is further highlighted when I asked them what Canada represents for them:

C: I love it here. I love it here.
B: Yes, it’s really nice. Ehm, they have big homes and ehm, and it represents my home now, because I live here and all my stuff right here.
C: My life right now. Everything.
B: Yeah.
R: And Monica, do you like it here?
M: Yeah. Because of the freedom that we have.

Quite confidently they expressed their enthusiasm for Canada, “I love it here.” Benjamin went even further claiming that he feels at home; Canada is his “home now.” For all of them, it seems that their life in Canada is their main point of reference, “my life right now.” Monica even made references to a certain idea of freedom with which she associates and identifies Canada. This children’s positioning confirms how identity issues are flexible and can change over time and even be negotiated in the interaction of the interview (De Fina & King, 2011; Giampapa, 2004; He, 2011). Now they identify Canada as their home that once used to be Italy.

Language Attitudes, Values, and Ideologies

The Parents’ Positioning

When I asked what values the Italian language presently has in the new context of Calgary, Thea clearly linked the Italian language to her origins:

T: And for me in this moment to speak the Italian language means keeping a bond with:: my origins. Indeed everything that represents for me Italy remains strictly spoken in Italian. For example, I tell the prayers in Italian and I don’t want to learn them in English. For example, when I read the recipes, I prefer to read them in Italian rather than in English. So there are few things with whom I don’t want to use the English language. These represent only and exclusively part of my culture.

T: E per me in questo momento parlare la lingua italiana vuol dire mantenere un legame con le:: mie origini. Tanto è vero che per dire tutto quello che mi rappresenta per me l’Italia rimane strettamente parlato in italiano. Per dire, non so, quando leggo le ricette, preferisco leggerle in italiano piuttosto che in inglese. Quindi ci sono alcune cose che non voglio parlare in inglese. Queste rappresentano
solo esclusivamente parte della mia cultura.

From the above excerpts, we can see that speaking the Italian language means keeping her bonds with her origins. This is in line with what was mentioned in the previous section with regard to her identification process, whereby being Italian implies for her a commitment to “mantenere i contatti con anche la mia famiglia, con quelle che sono le mie origini / keep the contacts also with my family, with my origins.” Moreover, she manifests no intention of compromising with the English language. What she perceives as typical of her Italian culture must be kept in Italian, such as prayers or recipes. She clearly expressed a refusal: “Ci sono alcune cose che non voglio parlare in inglese/ There are few things with whom I do not want to use the English language.” Thea seems to reproduce a traditional discourse (Giampapa, 2004; Roy & Gélinas, 2004), whereby attachment to the common traditions and language of Italy almost defines her actions, her beliefs, and her being (Gee, 2011).

Nevertheless, it seems that the great value she grants to Italian is confined to the family environment. When I asked her, if the community or the education system could do something to promote the Italian language in Calgary, she clearly placed Italian in a weaker position than other languages:

T: E:: per il resto, purtroppo le scuole non é che possano fare molto perché siamo talmente pochi rispetto ai francesi, o adesso anche gli spagnoli o i cinesi, così che la lingua italiana sta perdendo potere no, sta perdendo un po` spazio anche ((Risate)).

T: And:: well, unfortunately schools cannot do much, because we are so few in comparison with the French, or now the Spanish or the Chinese, so that the Italian language is losing power, is losing some space also ((Laughs)).
In her perceptions, Italian has not enough “potere / power” in Calgary to justify an investment from the education system, and this is mainly because the Italian community is small in comparison with the communities she mentioned. Therefore, Italian is surely valued by her, and she feels attached, but it is more the language that connects her to her family roots and personal history.

Which Italian is she referring to though? How well such Italian should be spoken in Thea’s perceptions? We saw earlier that, for Anna and Nicola, purist language ideologies led to a certain prestige around the perfect knowledge of standard Italian. As further analysed in the next section on language socialization practices, Thea, despite coming from the same Italian region as her husband, claimed to favour the use of standard Italian over the dialect. However, in the previous sections, it was mentioned how Thea cannot identify herself with the Calgary Italian Club, because for her, it represents different regions than hers. On one side, she seems to show a certain attachment to her regional roots, but such attachment to her regional roots does not necessarily translate into attachment to the dialects, showing a preference for standard Italian only. Thea demonstrates an apparent contradiction that, in reality, reflects the complexity of the Italian language and its history, as explained in the Context chapter. Moreover, by analysing her comments with regard to how she evaluates the Italian language spoken by the children, it emerges that she values standard Italian that is spoken correctly:

T: Be’, (.) diciamo che dal punto di vista del parlato i due ragazzi sono abbastanza bravi, fanno qualche errore. I congiuntivi li sbagliano tutti ((Risate)), però quelli li sbagliano anche gli italiani ((Risate)). Però ((Risate)) però quando parlano e si
sforzano di parlare in italiano è abbastanza corretto, ovviamente con qualche piccolo errore che ogni tanto, che noi correggiamo puntualmente. Lo scritto, no, lo scritto, purtroppo quando devono scrivere qualcosa ci sono molti errori di grammatica, perché ovviamente non scrivendo mai in italiano, per loro è difficile.

She seems quite pleased with Benjamin and Carlos, the oldest children, but again, like in the previous family, there is the tendency to promptly correct any mistakes and there are references to grammar, once again to the subjunctive, as the previous family made, almost implying a purist use of the language, but they are excused, as Italians also make mistakes with subjunctives. Thea is less pleased with the level of Monica, who arrived in Canada, when she was about one year old and has been living here since then:

T: E invece Monica purtroppo parla l’italiano diciamo il parlato, è così, sembra un russo che sta parlando italiano, perché ha un accento che non é né italiano né inglese ((Risate)). E poi fa fatica, perché tante volte non le vengono le parole, non sa cosa vuol dire, cioè non sa cosa, come tradurre una parola inglese in una parola italiana. Cosa che invece invece ai ragazzi non succede.

T: And Monica instead, unfortunately she speaks Italian, let’s say the spoken, she seems a Russian who is speaking Italian, because she has an accent which is neither Italian nor English ((Laughs)). And then she struggles, because many times she does not remember the words, she does not know the meaning, she does not know how to translate an English word into an Italian word. Something that does not happen with the boys.

Therefore, according to Thea, Monica seems to struggle with the Italian language. The fact that Thea felt the need to mention that Monica speaks Italian like a foreigner, with an accent, which is neither English nor Italian and that she laughed, seems to hide again a
purist approach. Moreover, as I mentioned earlier, this derisory approach might be
discouraging to the children, who may feel that the standards are quite high (Garrett, 2011).

It is relevant to notice that these purist attitudes surrounding the standard Italian
seem to be applied also to the English language with regard to herself and then to the
children. Thea complained that English native speakers do not correct her as she wishes.
Besides, with regard to her children, at the end of the interview Thea felt the need to ask a
few questions directly of the children, asking them how they feel for not getting as high
marks as their native English classmates. Thea implied that as her children are not English
native speakers, they cannot get as high marks as the other native speaker students.
Benjamin and Carlos, however, replied to her mother that they are not so concerned about
that, they do their best, showing a more relaxed attitude. Through her questioning, Thea
almost sends an indirect message to the children that only knowledge at a native speaker
level can help you have success, in this case in the school environment. She seems to
simplify the situation behind what it means to receive a good or bad mark, overlooking
other factors that may prevent the children from obtaining as high marks as the other
students and that may not depend on their language skills.

Alongside ideologies that favour a native speaker’s knowledge of a language, Thea
seems to simultaneously show a cosmopolitan attitude with regard to the maintenance of
Italian in her children. Indeed, when I asked Thea what advantages her children would
have knowing Italian, she mentioned the idea of Italian as a door to better understand other
cultures. The knowledge of Italian, alongside English, can empower her children to better
understand other realities, other points of view. This attitude is not only addressed to the
Italian language, but any other languages. For example, although French is not a language spoken by the parents and to which they attach no particular value, the family still decided to put Benjamin in French Immersion to give him a more cosmopolitan view and to better understand other cultures. On few occasions during the interview, Thea expressed her admiration for Canada and for its open attitudes and multicultural values, in reference particularly to some intercultural projects she had the chance to experience when she first arrived in Canada.

*The Children’s Positioning*

When I asked the children what is the language (English or Italian) they enjoy the most and the one they feel most comfortable with, as well as the one with which they feel less comfortable, they did not seem to show any specific preference towards one language or the other, but instead they tended to establish two specific domains. The Italian language represents their family and home values, while the English language represents their Canadian values. It is interesting to notice that siblings are considered to be friends and not family members. Therefore, they use English among each other, as I could observe. However, when I asked them what they would consider to be their first language, if for example they had to fill a form, Carlos and Benjamin had no doubt to reply “Italian”, while Monica replied that her first language is “Canadian”. Because of Monica’s young age, at the time I did not go further in asking more details about what she meant by “Canadian” as her first language.
When I asked them more specifically about the English language and what it represents for them, they replied that English is a language which allows you to communicate all over the world:

B: But my English is like a sort of a language of communication. If I go to other countries, and I don’t know their language, I am pretty sure they would know English, because that’s sort of what everybody uses it to communicate, so it’s like a language of communication with other people.
C: Ok. Speaking in English represents my teen values, my teen life. Speaking Italian represents kind of like my home values. That’s why I talk to my parents in Italian.
M: Because we are in Canada, to find ((Incomprehensible speech)).

We can see from the above excerpts that English is taken for granted as a language of international communication that everyone is supposed to know. The comment, “I am pretty sure that they would know English,” alludes to the powerful position that English has in the world among any other languages (Crystal, 1997). For Carlos, it is also the language that represents his teen values, and this seems to relate to what he mentioned before about the language he would use with his friends. For Monica, again English is referred to one of the languages spoken in Canada.

When I asked them more specifically how easy or difficult they find speaking Italian, Carlos and Benjamin claimed to have no problem in speaking Italian. Only Benjamin mentioned that sometimes words do not come immediately in his head. Instead it is Monica, who clearly expressed to have a lot of difficulties with the Italian language:

M: I have a lot of difficulty, because I lived here when I was very young that I don’t get to learn the language ((Incomprehensible speech)).
Monica feels that she is struggling with the Italian language and she explained her difficulty by the fact that she spent most of her life in Canada, almost as if the fact of having lived in Canada cannot also involve learning Italian along with English. As for the English language, they all mentioned feeling confident with it, although they all signalled the need to improve it in some areas, such as reading or writing for Carlos or vocabulary for Benjamin.

Finally, I asked them if they think they have an advantage speaking more than one language in relation to their monolingual friends. Their answers reflected a similar cosmopolitan discourse as their mother, where knowing more than one language gives you a more open-minded view of the world. They also mentioned how knowing Italian or any other language helps you learn other languages, giving you a cognitive advantage.

**Language Socialization Practices and Heritage Language Maintenance**

When I asked Thea what language she uses with her husband, she claimed that only standard Italian is used, and this is what I observed too in the other informal situations that I had the chance to be with them. I asked her about the dialect, as Thea and her husband come from the same Italian region, but she confirmed to me that no dialect is used in the conversation among each other or within the family. She claimed that dialects might be used in the conversations with her husband only to make jokes or derisory comments. This is a preference that could socialize children to legitimize only standard Italian as opposed to using dialects or other variation (Garrett, 2011).

When I asked Thea more specifically what language she and her husband use with the children, she confidently claimed Italian: “Noi parliamo sempre italiano, sempre / We
always speak Italian, always.” Interestingly, she repeated the adverb *always* twice, underscoring the importance that the Italian language has in the socialization practices of the family.

However, the use of English is not completely absent in this family, especially because of Monica who seems to favour English in her practices. First of all, although the interview was carried out in Italian only between me and Thea, the interview with the children was carried out mainly in English. The choice to use English was made mainly to accommodate the youngest one, Monica, making sure she could follow the conversation among the others; according to the mother, she is the one, who has the most difficulties with the Italian language. This choice might indirectly lead to a preference for the English language as better suited to explain or clarify concepts that are considered to be too difficult. However, at the end of the interview, Thea and I switched to Italian, as per request by Thea, who seemed more comfortable with it, but all children continued with English, despite having the occasion of using Italian at that point.

Secondly, I tried to explore more to what extent this Italian is always used and if English might be possibly used in some situations, considering that the interview with the children showed a preference for the English language. Indeed, Thea mentioned that English is used to help Marta with homework, and as mentioned later on in the interview, the same practice is applied with the other two children. In those situations, the parents prefer to use English to make sure that the children clearly understand concepts that in Italian they might not understand. This practice seems to contradict the previous claim about the use of Italian “always”, showing an ambivalent attitude in the language choices.
Italian is important, of course, but still English is preferred in certain situations as a language that is better suited in clarifying or explaining difficult concepts to the children, as also seen during the interview.

Moreover, Thea claimed that the children have the tendency to reply in English, although Thea claimed that Thea and her husband insist that they reply in Italian, even though, as with the previous family, she did not insist during our interview. Again, even against the parents’ intentions, this choice might indirectly empower English and gradually socialize children to favour it in interactions, despite the occasion to use Italian with me (Garrett, 2011; Riley, 2011). Moreover, as I could observe too and as confirmed by them, the children use English only among each other. It was described before how the children justified the use of English, because English is associated with friendship, and siblings are considered to be friends. Interestingly, Thea reported how the children, especially the oldest one, use English also to challenge the parents and apparently to make them feel inferior:

*T:* Lui adotta la lingua ((Inglese)) di cui lui ha più conoscenza soprattutto gli slang per sfidarci oppure per metterci in una situazione d’inferiorità.  
*T:* He adopts the language ((English)) that he knows the most especially slang to challenge us or to put us in a situation where we feel inferior.

In particular, the oldest one seems to use the English language to put the parents in a situation, where they cannot understand, as English is the language with which the parents seem to feel less comfortable in comparison to Carlos. No matter how truthful this can be or not, the above excerpts seem to indicate that for Thea English might enjoy a more powerful position in respect to Italian, even in family interactions (Bourdieu, 1991; Garrett,
2011). The children have the tendency to use English in general, but even more to impose some superiority over the parents.

Moreover, as also seen in the case of Anna and Nicola, the whole family prefers to switch to English only in the presence of people who are not Italian speakers. They tend to use English if they are surrounded by non-Italian speakers, not to exclude them, even though these people might not be directly involved in the conversation. Again, this practice can indirectly socialize the children into the idea that English is more important.

So far a preference for the English language seems to prevail in the family practices and choices, despite the contradictory claims of always using Italian and positive values surrounding the Italian language, as seen in the previous sections. Therefore, when and how is the Italian language used in the family? Are specific strategies in place to maintain the language and culture in somehow? As for the use of the Italian language in the family, Thea explained how Italian is used for the everyday language of routine activities and for daily chores, such as asking to wash the dishes for example or to prepare the table.

Moreover, when I asked more specifically, if Thea and her husband apply some direct strategies to maintain the Italian language or specific resources, such as books or films, the reply was that they do not use any specific resources or strategies; neither have they directly taught the children the Italian language, not even to the youngest one, who had no chance to attend school in Italy. The main reason is because they do not want to overload the children with other activities, and Italian is perceived to be too much. A similar answer was given also by Anna and Nicola. It could be argued, however, that this
attitude might indirectly encourage the use of English, if Italian is perceived to be too much.

I also asked the children, if they take the initiative to read or watch some films in Italian. Carlos’s reply was that he does not read any Italian books, while Benjamin replied that sometimes he does. Monica watches some Italian fiction on TV with her mother. Carlos, the oldest one, is attending a school where Italian is taught as a second language and that was his choice to attend a school, showing therefore some interest in the Italian language. In this regard, it must be noted that Carlos is the oldest one, who arrived to Canada when he was about 10 years old. It could be argued, therefore, that his interest to pursue Italian is also related to having spent several years in Italy and hence he might feel more attached.

So far, the practices and choices, which have been highlighted above, seem to reveal therefore some ambivalence again. On one side, a strong attachment to the Italian language is claimed, especially from Thea. The Italian language is used for daily chores or routine daily activities, quite regularly with the grandparents, and occasionally to read or watch films. Thea’s attachment to the Italian language and her claimed desire to maintain it with the children, however, do not translate into active practices from the parents, who actually do nothing specific or structured to maintain it, apart from trying to speak it with them. Carlos is attending a school, where Italian is taught, but that was his choice. In the meantime, English starts to become quite dominant in the family interactions, as seen in conversations among siblings, in the tendency of the children to reply to parents in English.
or to use English to feel more powerful than the parents, without mentioning the youngest one, who claimed to struggle and to hardly use it.

I asked, therefore, what their relations are with the Calgary Italian School and Calgary Italian Club, as a way to socialize children into their Italian origins, but Thea immediately expressed her disappointment towards these two institutions, displaying an attitude quite similar to that of Anna and Nicola. The previous section mentioned how Thea was disappointed with the fact that these institutions represented a part of Italy she cannot identify with. She also made few comments with regard to the language claiming that she was disappointed that the Calgary Italian Club and School are mainly made of people who arrived 40 years ago and speak dialects or just English. Thea has the tendency to consider the Calgary Italian Club and the Calgary Italian School as one entity, and both of them are associated with the previous generations who arrived in Calgary 40 years ago and with their second and third generations. Again, similar to Anna and Nicola, I seem to see a net division between the new generations and the previous generations, which are represented by the Italian Club and, in this case, also by the Calgary Italian School. Thea specified that she had initially an interest to send the children to the Calgary Italian School, but she realized that her Italian is better, and it was no point to send her children there; she would have rather taught Italian herself to her children. However, actually as seen earlier, neither she nor her husband teach them Italian in a more structured way. They do not want to overload the children, and this is despite Monica’s difficulties and struggles to speak Italian, having had less contacts and experience with Italy.
The issue again is not so much that the children should attend or not the Calgary Italian School, but indirectly Thea’s positioning with regard to the Calgary Italian School and Club, seems to send the message that only standard Italian is valued and not just any Italian, but the Italian spoken in the Italy of today. A hierarchy of languages and their speakers seems to be established, and in the context of the Italian community in Calgary, it is the new generation who establishes the criteria and norms against which any other group, who claims Italian origins, need to conform to (Blommaert, 2005; Bourdieu, 1991). In Thea’s eyes, she represents the Italy of today, the only Italy, which has the power to legitimate how Italian should be spoken and who should teach it. Despite the fact that Monica is struggling with the Italian language and has spent most of her life in Canada, Thea cannot consider the Calgary Italian School as a valuable option to help her with Italian. These attitudes might indirectly lend primacy to the English language and challenge the presence of Italian in the children and family, despite the positive associations of Italian as a way to keep alive family bonds or as a language to see the world from different perspectives.
CHAPTER SEVEN: SARA AND DIEGO’S FAMILY

“Absolutely not. Children here speak in English, at home we speak Italian, because I am Italian and I speak Italian” - Sara

Background Information of Interview
The interview started with the children, Josha and Domenico. Neither of the parents was present at the interview with the children. Soon afterwards I interviewed Sara and Diego, separately from each other.

Because of the young age of Josha and Domenico—6 and 8 years old—it was, at times, difficult to obtain an elaborate answer from them. Therefore, their profile, especially regarding identity issues and language attitudes, reveals fewer details than the ones examined in the other families, where the children were older. However, some comments and responses still proved to be quite useful, specifically compared to the parents’ perspectives.

Issues of Identities and Ideologies

The Parents’ Positioning

When I asked Anna what it means to be Italian now in their new context, she specified that for her being Italian does not go beyond her “origini biologiche / biological origins”, nothing more. She is Italian because she was born in Italy, but she does not feel any specific attachment to her Italian origins. However, when I continued with the interview and I asked how she thinks Italy is viewed in Calgary or Canada, she started to show a stronger sense of pride towards Italy and Italians:

S: Riconoscono che é un paese molto bello, S: They recognise that it’s a very beautiful
Despite showing some initial detachment in her being Italian, Anna still perceives Italy as a beautiful country, with a rich culture, full of history and monuments, populated with great workers. These are ideas that also emerged in the other two families. Later on, Diego, in a separate interview, raised these ideas about Italy as well, clearly specifying that he has always felt very proud of being Italian. He feels proud because Italy is a great country for its history and art and he thinks that Italians distinguish themselves by their creativity and their resourceful labour.

Nonetheless, when I asked if they intended to go back to Italy one day, their answer was a clear “No”, firstly because they feel that the children will be attached to their new life in Canada and hence they would have no intention of starting a new life in Italy, but also because of the economic difficulties Italy is facing at the moment. On this topic, Sara claims:

*S: Siamo abbastanza rassegnati, ma con serenità.*

*S: We have quite surrendered, but we are happy.*

As we can see from the above excerpt, contrary to Thea and to Anna and Nicola, Sara seems to accept, with no conflicting attitudes, her new life in Canada. Diego also mentioned on few occasions during the interview how he admires Canada for being a multicultural country open to diversity, reproducing similar ideas to the previous families. Such positive and cosmopolitan perceptions about Canada, at least for these Italians, could
find an explanation in the history of Canada, for example in being one of the first countries in the world to officially enact a multiculturalism policy in 1971, for its diverse population, as well as for its bilingual history. Although many Italians might not be aware of the historical details about Canada and regardless of the complexity behind what is actually meant by multiculturalism, as Blommaert (2005, 2010) notes, the way a state positions itself through its policies and political decisions in the course of its history has effects on how this country is perceived by people nationwide or worldwide, even though, in some cases, such perceptions might lead to simplifications or myths about the perceived identity of that country. In the case of these Italian families, it might be also argued that such positive ideas of Canada are also facilitated by their personal situation, being families who have a very high socioeconomic and educational background (Guardado, 2010; Li, 2006).

As emerged from the interviews, none of them had to learn English in conditions of stress, in menial jobs, and when they arrived in Canada, they were all quite well settled job-wise and professionally. Such a fairly positive start in the new country makes them more prone to perceive the positive aspects of their new experience, regardless of what it is true or not (Li, 2006).

In the case of Sara and Diego, the enthusiasm for Canada was evident to me when I had a chance meeting of the family at Canada Day, July 1, 2013. All the family was dressed in red with Canadian flags, showing pride for their belonging to Canada. This attachment to Canada was further confirmed to me, when I asked Sara and Diego if they intended to apply for Canadian citizenship one day, and without a shadow of a doubt, their answer was “Yes”. Sara would even renounce her Italian citizenship.
So far it can be noted that despite a sense of pride for being Italian, they seem to be very attracted and enthusiastic about identifying themselves with what they perceive to be the Canadian culture, showing no particular interest to integrate within the Italian community in Calgary. Indeed, when I asked if they attend the events of the Calgary Italian Club and why, they confirmed to me that they do not and for the following reasons:

S: Perché cioè siamo venuti qua per conoscere un’altra cultura, per integrarci in un altro ambiente, perché io me ne devo andare, è come quando vai all’estero e cerchi il ristorante italiano. Perché cercare l’italianità a tutti i costi? Preferisco aprire i miei orizzonti e vedere qualcosa che in Italia non c’è.

S: Because we came here to know another culture, to integrate into another environment, why should I go, it is as when you go abroad and you look for the Italian restaurant. Why should I look for something Italian at all costs? I prefer to open my horizons and see something that it’s not in Italy.

Therefore, they feel the need to integrate into their new life in Calgary and to be open to what Canada has to offer, not narrowing their life to an Italian identity. Sara mentioned they already live their Italian identity within the family environment. Therefore, for them there is no reason to extend this Italian life outside the family. Moreover, Sara clearly expressed that she wants her children to integrate into their new life in Canada:

S: Siamo qua e vorremmo che loro s’integrassero nel loro mondo canadese, cioè per questo non frequentiamo il Club Italiano, il Club d’Italiano. No.

S: We are here and we would like them to integrate in their Canadian world, that is why we don’t go to the Italian Club, the Italian Club. No.

From the above excerpts it seems that attending the Italian Club would hinder the children from integrating into their Canadian world, as if the two aspects cannot co-exist.
The Children’s Positioning

When I asked Domenico and Josha what Italy represents for them, Domenico immediately mentioned that they miss it:

D: Be’, lì é molto bello. Ci manca ancora. Cioé, anche se c’era la pioggia, c’erano i giorni che potevano andare al mare.

D: Well, it’s very beautiful there. We still miss it. That is, even if it was raining, there were the days that we could go to the sea.

They seem to have nice memories of their lives in Italy and contrary to their parents, they claim to still miss it. Afterwards, they started to list a series of situations that they enjoyed about their life in Italy and they seemed to show a certain feeling of nostalgia, such as for the ice creams, a dog they knew, or some relatives, who lived along the sea. When I asked them if they would like to go and live in Italy one day, they replied, “Yes” and they immediately made references to relatives whom they want to visit as soon as they have the chance to go on holidays, demonstrating how family and relatives might be quite important in the children’s identification with Italy. Indeed, relatives try to visit the family regularly, and the family Skypes with the grandparents every two weeks.

When I asked them about Canada, however, they also expressed enthusiasm:

R: E invece, il Canada, vi piace vivere in Canada?
D: Oh, sì! Qui é molto bello! É più grande! Ci sono più parchi, più (.) cose da trovare, cose nuove da fare.

R: Do you like living in Canada?
D: Oh, yes! Here it’s very beautiful! It’s much bigger! There are more parks, more (.) things to find, new things to do.

They like it in Canada, and everything is bigger. Later on, they also made references to their school and started to talk to me about their new friends. From what they said, they seem to enjoy and feel at ease in their new school environment.
Finally, I asked how they would define their nationality, and contrary to the children of the other families, they mentioned that they feel Italian Canadian and not just Italian, showing an hybrid identification that was not so clearly expressed in the other children. This positioning might be a reflection of their mother’s desire to have the children integrated into their new life in Canada.

**Language Attitudes, Values, and Ideologies**

*The Parents’ Positioning*

Like the other families, both Sara and Diego tend to value the use of standard Italian rather than dialects or regional varieties, and this is evident when Sara explained why they do not need to send the children at the Calgary Italian School, an aspect that will be analysed in more detail in the next section on language socialization practices:

*S: Ma, noi non abbiamo bisogno, perché noi l’italiano lo conosciamo perfettamente, siamo due laureati, quindi voglio dire, la nostra, anche il nostro vocabolario, il nostro, cioè, non è dialettale, lo sappiamo insegnare, lo sappiamo leggere, lo sappiamo scrivere, lo possiamo trasferire a loro. È quello che facciamo quotidianamente.*

*S: But, we don’t really need it, because we know Italian perfectly, we are two university graduates, therefore, I mean, also our vocabulary is not dialectal, we know how to teach it, we know, we know how to read it, how to write it, we can transfer it to them. It is what we do daily.*

Therefore, it seems that level of education and knowledge of dialects are incompatible, reproducing a standard language ideology; the knowledge of a perfect Italian whose norms have been established by a political and historical context is prerogative of highly educated people, whose language is not contaminated by dialects (Bourdieu, 1991; Guerini, 2011). Diego went even further in his preference for a standard and correct use of the Italian
language, when he gave his opinion on the teaching of Italian as a second language in his children’s school:

D: L’unica cosa che non capisco é l’adozione di una, diciamo, una lingua italiana in una scuola, però gestita da persone che non hanno la facoltà di parlare italiano. Nel senso, io apprezzo che ci sia l’intenzione di spiegare la cultura italiana, ma cercare di trasferire a dei bambini un idioma italiano sbagliato, perché la persona ha seconda o terza generazione, non ha senso. É meglio non farlo. É meglio prendere la mamma di famiglia italiana, che dica quattro frasi, tanto non vanno oltre quella, non é che si costruiscono frasi o analisi logica.

In order to better understand the above excerpts, it must be mentioned that the children are attending a Catholic school in Calgary, where Italian is taught as a second language. However, it was not actually the intention of the parents to choose a school where Italian was taught. As mentioned earlier, Sara wanted their children to integrate into the mainstream Canadian society, and Sara thinks that they do not need to attend any extra classes in Italian, because the parents could teach them Italian. As she mentioned earlier, they are university graduates and speak “perfettamente / perfectly” Italian. The only reason why they chose that school is simply because it was close to their home and because in their perception, Catholic schools in Calgary seem to offer a better education. However, from the above excerpts, we can see that Diego completely denies the contribution of teaching Italian as a second language from “persone che non hanno la facoltà di parlare italiano / people who do not have the faculty of speaking Italian”; later, he will add, “Qual
é il tuo contributo? / What is your contribution?” What I can see here is an extreme reproduction of native speaker and mother tongue language ideologies, which legitimize and grant power only to the mother tongue speaker to teach Italian (Bourdieu, 1991; Llurda, 2009). Moreover, it is interesting to note his reference to “la mamma di famiglia italiana / the mum of Italian family.” Even though such a specific link between the mother and the language does not emerge in the other families, in the specific case of Italy, mothers have been traditionally and historically at the center of children’s education and, therefore, of their language socialization. As noted by Burfoot (1999), in Italy “despite the increase in the number of working mothers, expectations for a devout form of mothering remain high, and women remain the prime caretakers of children” (p.32).

Another theme raised by Diego and also common to the other two families is the value of the Italian language for biological origins and family bonds. Diego specified clearly that the Italian language is valuable because all the family was born there and if their children were to lose the Italian language, it would be sad because they would lose their origins. Moreover, for Sara it would be unimaginable that her children could lose the Italian language and they would no longer be able to communicate especially with relatives or grandparents. She brought me the example of two Italian parents she knew, who only spoke English to their child and in the end this child could not talk with the Italian grandparents:

S: Io mi sono resa conto che é terribile il fatto che ’sta bambina non sa parlare con i nonni!?! S: I realized that it’s terrible the fact that this child cannot speak with her grandparents!??!
Sara seems shocked that this girl is not capable of speaking with the grandparents, showing how vital and valuable for her that the Italian language maintain those family bonds.

Another aspect that emerges around the Italian language and its value is the idea of learning and maintaining the Italian language to provide the children with cultural richness:

S: *Per me é importante mantenerla in casa, per dare a loro (Emphasis on loro)*, figli, la possibilità di, di:: dargli una ricchezza in più, una seconda lingua. E comunque voglio dire, é comunque cultura no, sapere un’altra lingua, essere::(.), é cultura, cioè assolutamente.  

D: *((La lingua italiana)) Aiuta te, ma non ti aiuta, perché poi questo fatto di avere questa base, tante volte é quello che ti dà quella sensazione di sufficienza per cui non ti sforzi mai per migliorare o per cambiare. ((Gli italiani all’estero)) preferiscono continuare, diciamo con i loro italianismi, maccheronismi, tentativi più o meno insomma, per mantenere la propria lingua*  

S: For me it’s important to keep it at home, to give them (Emphasis on them), children, the possibility of, of:: giving them an extra asset, a second language. And anyway I mean, it’s culture, right, to know another language, to be:: (.), it’s culture, absolutely.

Italian represents a second language that allows access to a different culture, and this is perceived as an asset. Along similar lines, Diego pointed out that there are some cognitive advantages in learning the Italian language in particular. According to him, the Italian language allows you to easily understand at least 15% of other European languages, because of its Latin basis. Nevertheless, he said that this is also a disadvantage and made some comments with regard to the problems of Italian people abroad who do not make enough efforts to properly learn other languages, because they get by with what they can understand thanks to the Latin roots of the Italian language, without going further in the learning:

D: *((The Italian language)) It helps you, but it doesn’t help you, because the fact of having these roots, many times it is what gives you that feeling of sufficiency, hence you never make the effort to improve or to change. ((Italians abroad)) prefer to continue, let’s say with their Italianisms, gross and rough attempts at keeping their own language and squeeze in some foreign*
Diego’s critical attitude with regard to those Italians who do not want to improve, might harbour a purist attitude with regard to languages in general. This purist attitude is more evident when he explained that for his children, being bilingual at an early age is an advantage because they will acquire a different mental approach that, according to him, will allow them to speak two languages, without an accent (Grosjean, 2000; Lippi-Green, 1997). He seems very proud of the fact that his children are able to speak Italian with an Italian accent and English with the proper English accent. This is particularly valued by Diego, who considers it as a “capacità notevole / remarkable skill.” As explained in the Theoretical Framework, it is often such details like accents that need to be taken into account in Critical Discourse Analysis and might reveal more than just common sense knowledge (Blommaert, 2005, 2010). Indeed, society in general, at least in North America and Europe, seems to be fairly attracted by the idea that a bilingual or a multilingual speaker is someone who can speak such languages accent-free, indexing the idea that languages can be spoken “properly” only with a native speaker accent (Blommaert, 2010; Lippi-Green, 1997). Such approach not only might be unrealistic, but can create discrimination in the workplace, for example, and further frustration among multilingual speakers (Grosjean, 2000; Lippi-Green, 1997).

Nevertheless, despite this attachment to the Italian language, for family reasons and for the cognitive and cultural advantage it can give, Sara and Diego, like Thea, acknowledged the fact that the Italian language occupies a weak position in Canada against
other languages such as Spanish or French, and Sara is even surprised that Italian is taught in some schools:

S: Sinceramente non credo che l’italiano abbia questa importanza nel mondo. Cioé, se vuoi la verità ((Incomprensibile)), almeno il francese in Francia ed in Québec, ma, l’italiano tolta l’Italia, cioè nessuno lo parla. Quindi perché il Canada dovrebbe promuovere l’italiano nelle sue scuole? Già che ce n’è una di scuola!

S: Honestly I don’t think that Italian is so important in the world. Frankly ((Incomprehensible)) at least French in France and in Québec, but, Italian apart from Italy, nobody speaks it. Therefore why should Canada promote Italian in its schools? We should be grateful that we already have one!

Therefore, apart from the family environment and as a cognitive advantage, Italian itself is perceived almost as valueless in the world. This positioning seems to contradict what was mentioned in the previous section. In the previous section, Sara and Diego, for example, feel very proud of being Italian because of the artistic and historical heritage that makes Italy valuable in the world and for family or cognitive reasons. At the same time, Italian is perceived to be weak and almost useless within the market of languages around the world (Bourdieu, 1991).

Another aspect that questions the position of Italian with that of other languages, in particular with English, emerges in reference to what languages to speak outside the home in the presence of non-Italians. As had occurred in the other families, Sara told me how the whole family prefers to switch to English as a matter of respect and for not letting other people think that they are talking badly about them. Sara and Diego gave me some examples, such as at playgrounds, during play dates at home, where English is always used among the family members, or more specifically, if they have to reproach the children in front of non-Italian speakers.
The Children’s Positioning

The children seem to show a positive attitude about the Italian language, considering that at the beginning of the interview, when I asked them what language they would like to use with me, they enthusiastically chose Italian. When I asked them more specifically what language they preferred, they mentioned both English and Italian claiming that they perceive Italian to be easier, although sometimes they feel that they are starting to forget a few words.

With regard to what language they feel to be their first language, again they had no doubt about being Italian:

D: Si, l’italiano é la nostra prima, perché eravamo nati in Italy. La nostra prima parola era mamma, é normale, come tutti i bebé. Quindi la nostra prima lingua é l’italiano.

D: Yes, Italian is our first language, because we were born in Italy. Our first word was mum, it’s normal, like all babies. Therefore our first language is Italian.

Italian is considered to be their first language because they were born in Italy, echoing a similar idea to Diego about the relation between biological and territorial origins and language. Moreover, although not so clear from Domenico’s words, it is interesting that the relationship Domenico makes between their first word mamma and first language, being Italian, almost solidifies the bond between first language and family, which reminds me also of the idea of mother tongue. The mother is Italian, their first word was mamma, and, therefore, their first language can only be Italian, showing even more how the family, in this case more in the role of the “mamma” (see previous Diego’s comments p.132), plays a key role in the language socialization of the children, at least when they are so young (Guardado, 2010; Li, 2006).
When Domenico referred to his school, he demonstrated a sense of pride for being able to share his Italian background with other students, who are learning Italian as a second language, and he is happy when his classmates ask him questions, because “io sono quello che ne sa di più/ I am the one who knows the most.” However, Domenico felt the need to specify immediately that his classmates “non lo sanno parlare tanto/ do not know how to speak it much,” and they feel they are “i migliori/ the best ones.” As mentioned earlier, they consider Italian to be their first or mother tongue. This negative judgment, whereby Domenico positions himself as the best one as opposed to the other students who cannot speak Italian well, reminds me of an ideology, whereby Italian is valued against standards and rules established by native speakers from Italy or arrived recently from Italy, holding a similar position to his father, Diego (Llurda, 2009).

From the interview and from what I could observe, Italian is quite valued by Domenico and Josha. It is considered to be their first and mother tongue, and they did not express any difficulty in speaking Italian. However, ideologies that favour standard and native speaker knowledge of Italian seem to indirectly influence what they say.

**Language Socialization Practices and Heritage Language Maintenance**

As I observed during my visit and as claimed by Sara and Diego, only standard Italian is used in the conversation among the two parents and between the parents and children. In the previous section, the parents had indicated a preference for standard Italian. I also noticed how the children tend to use mainly Italian between each other, occasionally demonstrating some code switching of a few words. Moreover, the children all made efforts to speak to me in Italian, and when I asked them what language they wanted to use
for the interview, they enthusiastically said Italian. We can see, therefore, that contrary to the other two families, this family seems to be more successful in keeping the heritage language, at least for now. It is interesting to notice that, so far, Italian seems to be favoured by the children, despite the family expressing a strong need for integration into the Canadian society. The parents show no interest in participating in any Italian events or favouring Italian outside the home environment. Although predictions are hard to make when dealing with language socialization practices (Duff, 2008b), literature has shown how such strong need for integration could eventually translate into socialization practices that favour the language of the host country (Ajsic, 2013; Li, 2006). Nevertheless, by going more into detail in the findings, we can notice some differences from the previous families that might help shed light on such a contradicting and paradoxical situation. On one side, Italian still seems to be fairly dominant despite the strong will from the family to be part of the Canadian society and yet they almost avoid Italian-related events.

First of all, because of Diego’s personal experience in an English speaking country, this family seems to be more aware than the other two families that English can very quickly enter children’s life, at the expense of Italian. He, himself, experienced it when he was a child. When I asked Diego what he thinks of his children’s linguistic future, he cited the possible risk of English dominating over Italian, based on his own childhood experience. It could be argued that such awareness, not as much present in the other families, might translate into a strong determination to keep the Italian language in family interactions, a determination that is shown in particular by Sara. She brought me the example of an Italian acquaintance in Calgary, who has a child. According to Sara, the
Italian of this child is perfect, and she is surprised that the child managed to keep the Italian language:

S: Il suo italiano è perfetto. Allora gli ho chiesto: “Ma come hai fatto a mantenere complimenti!” E:: stessa cosa, i genitori gli hanno parlato in italiano. È l’unica cosa. La differenza, che c’è, tra chi l’ha dimenticato e:: è la famiglia come si è comportata. La famiglia è importantissima.

S: His Italian is perfect. So I asked him: “But how did you manage to maintain compliments!” And:: same thing, the parents have spoken to him in Italian. It’s the only thing. The difference between those who forgot it and:: those who kept it is how the family behaved. The family is very important.

According to Sara, the family plays a key role in maintaining the heritage language. Such attitude and her determination are even more evident when she told me that in Fort McMurray, where they used to live before coming to Calgary, teachers asked Sara and Diego to use English at home instead of Italian:

S: Loro ((I bambini)) non sapevano una parola d’inglese, quindi, per accelerare il loro processo d’apprendimento, loro ((Gli insegnanti)) ci dicevano: “Parlate in inglese in casa, così loro imparano prima e noi c’abbiamo il lavoro facile.” Io invece non ho mai ceduto su questo. Io ho detto: “Assolutamente no. I bambini qui ((A scuola)) parlano in inglese, a casa si parla in italiano, perché io sono italiana e parlo in italiano.” Io credo che nel 100% d’apprendimento, il 30% lo dà la scuola, il 70% % la famiglia.

S: They ((The children)) didn’t know a word of English, so to accelerate their learning process, they ((The teachers)) told us: “Speak in English at home, so they learn faster and it’s easier for us.” Myself instead I have never given up on that. I said: “Absolutely not. Children here ((At school)) speak in English, at home we speak Italian, because I am Italian and I speak Italian.” I think that for 100% of learning, 30% is from the school, 70% from the family.

In this situation, Sara seems to produce a counterdiscourse against the possible dominance of the English language, challenging the teachers’ suggestions (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). She is Italian and, therefore, she speaks Italian at home. Now, after two and a half
years, she mentioned that she is pleased that the children are managing to keep Italian alongside English.

Secondly, this determination and awareness seem to translate into practices targeted to promote the Italian language at home, which show a more active role in maintaining the language in comparison with the two previous families. For example, Sara mentioned that on Fridays they organise an evening where they watch films in Italian together and, generally, she said that they prefer watching TV in Italian. They specifically bought a television that has a dual system, allowing them to watch DVDs or video games from Italy. Very proudly during my visit the children showed me an Italian song that was quite popular in Italy at the time of the interview. Although the parents do not organise structured activities to teach them the language, they still try to regularly read them stories in Italian. Moreover, the children have another friend of Italian origin, who comes for play dates at their home, and Sara mentioned how she applies a strict Italian only policy:

*S:* Quando viene questo bambino, gli ho detto: “In casa mia, puoi avere tutte le play date che vuoi, ma devi parlare in italiano.”

These socialization practices indirectly send the message to the children about the importance and value of the Italian language being strongly associated with family values, favouring its overall maintenance.

Nevertheless, it could also be argued that the young age of the children—6 and 8 years old—is another element that favours practices that foster, directly or indirectly, the maintenance of Italian in comparison to the previous two families. In the early years, the
family has a key role in the language socialization of the children, but once the children start to grow, other factors can influence their language socialization, such as peers or school, especially in immigration context (Li, 2006). Because their children are quite young, Sara and Diego have indeed more possibilities to spend time with them by watching TV or reading stories, as examples, and the children still rely more on them, increasing their exposure to Italian. It is as if this family found a niche to treasure the Italian language within the family environment, and the young age of the children might facilitate this attachment. It remains to be seen to what extent such family values will remain when children are slightly older and more independent from their family life, as in the previous families. Indeed, family plays a strong role in the life of Italians in general, and this importance has historical reasons, as further discussed in the Analysis and Discussion chapter (Bassetti, 2003; Magatti, 2003). Such attachment could represent a potential counterdiscourse to the dominance of the English language, but Italian still remains in a fragile position, as the case studies of the previous two families show.

Another element that could assist in understanding the presence of Italian, despite several contradictions around its value, is that the parents do not seem to inflict upon their children purist and perfectionist language attitudes, as manifested, in particular by Diego, at the Calgary Italian School—at least from what I observed during my visit. They seem to be aware that their Italian is no longer the standard spoken in Italy. Both Sara and Diego made references to the slow progress of Josha’s Italian, but at the same time, they do not expect that his Italian will be perfect. They do not apply sarcasm or negative judgments, as the parents of the other two families did. Sara clearly told me, “Non ce ne frega niente dei
modi di dire / We don’t care if the children are not acquiring all Italian idiomatic expressions,” showing a more relaxed attitude. Diego had experienced the same linguistic situation as a child and he is aware that the Italian language is not going to be perfect. Such an approach might be less discouraging for the children, who might then feel more prone to keep the Italian language, even when native speaker perfection is not reached, contrary to what might happen in the other two families (Garrett, 2011; Riley, 2011).
CHAPTER EIGHT: LUIGI’S FAMILY

“I feel a little bit Italian, a little bit Canadian, actually very Italian, a little bit Canadian and also a lot citizen of the world” – Luigi

Background Information of Interview

The interview started with Luigi and was followed by interviews with his daughters, Francy and Elena. The father was not present at the interview with the children. It was sometimes difficult to gather elaborate answers from Francy and Elena because of their young age—9 and 7 years old—but some of their answers and comments still proved to be quite helpful, especially if compared with the father’s perspectives.

During the interview, the children’s maternal grandfather, as well as an English-speaking acquaintance of the family were also present.

Issues of Identities and Ideologies

The Father’s Positioning

Luigi fell in love with Canada from the first day and, after a short break in Italy of one and a half years, he struggled to resettle there, but he had no doubt about returning to Calgary and starting his new life in Canada. He mentioned how he admires Canada for its big spaces and for a practical and direct way of dealing with everything, contrary to that which he perceives to be in Italy. In this regard, he presented me with an example of the English language that, according to him, reflects this practical side, for example, not using the formal third person singular Lei, which in Italian indicates a formal conversation, allowing a more direct and natural way of interaction among people. Luigi has held a
Canadian citizenship since 2003 and for him the Canadian citizenship has a specific meaning:

L: *Un po’ ci credevo quando ho fatto il giuramento alla Regina, un po’ ci credevo, un po’ lo facevo anche per diventare cittadino del mondo.*  
L: I believed it somewhat when I took the oath to the Queen, somewhat I believed it, somewhat I did it also to become citizen of the world.

Such positioning is indicative of a sense of belonging to Canada that seems to be associated with this idea of being “cittadino del mondo / citizen of the world.” For him, Canada is perceived as cosmopolitan and open to diversity, an aspect that was also raised by the other three families and is further clarified by these words:

*L:* *E:: io penso di aver capito in Canada che (.) c’è una bellezza nell’essere diverso, perché è una questione di diversità, e:: c’è una particolarità nell’essere italiano ecco, e:: (.) non mi sento più assolutamente in colpa per i difetti tipici degli italiani, perché ho imparato in Canada che ci sono nazionalità di tutto il mondo.*  
L: And:: I think I understood in Canada that (.) it’s beautiful to be different, because it’s an issue of diversity, and:: there is something special in being Italian, and :: (.) I no longer feel guilty for the typical faults of Italians, because I have learnt that in Canada there are nationalities from all over the world.

It seems that he can rely on this idea of Canada as a diverse and cosmopolitan country, identifying himself as a citizen of the world to find his place in Canada. More importantly, thanks to this open-minded view, he no longer feels guilty about the typical negative stereotypes which surround the Italian identity, because everyone is diverse in Canada. I wanted to explore this sense of guilty around his Italian identity, and immediately he mentioned how his English was not good when he first arrived in Calgary. He felt ashamed of his Italian accent, but now instead he feels very proud of being Italian and of his accent:
L: All’inizio semplicemente, come tutti quanti, la mia prima necessità era quella d’integrarmi. Ora questa necessità non c’è più assolutamente. Quando vado in qualche congresso, in qualche evento, mi presento come italiano e sono fiero del mio accento italiano e della mia diversità.

L: At the beginning simply, like everyone, my first necessity was to integrate. Now I do no longer have this necessity, absolutely. When I go to some conferences, to some events, I introduce myself as Italian and I am proud of my Italian accent and of my diversity.

Such a sense of shame for the accent and, consequently, the idea of revealing his identity were previously also brought up by Anna. Based on the above excerpts, it would appear that the uneasiness felt by Luigi is related to an initial need for integration. After obtaining some level of professional success and “integration”, the accent and diversity become less of a problem, and instead even something to feel proud of.

In line with what Luigi mentioned above, when I asked more specifically about what it means for him to be Italian, he replied that, for him, being Italian has a deep meaning and he feels “italianissimo / very Italian.” He would not consider going back there for work, but still he sees Italy as an option for retiring. Like the previous families, he raised ideas about feeling proud of a country that is rich in culture, art, and history, to which he feels attached, although he is disappointed with the political and economic situation of the country over the last years—one of the reasons that led him to leave Italy and settle in Canada. Luigi also expressed a clear sense of belonging to his family, who is still in Italy and he is very keen to keep the bonds with all his relatives. Indeed, they try to go back to Italy at least twice a year and receive regular visits from relatives from Italy. Nonetheless, more in line with the previous family of Sara and Diego, Luigi did show no sign of feeling homesick and nostalgic at all; instead, he mentioned how he likes his life in Canada with no regrets. I asked him if they attend the events of the Calgary Italian Club or...
other specific events in Calgary related to the Italian culture and he seems to show a similar position as did Sara and Diego. He claimed that he does not want to focus only on Italian events in his spare time. The family and the home are places to live their Italian heritage, but outside they want to experience the cultural diversity that Calgary offers.

An excerpt seems to summarize his apparently ambivalent attitudes with regard to his process of identification:

L: Mi sento un po’, diciamo, italiano, un po’ canadese, anzi molto italiano, un po’ canadese, e anche molto cittadino del mondo.

L: I feel a little bit, let’s say Italian, a little bit Canadian, actually very Italian, a little bit Canadian and also a lot citizen of the world.

It is as if Luigi shows a hybrid attitude, where his Italian and Canadian ways of being can easily co-exist revolving around the idea of being a citizen of the world, as seen earlier. He is very attached to Italy for the family and feels proud of it for its cultural heritage, but, at the same time, he has no feelings of nostalgia or regret. At the beginning of his residence in Calgary, Luigi felt almost ashamed of his Italian heritage, which he managed to overcome along with an increasing perception of integration into the Canadian society. Moreover, he shows no particular interest in following Italian events outside the home.

The Children’s Positioning

It must be remembered that Francy and Elena were born in Calgary. Nevertheless, Luigi and his relatives seem to be quite keen to keep family bonds alive with Italy and the family. Although not mentioned during the interview, my interpretation is that being a single father has increased the importance of maintaining strong relations between the two girls and their Italian relatives. In fact, during my visit, the children’s maternal grandfather
was present. Besides, when I asked Francy and Elena what Italy represents to them, the first associations were with “nonni e nonne / grandfathers and grandmothers,” along with other positive remarks. They admire Italy for the sea, the warm weather, and “ci sono tante cose da vedere come il Colosseo/ there are many things to see like the Coliseum,” reflecting similar ideas about art and culture as those of their father. They even expressed the desire to go and live there one day, showing an overall sense of attachment towards their Italian heritage. Despite enjoying living in Calgary, which Francy and Elena associate with their friends and their home, still they feel that Italy is little bit more special, and I asked them why:

F: Non lo so. Forse (.) é (.), é come, siamo, non siamo come gli altri, c’abbiamo altre (.) altre tradizioni e altri linguaggi e modi di parlare, sì.

They justify their preference for Italy by saying that they feel they are not like the other people in Calgary because they have different traditions and languages, almost implying that they feel closer to an identification with their Italian heritage or a non-identification with English Canadians. In this regard, when I asked them what they consider to be their nationality, if Italian, Italian Canadian, or Canadian, they both replied, “Italian,” emphasizing even more this sense of belonging to their Italian heritage. It must be noted that technically, by law, they are also Canadian, but they immediately referred to their Italian nationality. However, it is interesting to note that Elena felt the need to specify that in Calgary her friends refer to her as “Italian”, while back in Italy, relatives and people tend to identify them as “English”. This reminds me of Blommaert (2005) when he states that
identity is not always something we can choose, but actually “. . . regardless of whether one wants to belong to particular groups or not, one is often grouped by others . . .” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 205).

Overall, Francy and Elena seem to feel quite close to their Italian heritage for different reasons: family reasons, the impression to have traditions and languages that they cannot share with their friends in Calgary, or simply because they enjoy Italy for its warm weather or the sea. It could be argued that my presence, being myself from Italy, could have influenced them and led them to give me such answers. Still, when I entered their home and I started to speak Italian with their father, they immediately approached me speaking in Italian, questioning me about Italy, and showing curiosity and enthusiasm, which seemed to be genuine and in line with their comments during our interview. The children’s sense of closeness to the Italian heritage seems to reflect, to some extent, that of the father, who expressed a sense of pride for his Italian background as well.

Language Attitudes, Values, and Ideologies

The Father’s Positioning

When I asked Luigi more specifically about the Italian language and what it means for him now, he cited the importance of the language for family reasons and to keep alive the sense of belonging to the family they have in Italy. However, he also raised ideas around the idea of a language that can you give access to the richness of the Italian cultural heritage. In particular, when I asked him what advantages he thinks his children will have because they know the Italian language, he noted the idea of languages as “entry points” to different world perspectives that you cannot obtain by being monolingual:
L: Io vorrei dare alle mie bambine il linguaggio e dunque l’elemento fondamentale per poter anche loro avere una, quella che qui si chiama “entry point,” per capire il mondo ecco. Un forte background italiano ti fa andare, per esempio a vedere uno spettacolo o l’Opera con una certa chiave di lettura.

Thanks to the Italian language, one can access directly its cultural heritage, being able to appreciate it through its language. Luigi’s positioning was further explained when I asked him what would be lost if one day his children would lose the Italian language. Again he raised this idea of losing “una grande componente di cultura/ a large cultural component,” as well as the possibility of looking at the world from different windows and perspectives:

L: Sarebbe un modo (. ) di, di:: perdere un po’ i colori, ecco, i colori diversi di questo mondo. Sì.

L: It would be a way (. ) to, to:: lose somewhat the colours, the different colours of this world. Yes.

Losing the Italian language would mean losing the possibility of appreciating the diversity of this world. Such ideas around languages as a way to have access to the diversity of this world seem also to explain his choice to send Francy and Elena in a French Immersion School. For him this meant giving them an additional element of diversity:

L: Un elemento aggiuntivo, di varietà e diversità, come loro hanno l’italiano, potrebbero avere un po’ di francese.

L: An additional element, of variety and diversity, like they have Italian, they could have also a little bit of French.

Again, the idea of variety and diversity associated with languages seems to be very important for Luigi and is in line with what emerged in the previous section in relation to his identity as a citizen of the world. In the case of Luigi, however, the choice for French
was also determined by his hope that French could help the children’s Italian because of the linguistic similarities between the two languages.

Nevertheless, such cosmopolitan and open-minded ideas are not totally immune from some preference towards standard and correct ways of speaking such languages, whereby bilingualism or multilingualism tend to be conceived as the learning of two or more separate linguistic systems (Roy & Galiev, 2011). As mentioned in the previous section, Luigi’s Italian accent was seen as an issue at the beginning of his stay in Calgary. Considering the variety of the Italian language because of its dialects and regional varieties, he explained how he wants to convey a standard and “corretto / correct” Italian to his children with no dialectal or regional influence. Moreover, he complained how, at the beginning, Francy and Elena were speaking Italian with an English accent using a syntax that was closer to the English one. He is proud now that the two children are no longer doing this mixing according to him:

L: Sono riuscite secondo me, sia a livello proprio di come si mette la lingua, ad avere un accento molto, molto buono e sia a livello di grammatica, a capire che c’è una costruzione diversa nelle due lingue, che tutte e due si possono usare indipendentemente.

L: In my opinion they have been able to, both at the level of how to put the tongue, to have a very, very good accent and both at a grammar level, to understand that there is a different construction in the two languages, that both of them can be used independently.

Luigi made references to accent and grammar constructions, appreciating the fact that they are no longer influenced by the English, but the languages are kept separate, and the two languages “si possono usare indipendentemente / can be used independently” by the children, which is not what bilinguals actually do as they have a more complex and diversified mental arrangement that cannot be compared with that of monolinguals.
As argued by Grosjean (2000), expecting that bilinguals or multilinguals have a perfect and identical knowledge of their languages is a myth. He notes, “bilinguals know their languages to the level that they need them. . . . What is important to keep in mind is that bilinguals are very diverse, as are monolinguals” (Grosjean, 2000, para. 4).

Preference for standard and correct ways of speaking the Italian language is also shown in his decision not to send his children at the Saturday Calgary Italian School. Like the other families, he associated the school and the Calgary Italian Club with the previous generations of Italians, who arrived after the Second World War, and he commented on their Italian:

L: Probably people like me, who do not belong to that wave of Italians of 30 years ago, who have a different knowledge of the language, of the grammar, (.) do not have a great advantage in taking part to these initiatives, because their target group is still people, who have really, who are losing all the Italian language or who speak only the dialect and therefore they offer a minimum education in Italian and: also socially they are often people, who lost all bonds with Italy. If my children would go there, they should be the teachers that would be bizarre, yes.

According to him, the target group of the Calgary Italian Club and School belong to a generation of Italians who mainly speak the dialect or are losing the Italian language. As the other families, he tends to establish a net division between him of the new generation,
who speaks standard Italian, and the old generations, who do not seem to have such knowledge.

As for the English language, he considers it as a “linguaggio comune internazionale con il quale comunicare/ an international common language with which to communicate,” reflecting a common idea about English as an international and world language, as also emerged in the other families. However, when I asked him more specifically what language they use in the presence of non-Italian speakers, although he said that English was used as a way not to exclude the others, he still mentioned how he would not mind using Italian if he had to speak directly to the children or for reproaching them. This attitude was indeed different from the other families, who would have gone for English only. It is as if English is surely an international language, but still there is place for other languages too.

The Children’s Positioning

The children clearly specified to me that they enjoy speaking Italian and that was also evident by their initiative to speak to me in Italian as soon as I entered the house. Moreover, like for Luigi and as mentioned in the previous section, the Italian language is valuable because it represents a way to keep the bonds with their family in Italy alive. This shared language is treasured by everyone:

R: Che cos’è che vi piace della lingua italiana?
F: È come che stiamo là. È come siamo una parte della famiglia. Se non parliamo italiano, é come, non, non posso comunicare con la mia famiglia e::, e a me piace tanto la lingua italiana.
R: E per te?
E: Uguale.

R: What do you like about the Italian language?
F: It is like we were there. It is as if we are part of a family. If we don’t speak Italian, I wouldn’t be able to communicate with my family and::, and I really like a lot the Italian language.
R: And for you?
E: The same.
The children appreciate the value of the Italian language as a way to be able to communicate with their family. Moreover, they mentioned that they were lucky to speak more than one language and, interestingly, when I asked them why, they told me that if they travel to Mexico, for instance, they feel they can use Italian to communicate, being similar to Spanish. Interestingly, in Thea’s family Benjamin discussed a similar example about travelling to South America, using English as a language of worldwide communication, while Francy granted this role to the Italian language. This attitude seems to me to be a reflection of the father, where the dominance of the English language can be, to some extent, challenged by the linguistic diversity of this world and, therefore, Italian can have a role too.

Nonetheless, when I asked what language they prefer to speak among the languages they know, Francy immediately pointed out that Italian is perceived to be the most difficult one. The perception of the Italian language being difficult was also raised by Isabella in Anna and Nicola’s family and by Monica in Thea’s family. It was also noted that this difficulty was accompanied by high language standards imposed by the parents, who expressed quite a negative and judgmental view against the Italian spoken by their children. In this case, as previously described, Luigi showed a preference towards standard and correct ways of speaking languages, contrary to Anna and Nicola or Thea. It is worth mentioning that negative, judgmental, or sarcastic tones were not observed by me, neither did they emerge from the interview. As will be further examined in the next section, Luigi seems to show a more constructive approach in dealing with his children’s “mistakes” in Italian. It must be noted also that the perceived difficulty of the Italian language did not
prevent Francy and Elena from using the Italian language in my presence, while in Isabella and Fulmine’s and Monica’s cases, the English language was favoured.

Language Socialization Practices and Heritage Language Maintenance

When I visited Luigi for the interview, not only was the grandfather present, but there was a non-Italian speaking acquaintance as well. Therefore, I had the chance to observe the family interactions in this mixed situation and I could notice how Luigi and his children and the grandfather were switching between Italian and English within the same conversation among each other, unless they were speaking directly to their English speaking friend, and, in that case, English was used. Moreover, when the family was addressing me both during the interview and outside the interview setting, regardless of the presence of the non-Italian speaker, Italian only was used with me. In terms of language socialization of the children, such practices might implicitly send a positive message, where not only English, but other languages can simultaneously exist within the same conversation (Guardado, 2010).

Moreover, the children started to speak to me in Italian as soon as I entered their house, and when I asked them in what language they wanted to be interviewed, they enthusiastically replied “Italian,” making all possible efforts to use the language. As also mentioned by the father, I was able to observe that when the two girls spoke between each other, both Italian and English were used without necessarily favouring one over the other. The father explained to me that when he speaks with the two children, he tends to use Italian, unless:

$L$: ...c’è una necessità immediata di esprimere un concetto che (.) loro hanno

$L$: ... there is an immediate necessity to express a concept that (.) they only heard
A similar practice is used by Thea and her family, whereby English is used to express concepts that are more familiar to the children in English rather than in Italian. Luigi mentioned how sometimes he might get angry with the two children in English to get the message across well. It could be argued that these practices might socialize the children into an idea of English as being more effective than Italian and therefore more powerful (Garrett, 2011). Still Luigi’s family, contrary to that of Thea, seems to be quite successful in maintaining the Italian language, and this is despite the children being born in Canada and despite Luigi being on his own, not having an Italian partner. Nonetheless, if we go more in-depth to analyse the practices and choices of Luigi’s family, there are some peculiarities with regard to his situation and also some commonalities with Sara and Diego’s case, which might shed light on some possible interpretations and explain why Italian seems to find its place alongside English.

First of all, despite showing some preference for a standard and correct use of the language, contrary to the other families and more in line with Sara and Diego’s case, Luigi seems to show a constructive way of approaching his children’s mistakes in Italian. For example, he mentioned how he wants to avoid direct negative judgments against their mistakes, but he repeats the Italian sentence in a correct way, thus modelling indirectly. This practice might be encouraging for the children, who feel less devalued, even though they are still pushed to speak a good Italian (Garrett, 2011; Guardado, 2002).

Secondly, the fact of being on his own, along with a strong sense of attachment to the family in Italy, seems to have pushed him to do anything possible to keep this language
alive, and that translated into active strategies to preserve Italian. Luigi said how he encouraged reading Italian books and watching Italian films with his daughters. He also mentioned that he goes back to Italy with Francy and Elena at least twice a year, and they receive frequent visits from Italy. All of these practices indirectly socialize the children to the idea that Italian is a valuable language to keep.

Thirdly, the decision to put the girls into French Immersion was not only along the line of the idea of learning languages as an “elemento aggiuntivo di diversità / additional element of diversity,” as mentioned earlier, but Luigi was hoping that the French language could help reinforce the Italian language because of its similarities to Italian. Such a decision might further reinforce a language socialization that brings the children to indirectly value Italian. According to him, he actually started to notice a strong improvement in the Italian language, since Francy and Elena started French Immersion.

Finally, like Sara and Diego, Luigi shows no regrets for his new life in Canada and even feels like a citizen of the world, with no interest in focusing just on Italian events. No feelings of nostalgia around the learning of the Italian language or the Italian country are present, as is evident in Sara and Diego. Italian is a language that can give you access to a different way of looking at the world which a monolingual perspective cannot give you (Guardado, 2010). To some extent, all the other families mentioned such ideas, but Luigi seems to show a more relaxed attitude with no conflicting or nostalgic positioning, therefore allowing for a more peaceful and relaxed socialization into Italian, along with other languages, be these English or others, such as French in this family (Guardado, 2010).
CHAPTER NINE: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, a cross-case analysis will be employed where research questions will be answered by further analysing and discussing the emerging recurring themes across the family cases, highlighting comparisons and differences among the cases, and linking the findings with the existing literature (Merriam, 1998).

Going back to the research questions, what, then, are the language ideologies underlying the families’ language socialization practices and their identifications and positioning? Where do these ideologies come from? Why and what is the impact on the children’s linguistic future?

Three main themes have been identified in order to answer such questions. The first theme, “Ambivalence and Contradictions Around Italy and Italian”, focuses on the strong ties to family and the pride for being Italian, so heartily expressed by all the participants. In an historical context, this theme will further explore the origins of this attachment and will examine the contradictions about Italy and the Italian language, which emerged from the families and which impact their language socialization practices and identities. The second theme, “Perceptions and Attitudes Around the English Language”, follows from the previous theme and aims at analysing the relationship that each family has developed with the English language. This will examine the prestige with which English seems to be imbued in all the families, leading to different outcomes in terms of language socialization practices. The third theme, “Purism and Standard Language Ideologies”, goes to the heart
of one the most recurring themes of the study, and it is further divided into four
subsections. The first subsection, “Relations Between Standard Language Ideologies in
Italy and in the Families in Calgary”, examines the links between standard language
ideologies in Italy and in the four families in Calgary and how such ideologies are reflected
in the micro interactions of these families. The second subsection, “Parents’ Perceptions on
Children’s Ability in Italian”, studies, in more detail, how standard language ideologies are
embedded in the families’ perceptions of their children’s skills in Italian and how these
ideologies can have an impact on language socialization practices and heritage language
maintenance. The third subsection, “Families’ Relations With the Italian Community in
Calgary”, analyses how standard language ideologies are intertwined in the families’
positioning with the Calgary Italian Club and, in particular, with the Calgary Italian School,
revealing further insights on the language socialization dynamics within the families. The
fourth subsection, “Standard Language Ideologies and Multilingualism”, highlights how a
recurring theme in the interviews with the families about the advantages of being
multilingual can be a potential alternative ideology to foster heritage language maintenance
(Guardado, 2010), but a purist and standard way of seeing the different languages and
power issues can inhibit and “sabotage” the potential advantages of diversity and
multilingualism (Grosjean, 2000; Roy & Galiev, 2011).

In the following sections, I will answer my research questions by analysing and
discussing each theme in detail.
Theme One: Ambivalence and Contradictions Around Italy and Italian

All of the families of my study, both parents and children, clearly expressed a position in which Italy and the Italian language are positively associated with discourses around family and biological roots and pride in a great cultural and artistic heritage. All of the children claim a strong attachment to an Italian identity, and this happens regardless of the actual use of the Italian language or of language socialization practices that favour the Italian language. In particular, in Anna and Nicola’s and Thea’s families, English tends to be favoured, illustrating how a strong sense of belonging and pride about Italy and Italian does not automatically translate into socialization practices that favour the heritage language. This seems to be in contrast with other studies (Li, 2006; Schecter & Bayley, 1997), whereby a strong attachment and sense of pride towards the country of origin go hand in hand with active language socialization practices that help maintain the heritage language, as seen in the Literature Review section.

However, in the case of these Italian families, this sense of pride and attachment is not so clear-cut. In all four families, pride and attachment to Italy and its language are also accompanied by negative attitudes and comments. All parents make reference to the economic difficulties Italy is facing, recognizing Canada as a land of economic and professional opportunities that Italy cannot offer. In the eyes of these parents, Canada is perceived as being multicultural, open minded, and meritocratic, in contrast to Italy. Moreover, despite claiming that Italian is a language that could grant access to a rich historical and cultural heritage, and one of which they are proud, nevertheless, all four families also perceive Italian to be in a weak position in the context of Calgary and
worldwide, especially in relation to English. The English language is accorded a high level of prestige from all four families. Besides, both Anna and Luigi even mentioned feeling initially ashamed of their Italian accent.

Although generalizations are hard to make with case studies, in terms of language socialization, two different situations can be identified within the contradictions and ambivalences surrounding the Italian language and Italy and how they are resolved within each of the four families. On one side, Anna and Nicola’s and Thea’s families position themselves in a more conflicted, nostalgic way regarding their new life in Canada and Italy than the other two families. Anna and Nicola are not sure if they want to stay in Canada. They deeply miss Italy, but they also like their new life in Canada. Thea still feels much attached to Italy and misses it a lot; at the same time, she recognizes the value of being in Canada. Interestingly, these two families also display a lack of direct activities and strategies to maintain the Italian language, indirectly socializing the children to gradually approach the English language.

On the other side, in Sara and Diego’s and Luigi’s cases, despite the contradictions they express around Italy and Italian, no conflicting or nostalgic views seem to emerge. Both families seem to accept their new life in Canada, without showing internal struggles. Luigi seems to have found his identity as a “citizen of the world”. As a child, Diego experienced a life outside Italy and seems to be more aware and realist about the implications of it. In contrast to the other two families, these two families are also more active in practices to maintain the Italian language by reading stories or encouraging the viewing of Italian films and cartoons, for example. However, it could be also argued that
the young age of their children facilitate the possibility of spending more time with them and, therefore, a more successful socialization into Italian. Especially, Sara and Diego expressed a strong need for the entire family to integrate into the Canadian society. It could be argued that, in the future, such a position could potentially challenge the further growth of Italian in their children, especially when they will get older and move further from the family, as is happening in both Thea’s and Anna and Nicola’s cases. Despite the parents’ willingness to maintain the language, the ambiguous messages and attitudes conveyed to the children from the parents in relation to Italy and the Italian language could easily translate into unconscious language socialization practices and choices that favour the dominant language, in this case English, as also emerged in other language socialization studies (Garrett, 2011; Li, 2006).

As mentioned in the Literature Review, we can see that issues centering around identities, positioning, and their relation to language ideologies and socialization practices are complex processes, often surrounded by contradictions, ambivalences, and struggles, all of which can change over time through ongoing social interactions (Garrett, 2011; Giampapa, 2004; He, 2011).

In the specific case of Italy, such contradictions and ambivalences around the language and country find an explanation in its history, as suggested in the Theoretical Framework of this thesis (Blommaert, 1999, 2005). While an answer to these questions requires an examination of the role played by different ideologies and attitudes, which range from the perceptions of the English language to the role of standard language ideologies, as analysed in the next themes, a preliminary answer can be found by exploring
the historical origins of this attachment to family and pride in the Italian artistic heritage, and how these factors are related to the Italian language, to the Italian state, and to the present (Blommaert, 2005, 2010).

Firstly, we have to look at the lack of a traditional discourse in the history of Italy. Within this traditional discourse, which became stronger at the end of the 19th century in several European countries, a nation’s pride was associated with a sense of pride for its language and for its state (Heller & Duchêne, 2012). However, for Italy, this association has always been more controversial because of its history. When Italy was unified in 1861, it imposed a standard Italian on its population as a symbol of the new country. In reality, standard Italian was used by only 2.5% of the population, mainly by the intellectual elite (De Mauro, 2008). Therefore, throughout their history, Italians hardly ever experienced a sense of national unity and cohesion through one standard language. As further explained by Simone (1997), Italy had always been lacking a “. . . big historical event, a unifying event, which could aggregate around the language a variety of interests and popular causes, as it happened with the protestant reform, or if you want, the French Revolution. . .”11 (p.32). Moreover, before its unification, Italy endured frequent dominations throughout the centuries, which further prevented the development of a national sense of belonging around a language (De Mauro, 2008; Simone, 1997).

Consequently, as Magatti (2003) notes, people started to develop a detached attitude towards political institutions in general, quoting a well-known proverb, “Whether

11 The original text in Italian is, “La mancanza di un grande evento storico unificante, che aggregasse attorno alla lingua una varietà di interessi e cause popolari, come sono stati la riforma protestante o se volete la Rivoluzione francese” (Simone, 1997, p. 32).
we’re ruled by France or Spain, it’s enough that one eats” (p.199). That is to say that regardless of who is in power, what counts is the need for survival. Throughout the centuries, the majority of Italians has been gradually developing the perception that any political and/or governmental institutions, even those created after the unification of Italy up to the present day, have been incapable of solving their everyday problems (Magatti, 2003). As further explained by Magatti (2003), “the Italians have had to get used to basing their identity on something other than the institutional order” (p.198), and, I would add, other than one language as well. For the majority of the population, this “other than the institutional order” finds its expression in the family, one of the main institutions Italians could trust the most. This familial attachment could compensate for the lack of a trustworthy and unified institutional and political reference (Magatti, 2003). This “other than the institutional order” also finds its expression in turning toward aesthetical values or love for art (Bassetti, 2003). It could be argued that for any group all over the world, family and artistic heritage are important values, but for Italians this attachment and pride also secure their roots within the specific historical and political context of Italy. This explains why one can feel proud of being Italian and, at the same time feel ashamed, as mentioned by Anna or Luigi. This sense of shame is often addressed toward Italian political institutions, which have often been perceived as weak or incompetent to meet the needs of the population throughout the history of Italy (Magatti, 2003).

Bassetti (2003) even uses the term *Italic* instead of Italian to underscore how such aesthetic and familial values have nothing to do with the Italian state and its institutions. More specifically, Bassetti (2003) refers to the idea of *Italicity* to identify the existence of
an imagined transnational community of Italic people, who share common values, such as
the attachment to family ties or aesthetical values. These values become, therefore, part of
a common discourse with which the majority of Italians can recognise and identify
themselves, as expressed, in fact, by the participants (Gee, 2011). Historically, the roots of
this transnational community lie in the emigration of Italic people, from at least the
beginning of the Middle Ages (Bassetti, 2003). These were merchants, bankers, artists,
university teachers, churchmen, artisans, who travelled all over Europe and the world,
distinguishing themselves through their works in different fields and contributing to the
expansion of the values of Italicity all over Europe and the world (Bassetti, 2003).

To better understand the participants’ language attitudes, it is important to note that
this affiliation with Italicity does not necessarily involve the Italian language (Bassetti,
2003). Standard Italian has been symbol of an Italian state, which has been perceived as
distant, politically weak, and unsupportive in the past and present (Magatti, 2003).
Consequently, the language, the symbol of this Italian state, loses its value as a cohesive,
strong, and unifying element for which Italians can feel proud (Magatti, 2003). As Bassetti
(2003) notes, Italicity refers to a “belonging in the widest ‘cultural’ sense: not as ethnic or
linguistic belonging as with those of Italian origin or who speak the Italian language or as
the legal or institutional belonging of Italian citizens” (p. 13). One can feel deeply attached
to Italian values for family reasons or for the Italian aesthetic and artistic heritage without
necessarily speaking the Italian language, maybe even claiming to be Italian, without
speaking the language (Bassetti, 2003). This explains why regardless of the perceived level
of the Italian language or its actual use, all the children in the present study claim
confidently their affiliation, pride, and sense of belonging to Italy and claim to be Italian. We can argue as well that such claims from the children are also due to the tendency of children, especially if very young, to reproduce the same discourses as parents; while this might be the case, for the Italian situation, I would also add the above historical perspective to better explain the contradictions children and parents expressed around Italy and the Italian language.

Proceeding from these points, a second issue needs to be taken into consideration. That refers to the perceived lack, not only of a strong and cohesive political power and its relation with language as seen above, but also to the perceived weakness of the economic power of the Italian state by the four families of my study. In the perceptions of the four families, the Italian language struggles to be seen as a profitable commodity (Heller & Duchêne, 2012). Heller and Duchêne (2012) explain how, in the globalized economy of today, languages need to develop discourses not only around a strong political or cultural identity, but also around the idea of representing an economic added value for a certain community, group, or state. As explained in the Theoretical Framework, the position of a state at the worldwide level as an economic entity and how it is perceived by people need to be taken into account in the analysis of discourses and of language practices at micro levels (Blommaert, 2005, 2010). Italy is clearly not perceived as an economic superpower by the participants of the study. As a global and economic player, Italy finds itself in an ambiguous and fragile position. Therefore, as was seen above in the political arena, this weak economic position is also reflected in the way the language is perceived by people—not as a language of strong economic power, like English (Vedovelli, 2005). As noticed by
Polezzi (2012), the “role of Italy within this wider map is, in itself, complicated. Italy is at once an integral part of the West (understood as a cultural, economic and political center) and one of its peripheries” (p. 97). Dainotto (2007) notes, how within the map of Europe, the southern countries of Europe, such as Italy, Spain, or Portugal, have been historically perceived and positioned by Europeans for being economically and politically more backward than countries in the North or Central Europe, such as France or Germany. Although no specific references to Europe emerge during the interviews, the negative perceptions of Italy being economically, as well as politically weak, are manifested clearly in the interviews with the four families and, therefore, create ambiguous feelings towards the Italian language as well. These perspectives show that when dealing with identities issues, no matter how we position ourselves, it is often a matter of how others position us, in this case how Italy has been positioned by other Europeans, and this might have consequences at the local level, even in family interactions (Blommaert, 2005, 2010; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

The fragility of the Italian language is also noted by Vedovelli (2005) when he refers more generally to the Italian language, when it is studied outside Italy as a foreign language. Based on few surveys, carried out in the last years, people choose to study Italian mainly for its historic and cultural heritage and for family reasons, especially among large communities of Italians in the second, third, or even fourth generation (Vedovelli, 2005). These are discourses, which have also been raised by the participants of this study, and which could potentially represent alternative counterdiscourses to the dominance of English (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Vedovelli, 2005). However, as argued by Haller
(2012) and Vedovelli (2005), the economic value of a language plays an important role in
the choice of a foreign language to study, as also pointed out earlier by Heller and Duchêne
(2012). Therefore, alternative discourses (e.g., cultural heritage, family, love for the Italian
history and art, etc.) might still be fragile (Vedovelli, 2005) and become even more
difficult to justify in the current economic situation of Italy and its economic crisis, where
even Italians are gradually starting to emigrate. Indeed, as noticed by Macchiarella (1997),
in the United States, in the schools where Italian is offered, if there are fiscal difficulties,
Italian is the first language to be dropped, before French, Spanish, or German. As Lèbano
(1997) points out, “in this country [in the USA], whether we like it or not, the acquisition
of knowledge is a consumer’s good, and, as such, is subject to that basic economic
principle of supply and demand” (p.59). This weak position of the Italian language also
seems to be felt by my participants and might put constraints on a successful heritage
language socialization.

However, a discussion on the language socialization of these families would be
incomplete if the perceptions and attitudes of the host country and its dominant language
(Li, 2006), in this context, English, are not taken into account, as explained in the next
theme.

**Theme Two: Perceptions and Attitudes Around the English Language**

A recurring theme emerging from the four families refers to the prestige accorded
to the English language and to Canada. In this section, I will reflect on why and in what
sense, English plays a role in the socialization practices and attitudes of the families,
analysing not only the role of English at a general and worldwide level, but also analysing what the English language specifically means for Italians and for Italy.

In the specific case of immigrant families, when the perceptions and attitudes, hence the ideologies around their heritage language, are weak and even negative, such weaknesses might easily leave an open space for the dominant language spoken in the host country, in terms of language socialization practices (Li, 2006). The findings of the present study show how English enjoys a fairly high prestige among these families, which can raise concerns, as in the cases of Anna and Nicola’s or Thea’s families, in which the children show the tendency to favour English over Italian in several situations.

In comparison with the previous generations of Italians in the North American context, who left Italy after the Second World War, this potential shift to English, as seen in Anna and Nicola’s and Thea’s families, does not occur because of the dialect. The dialect was often dominant in those generations and perceived inferior to standard Italian and English (Bettoni, 2007). These generations felt the pressure to integrate into the host society, often coming from poor backgrounds, thereby favouring English, the language that would have helped them successfully integrate (Bettoni, 2007; Cavallaro, 2010). All the parents claim, and as I could observe too, to use only standard Italian. This corresponds to the general trend nowadays in Italy to use standard Italian or regional Italian and less and less dialect (Berruto, 1998; Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Still, at least in two families, the absence of the dialect or other perceived low varieties does not prevent the children from gradually shifting to English.
Moreover, these families of the current generation did not have the pressure to integrate into the Canadian society professionally, as they are all successful professionals, who felt and still feel fairly at ease with their job and social status in Canada. During the interviews, I asked how they transitioned from Italy into their new life; none claimed to have had a negative experience. Their situation, therefore, contrasts with the findings of other studies, such as that of Li (2006), whereby it was shown how a positive initial experience in the host country, along with the feeling to greatly contribute professionally, were also accompanied by an active interest in the families to retain the heritage language. This is not necessarily the case in Anna and Nicola’s and Thea’s families.

Moreover, the high level of education of parents does not seem to be a factor that influences the language socialization practices, in contrast with a study from Guardado (2002), in which parents with a low socioeconomic status were less successful than highly educated families in socializing children into the heritage language and were showing, instead, a shift to English. Despite a high educational level in Anna and Nicola’s and Thea’s families, their language socialization practices tend to favour English, with no specific or direct strategies to keep Italian.

There are instead other factors that can explain why English is enjoying such a prestige in these Italian families. First of all, English is the official language of Alberta and one of the official languages of Canada and, therefore, enjoys full legitimization by all institutions, the education system, and the media, to mention a few (Bourdieu, 1991). As argued by Bourdieu (1991), the official language tends to impose itself as the most dominant one, which could give speakers access to the economic and social capital of the
country whose official language it is. In this regard, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) explain, “a corollary of such linguistic ideology is that speakers of official languages or standard varieties may be regarded as having greater moral and intellectual worth than speakers of unofficial languages or non-standard varieties” (p.15). In the specific context of Alberta and Canada, the situation is even more complex though. Roy and Barrett (submitted) have shown how despite the rhetoric of a multicultural and welcoming Alberta promoted by local governments, even French, which is one of the official languages in Canada, struggles to find its recognition in Alberta, and immigrants are reminded that it is English only they need to learn properly if they wish to succeed educationally or professionally. If we take into consideration this context and we match it with the fragile position of Italian, this might create even more pressure on the non-speakers of the official language, in this case Italians, to indirectly or directly empower English, maybe even against their heritage language (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). This might also partly explain why the families claim the importance of switching to English in presence of non-Italian speakers, as a form of respect.

Furthermore, English is not just the official language of Alberta or one of the official languages of Canada. English also enjoys a special status as a global language, as often discussed by the literature (Crystal, 1997). As Crystal (1997) points out, English was “in the right place at the right time” (p.110). England and the USA have been enjoying political and economic power through the last centuries. That created the conditions for English to develop into a lingua franca, establishing an economic power that might become difficult to challenge (Crystal, 1997).
Nevertheless, as argued by Blommaert (2010), when analysing linguistic practices at a local level, vis-à-vis the political and economic power of the English language, we should go beyond the claim that English is a global language or even an “agent of oppression or minorization” (p.195) to analyse what English actually means for Italians and for Italy, within its historical and sociocultural context, and how all this translates to the context of Calgary in the immigrant families.

In the specific case of Italy and Italians, English holds a great fascination for Italians (Taglialatela, 2011). Newspapers in Italy widely use English terms and very often they do not even provide an explication or a translation, even when the term is technical (Taglialatela, 2011). As I could notice myself in Italy, most toys aimed at developing literacy in children are now bilingual, English and Italian, and not in other languages.

How the Italian state has been positioning itself at a worldwide level, and how it is consequently perceived locally by its people, is important to understand attitudes about the English language (Blommaert, 2005, 2010). As explained in the Theoretical Framework, despite globalization, the state has not lost its power, especially in terms of language policies (Blommaert, 2005, 2010). In fact, as stated by Taglialatela (2011), “the language is normally the mirror of the politics of a country”12 (p.70). First of all, as Taglialatela (2011) observes, since the Second World War, Italy has had the tendency to follow a pro-American political stance, which, in turn, impacted the Italian language. As noticed by Taglialatela (2011), Italian politicians love to use English words, even when the Italian

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12 The original text in Italian is, “La lingua é di norma specchio della politica di un Paese” (Taglialatela, 2011, p. 70).
version of the English words exists. As noted by Pinnavaia (2005), since the end of the Second World War, the “English term recreated the climate of victory, of wealth, of light heartedness, of pragmatism, which the Italian population associated with England and the United States, a situation that mainly for economic reasons continues until nowadays”\textsuperscript{13} (as cited in Taglialatela, 2011, p.72).

Secondly, alongside these images of economic success and victory towards English speaking countries, as perceived by most Italians, Taglialatela (2011) also explains how Italian politics has been always weak in defending the Italian language through specific policies and laws, such as the Toubon law in France of 1994, wherein the use of English terms was restricted by law, sending ambivalent and mixed messages about the role of the Italian language. As Robustelli (2003) observes, the Italian linguistic policies have been and are rather “bland as far as the interest and the promotion of the national languages are concerned”\textsuperscript{14} (as cited in Taglialatela, 2011, p. 74). Taglialatela (2011) adds that Italy has always lacked a strong “metalinguistic awareness” (p.74) of the Italian language from political institutions, that is the lack of critical and productive reflections on the role of the Italian language, of its valorization, and especially of policies, which could promote plurilingualism to offer a counterdiscourse to the hegemonic presence of English (Taglialatela, 2011). As seen in the Context chapter, a political attempt, through the establishment of the High Council of the Italian Language (\textit{Consiglio superiore della})

\textsuperscript{13} The original text in Italian is as follows: Il termine inglese ricreava il clima di vittoria, di benessere, di spensieratezza, di positività che agli occhi degli italiani erano rappresentati dall’Inghilterra e dagli Stati Uniti d’America, un fatto che per motivi principalmente economici si è protratto fino ai nostri giorni. (Pinnava, 2005, as cited in Taglialatela, 2011, p. 72)

\textsuperscript{14} The original text in Italian is, “blanda per quanto riguarda l’interesse e la promozione della lingua nazionale” (Robustelli, 2003, as cited in Taglialatela, 2011, p. 74).
lingua Italiana), promotes the Italian language and culture in Italy and abroad against any type of misuse, which has, however, adopted purist and protective attitudes towards the Italian language (Savoia, 2004). As will be further analysed in the next section, purist attitudes might not necessarily be the best approach to socialize children into a language, setting high, unrealistic standards about the language and creating even more of a sense of detachment or frustration between the language and its speakers (Garrett, 2011; Riley, 2011).

This attraction towards the English language, which is so much embedded in the past and present of Italy, offers therefore an extra piece of the puzzle, which can further explain the ideological background behind the language socialization practices of the Italian families in Calgary. Another piece of the puzzle is also represented by the role enacted by standard language ideologies.

**Theme Three: Purism and Standard Language Ideologies**

*Relations Between Standard Language Ideologies in Italy and in the Families in Calgary*

Purism and standard language ideologies normally refer to a set of beliefs, ideas, and attitudes that involve the perception of distinct languages with specific linguistic rules and norms to be followed (Riley, 2011; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Purist attitudes involve the urge to speak languages in a perfect and correct way following strict linguistic standards. The reasons for this urge often lie within the historical and political contexts of the nationalist ideologies, which were strong all over Europe in the 19th century (Riley, 2011; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Emerging from the findings, issues around the use of
a correct way of speaking Italian, which favour a native speaker and a perfect form of Italian, have been raised by all of the families.

The presence of this ideology in the families’ discourses can be explained by looking at what happens in present-day Italy. As examined in the Context chapter, now in Italy the dominant ideology holds that any variation from a standard form of Italian would be considered questionable, inappropriate, and in some cases might indicate a lack of education (Guerini, 2011; Lorenzetti, 2002). Therefore, it is not surprising that the parents of these families replicate this ideology in their socialization practices.

This devotion to a perfect way of speaking Italian becomes emblematic in the continuous references to grammar both by the parents and children of this study. As mentioned by Woolard and Schieffelin (1994), the role of grammar is an important aspect to be considered in analysing language practices. In the case of Italy, grammar seems to become one of the most important ways of expressing such standard languages ideologies. In the Context chapter, I noted how Italian schools give importance to the systematic study of grammar from early grades. It is interesting to see here the link between the state and the education system, whereby the education system becomes an important medium of reproduction of state ideologies (Bourdieu, 1991). It is also interesting to notice how the huge role played by grammar seems to go hand in hand with a weak political power of the Italian governmental institutions. It is as if the imposition of a standard language through a systematic and intensive study of its grammar could compensate for that lack of political, sociocultural, and sociolinguistic unity that has always characterized Italy. Although it could be argued that I have gone too far in this last interpretation, Blommaert (2005) claims
that the “state has the capacity to provide an infrastructure for the reproduction of a particular regime of languages” (p.219). This infrastructure is provided by the media, cultural institutions, and in particular, by the education system (Blommaert, 2005).

Nevertheless, if we consider that a small country like Italy possesses one of the highest Linguistic Diversity Indexes in Europe, only after Belgium (Lorenzetti, 2002), such devotion to standard and purist ideologies around Italian might seem ironic. Although we could argue that the Italianization envisioned by the politicians of the 19th century has finally been achieved and that all of the parents of the study claim to use a standard form of Italian, in reality, from a descriptive point of view, the situation in Italy is linguistically still quite varied (Coveri et al., 1998; Lorenzetti, 2002). Based on my personal experience, even those who claim to speak a standard form of Italian might make use of regional expressions, which sometimes are even believed to be standard forms and are not understood by Italians of other regions. The problem with ideologies is that, regardless of what it is real, they become real the moment people start to believe in them. Once they enter a system of reproduction through the education system or the media, for example, they start to affect people’s lives (Blommaert, 2005). In the case of this study, they start to travel from Italy to Calgary into the microcosm of the families’ language socialization, as discussed in more detail in the following section.

Parents’ Perceptions on Children’s Ability in Italian

References to a standard language of Italian to be spoken correctly are emphasized, in particular, in the parents’ comments and evaluations of their children’s skills to speak Italian, but such standard and purist language ideologies are embedded in the language
socialization practices of the families in different ways, with a different impact on each family.

Although the lack of long-term observations does not allow me to make a direct correlation between standard and purism language ideologies and their impact on heritage language maintenance, a pattern can be noticed. The two families, Sara and Diego’s and Luigi’s, who are more successful with the heritage language maintenance, are also the ones who express fewer negative judgements and are more constructive in dealing with the children’s Italian. Luigi reports the use of indirect ways of correcting the children without imposing pressure on them. Sara and Diego seem to be more realistic and relaxed in their expectations of the children’s level of Italian, being aware that their Italian will not be perfect. These practices might leave the children feeling more relaxed and less inhibited to speak and use Italian or other languages, even when they are not perfect (Garrett, 2011; Riley, 2011).

Instead, when the evaluations and perceptions of parents are more pessimistic or negative, like in Anna and Nicola’s and Thea’s families, with a constant reference to a perfect form, frequent direct corrections, or even sarcasm, Italian struggles to find a peaceful cohabitation in children’s lives, who feel that they are struggling or that they are losing the language. Such practices might indirectly socialize the children to favour English, where children feel more in control and safe, contrary to Italian (Garrett, 2011; Riley, 2011).

Indeed, the findings of the present study seem to correspond with that of other studies, such as that of Guardado (2002) or Garrett (2011). These studies show, in fact, a
positive link between encouraging and non-judgemental comments from parents and heritage language maintenance in children (Guardado, 2002). Interestingly, the opposite is also true. Strict evaluations or sarcastic attitudes from parents can inhibit the use of the heritage language in children and indirectly socialize the children to use the language they feel more at ease (Garrett, 2011).

In line with the above, what emerges from the present study is that one of the most critical issues for parents in a multilingual setting is the tendency to treat multilingualism as the perfect knowledge of two or more separate languages, by applying a standard language ideology to their language socialization practices (Grosjean, 2000; Roy & Galiev, 2011). As Grosjean (2000) notes, multilinguals possess a more complicated mental arrangement, which distinguishes them from monolingual speakers. Hence, a strict separation of two or more languages might be an unrealistic expectation, leading only to frustration in those children who might feel never up to such standards. This correlates with studies in other domains (Roy & Galiev, 2011). Therefore, when dealing with immigrant children in multilingual settings, the framework of reference can no longer be the monolingual or the standard one, reflecting a native Italian stance, practiced in Italy. This can represent a challenge for some parents who might simply not be aware that, for example, code switching is a common practice in multilinguals and not a sign of lack of knowledge or improper use of the languages (Grosjean, 2000), especially when coming from countries like Italy, whereby purism and standard ways of speaking languages generally index very positive traits. As also noted by Roy and Galiev (2011), “denigration of code-switching can . . . contribute to negative self-identity in bilinguals so that, in a bid to preserve the ‘purity’
of languages, bilinguals may run the risk of marginalizing their own bilingual experience” (p. 366) and might, therefore, grant primacy to the dominant language. The issue is that not all parents might be aware or naturally inclined to use more constructive and educational approaches, as Sara and Diego or Luigi, especially when coming from countries like Italy, where the teaching of Italian involves mainly strict application of grammar rules.

Nevertheless, standard language ideologies represent only one part of the issue. Such perfectionist and purist attitudes need to be examined against issues of power. As analysed in the previous sections, in the mind of these Italian families, the Italian language is in a fragile position against English or even other languages. Imposing on the children a perfect and standard reference adds, therefore, an extra complexity to the Italian language, which can quickly discourage a peaceful socialization of the heritage language along with English, as seen for instance in Isabella, Fulmine, or Monica.

A further problem is highlighted by the fact that the only institutions that promote the Italian language in Calgary are not considered to be valuable resources by the parents of this study, as examined in the next section.

*Families’ Relations With the Italian Community in Calgary*

By relations with the Italian community, I am referring to the relations families have with the Calgary Italian Club and the Calgary Italian School (see Context chapter for description).

As revealed from the findings, none of the four families attend events of the Calgary Italian Club and are not sending the children to the Calgary Italian School. They tend to establish, instead, a net division between these institutions, which represent, in their
minds, the old generation of Italians, and themselves, members of the new generation. This division is not actually neutral and camouflages a standard language and purist approach, where, from the perspective of these families, the only Italian that is legitimized is the one spoken by native speakers in Italy, an Italian, which is not perceived to be in the hands of these two institutions.

Firstly, within this division of generations, as established by the families of the study, concepts of what it means to be “Italian” refer more to an imagined community, to a political and historical construction (Kroskrity, 2000). In reality, behind the concept of what it means to be “Italian” there are shades of nuances, which challenge the notion of group homogeneity. These nuances are not neutral, but hierarchies are established among those who claim to be Italian and speak Italian (Blommaert, 2005, 2010; Kroskrity, 2000). Among this “Italian community” in Calgary, the Italians of my study who arrived in recent years, tend to establish themselves as having a better Italian, the standard Italian. This standard Italian is the language they intend to pass on to their children—the Italian which has been imposed gradually by the Italian state and the education system, since the unification (Blommaert, 2005; Bourdieu, 1991). Indeed, as stated by Kroskrity (2000), “language ideologies represent the perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social and cultural group” (p.8), in this case in the interest of the new generation of Italians. In the mind of these Italians, those Italian immigrants who arrived after the Second World War, and their second and third generations, tend to be indirectly associated, for historical reasons, with the dialect, which has generally negative connotations in Italy (Guerini, 2011). It must be noted that dialects were still very
dominant in Italy after the Second World War and, therefore, in the generations, who left Italy around those times (Sobrero & Miglietta, 2006). Most of the members of the Calgary Italian Club belong to that generation, as also confirmed to me during the interview with one of the representatives of the Calgary Italian Club (personal communication, November 18, 2013). The issue is not so much that all new Italians should attend the events of the Calgary Italian Club, but it arises when negative judgements, such as being judged as “backward”, “old fashioned”, or using sarcasm, are applied, denying or simplifying the variety and the history of what also means to be Italian (Blommaert, 2005). This process is what Irvine and Gal (2000) define as iconization:

Iconization involves a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social images with which they are linked. Linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group’s inherent nature or essence. (p. 37)

In short, this means how language varieties, ways of speaking, or dialects can be associated in the mind of people, often in a subconscious way, with personality traits, which lead to judgements, such as being viewed as “educated”, “smart”, or “backward”, and this is explained by historical and political reasons, as the case of Italy (Irvine & Gal, 2000). Other studies have also pointed out how sarcasm, as occasionally used by Nicola for example, is often a subtle way, masked by humour, to denigrate languages and their speakers (Hill, 1998; Ronkin & Karn, 1999).
A second point of discussion, which follows the one above, refers to how linguistic resources that are valued in one context are not valued in another, as mentioned in the Theoretical Framework (Blommaert, 2005, 2010). This is particularly evident in the relations with the Calgary Italian School. The Italian used and taught in the Calgary Italian School seems to be quite valued by the school itself. This is evident to me through an analysis of its websites. Its websites’ pages are rich with pictures showing the involvement of children in language and cultural activities, which relate to Italy (e.g., Christmas, the Epiphany, Italian Carnival, the Festival of the Italian Regions, etc.), as well as other events involving students, such as graduations, Student of Month event, and so forth (Calgary Italian Club, 2013c). Moreover, for children the learning experience can be quite valuable at an academic level; in fact, “upon completion of their courses, students of Italian 10, 20, and 30 receive credits through Alberta Learning” (Calgary Italian School, 2013a, para.1). During the interview, I learned that the school can offer a valuable option for those newly arrived Italian families whose children are gradually shifting to English (personal communication, November 16, 2013). Despite such recognitions, the parents in this study display different views with regard to the Italian offered by the school. The standard Italian spoken in Italy tends to be seen as the reference, the norm, against which the Italian taught at the Calgary Italian School is compared, and value judgments such as “bad” or “low level”, are applied by the families. Once again, my point is not that all Italian children, newly immigrated to Calgary, should attend the Calgary Italian School. Rather, ideologies, in general, but in this case standard language and native speaker ideologies can be so embedded in how we interpret the world that they lead us to see the world only from one
perspective, denying access to the complexity and variety behind some situations (Blommaert, 2005; Kroskrity, 2000). These families tend to associate the Calgary Italian School mainly with the second or third generations, who are not considered to be native speakers. In particular, Anna and Nicola were looking for a school sponsored by the Italian government. They tended to focus mainly on the fact that the curriculum of the Calgary Italian School was not that of the Italian government, as taught in Italian schools; therefore it could not be good or suitable enough for them. It can be noticed how, despite globalisation and mobility of people, the Italian state, through the education system, is still an indirect, important reference for people and mirrors the Calgary experience of the families (Blommaert, 2005, 2010).

Such relations between the new generation of Italians and the rest of the Italian community bring me to reflect further on the impact of standard language ideologies in terms of denial or simplification of perspectives. People often tend to speak only from a specific point in history, simplifying the diversity and complexity of other groups or of their own group, as the Italians of the study tend to do with the two institutions (Blommaert, 2005, 2010). Blommaert (2005) refers for example to a “denial” in these terms:

It is a denial of the complexity of the particular position from which one speaks, and of differences between that position and that of others. Instead we get a flat comparison within one time-frame, the present, our experiential present, denying the rather fundamental differences between such time-scales and the various positions people assume on such scales. (p.136)
People tend to apply their historical criteria and categories to other groups, valuing themselves as better and the other groups as problematic, normalizing this application of criteria and categories, without questioning it (Blommaert, 2005). Having only the standard form as main reference leads this new generation to impose value judgements against the previous generations, to overlook or simplify the complexity of what it means to be Italian, its variety, its history, without realizing that their children no longer live in a monolingual situation like in Italy—if actually it has ever existed in Italy—but they are exposed to a much more complex linguistic and sociocultural background, using at least two languages, English and Italian.

Finally, the positioning of the families with regard to the two institutions can send indirect messages to children that only native speakers and standard ways of speaking the languages are valued, indirectly socializing the children into the ideology that hybrid linguistic forms or regional varieties are instead to be avoided (Garrett, 2011; Kroskrity, 2000). Moreover, such attitudes risk socializing the children into an idea that denies the value of the linguistic varieties, so distinctive of the history of Italy and so visible, even when you travel to Italy.

Standard Language Ideologies and Multilingualism

By multilingualism, I refer to a recurring theme raised by the families, whereby the knowledge or transmission of Italian or other languages, is considered to provide children with a cognitive advantage—one which can facilitate the learning of other languages and especially can give access to a different way of seeing the world and other cultures, opening the mind, becoming socialized into an identity as a “citizen of the world”, as
mentioned by Luigi. In that sense, multilingualism seems to be quite valued in these families, as also seen in the study from Guardado (2010) with Spanish speaking families in Vancouver, as reported in the Literature Review.

In particular, these ideas appear to be supported by the perceptions these parents have about Canada. When I asked what they like about Canada, all families strongly supported the idea of Canada as an open-minded and multicultural country. Canada’s bilingual historical background and its past as a country with open immigration policies might partly explain, why these families perceive Canada that way, as was also shown in studies with earlier generations of Italians, who arrived after the Second World War (Wood, 2002). Again, as mentioned in the Theoretical Framework, it is interesting to see that what happens at higher levels, the politics and history of a country like Canada, might enter the local and the micro interactions of the family and can be renegotiated through language choices and practices, socializing also children into such ideologies (Blommaert, 2005, 2010; Garrett, 2011).

Nevertheless, although these families all claim to value the knowledge of more than one language, they expect that all such languages have to be spoken following certain standards and possibly in a perfect way, with the risk of not appreciating the complexity and hybrid situation, as experienced by multilingual children, losing the possibility of socializing these children into becoming actually multilingual (Grosjean, 2000). Positive ideas around the value of multilingualism cannot thrive unless the frame of reference changes from a standard and purist way of seeing languages to a heteroglossic view. More realistically, multilinguals should be appreciated for their complexity and for individuals,
who “language\textsuperscript{15} differently and that ha[ve] diverse and unequal experiences with each of the two [or more] languages” (García, 2009, p.44). After all, as expressed by Anna and Thea, how can a country be perceived as multicultural and open to diversity, if accent is perceived to be a problem when finding a job or the lack of native speaker’s knowledge is perceived as a problem to obtain as good marks as the native speaking students? Again, such contradicting ideas might indirectly socialize the children into an ideology which will lead them to favour the most dominant language, in this case English, possibly at native speaker level, even if this shift occurs against parents’ will or without their awareness (Garrett, 2011; Riley, 2011).

Such contradictions around multilingualism are in line with other studies, such as that of Gal (2006), who points out how, in Europe, despite an ideology that celebrates multilingualism, still this multilingualism hides a preference for purist attitudes, where languages are better spoken in a standard and perfect way. Bergeron (2007) also explains how “multiculturalism is too often presented in a homogenous way” in her studies on how French and English are represented in Canadian studies textbooks (p. 379).

One must also be reminded that issues of power among such multilingual repertoires can sabotage the potential advantage of multilingualism, seen as an asset to open your world views, to accept diversity, or as a cognitive advantage (Heller & Duchêne, 2012; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Italian holds a fairly fragile position, as analysed in the previous themes, in which even if Italian is considered as a cognitive asset to open your

\textsuperscript{15} Please note that the author uses the word “language” as a verb to underscore the complexity of the language experience of multilingual individuals, who “language”, that is, who “use their languages” differently.
mind, ideologies connected to ideas of economic value and profit might, in some cases, become more dominant (Heller & Duchêne, 2012). Anna even made reference to how, in a multicultural environment, one should speak English, showing how we might still be far away from an idea of multilingualism that encompasses and accepts a wide repertoire of languages, in all their variations and flexibility, at least from the perspective of these Italians.

Nevertheless, when referring to multilingualism and the open-minded views centered around such ideology, I would direct specific attention to Luigi’s position. In Luigi’s case, these ideas around multilingualism and feeling a citizen of the world are quite strong, more than in the other families. Moreover, his ideas seem to be less characterised by the tendency to associate multilingualism with English, along with his constructive approach in dealing with her children’s Italian. In the life of his children, Italian seems to co-exist equally with English. It could be argued, therefore, that ideologies that value multilingualism within a less rigid framework of perceiving languages can be, in fact, potentially productive in socializing children into the heritage language or actually any other languages (García, 2009; Guardado, 2010). This is, indeed, in line with the study of Guardado (2010), where the successful socialization of children into the heritage language was favoured by parents’ open-minded and cosmopolitan views around the idea of knowing more than one language. Surely, in Luigi’s case, this success needs to be analysed considering other factors, related to his personal situation. Luigi is a single parent, who probably felt that he had to work harder to keep the language with his children. During the
interview, the presence of the grandfather also seems to show how the whole family is very keen to keep those family links.

On a final note, I would like to quote an observation from Hobsbawm (1996) on multiculturalism and identities, which summarize my thoughts on this theme:

The concept of a single, exclusive, and unchanging ethnic or cultural or other identity is a dangerous piece of brainwashing. Human mental identities are not like shoes, of which we can only wear one pair at a time. We are all multi-dimensional beings. (p. 1067)

Summary

Within a sociolinguistics of globalization, answers to the research questions have been discussed by bringing into play different spatial and temporal frames, attempting to go beyond the here and now of the communication, looking also at what happens in Italy now, at its history, and how all transfers to the context of Canada and Calgary (Blommaert, 2010). This approach helped me analyse the complexity and the contradictions of language ideologies, which emerged in the families’ positioning, in their identification, and socialization practices (Blommaert, 2010). As claimed by Woolard and Schieffelin (1994), language ideologies need to be seen, as a “social process involving struggles among multiple conceptualizations and demanding the recognition of variation and contestation within a community as well as contradictions within individuals” (p.71).

Three main themes have been identified. These themes are all interconnected, offering, in each case, a piece of the puzzle in understanding how language ideologies are intertwined with the language socialization of these families. The first theme, which
emerged from the families, refers to the strong attachment to Italy and Italian, mainly for family reasons, as well as to the cultural and artistic heritage associated with Italy. However, these families do not address this attachment and pride to the Italian state and its institutions, as has often been the case in the Italian history (Bassetti, 2003; Magatti, 2003). Instead, along with a sense of pride, families also express negative judgments around Italy, in particular against the political institutions and economic status of Italy (Magatti, 2003). The lack of a cohesive and strong political and economic power in both the Italian past and present seems to impact on how Italian is perceived by the families, who tend to acknowledge a fragile and marginal role of the Italian language in Canada and worldwide (Taglialatela, 2011; Vedovelli, 2005).

The second theme analyses the role of English in the families’ perceptions and positioning. While Italian is surrounded by contradictions and mixed feelings, English is a language, which is extremely valued by these families. It is valued not only for being one of the official languages of Canada or a global language, but also for historical and political reasons related to Italy, whereby English has been assuming an increasingly dominant role (Bourdieu, 1991; Crystal, 1997; Taglialatela, 2011).

Alongside ambivalence around the Italian language and prestige for the English language, these families also display language socialization practices that favour standard and native speaker language ideologies, which lead us to the third theme. These ideologies emerge, in particular, in the parents’ perceptions on their children’ skills in Italian, in their relations with the Calgary Italian Club and Italian School, and in the contradictory ways of perceiving multilingualism. It was discussed how standard language ideologies can become
a hindrance to a successful cohabitation of English and Italian, leaving children aiming at a perfect and native speaker standard that might be unrealistic in their hybrid multilingual situation (García, 2009; Garrett, 2011; Grosjean, 2000; Riley, 2011).

Unless strong alternative discourses (e.g., family values, cosmopolitan discourses, as emerged in Luigi) or some awareness of language shift processes (e.g., like in Diego) are present at a personal or community level, it can be concluded that in the context of Calgary, Italian might struggle to find its place alongside English in the new generation of Italian families. In the light of the discussions of this chapter and the findings of the study, the conclusive chapter will analyse these implications, with some reflections and recommendations about heritage language maintenance and future research.
CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSION

Even though we are no longer witnessing mass emigrations from Italy, which occurred at the end of the 19th century or after the Second World War, since the end of the 1990s, a new wave of Italians is gradually leaving Italy to emigrate both within and outside Europe for professional reasons.

Since most of the sociolinguistic literature has focussed on previous generations of Italians, it seemed important to me to explore the perceptions of the new generation, who left Italy in recent years, examining, in particular, what happens in the family environment in Calgary. The objective of the present research was to examine the perspectives of this new generation of Italian parents and their children regarding their language socialization practices, how they position themselves in relation to the Italian and English languages, the language ideologies behind such perspectives and how, in turn, language ideologies and language socialization have impacted the linguistic future of the children, in particular with regards to the Italian language.

Before starting my research, I examined the literature that was written on Italian emigrants, especially from a sociolinguistic perspective. I was aware, however, that in order to find some answers to my research questions, I also needed a critical sociolinguistic perspective, still lacking in the studies on Italians. A theoretical framework based on critical sociolinguistics helped me analyse language interactions going beyond a cognitive or a sociopsychological perspective, acknowledging the role of power, as well as of the social, political, historical contexts surrounding such interactions. As you have seen in the

Going further with such perspectives, the insights offered by the sociolinguistics of globalisation have been particularly fruitful in understanding how language interactions should also be analysed through several spatiotemporal frames, whereby in the globalised world of today language resources also need to be examined in their movements from one place or historical frame to another.

Language ideologies offered me a valuable tool of analysis to better understand the links between these spatial and temporal frames. In particular, social interactions have been examined through the lens of *ideological language socialization*. This examines how language ideologies can shape the socialization processes through which parents convey to children, consciously or unconsciously, the linguistic and sociocultural conventions of the languages involved, in this case English and Italian.

Although in an individual’s lifespan the socialization into and through a language is affected by several factors that could go from school, peers, work, and so forth, the present research has focussed on what happens within the family environment. The family represents, in fact, the main point of departure in the life of individuals that can shape their identity, language use, and values.

Literature on the relations between language ideologies and language socialization highlights the complexity of these relations, whereby contradictions, struggles, multiple identity, and ambivalences can come into play. A case study approach has been, therefore,
a suitable methodology that helped me appreciate such complexity, going beyond simplifications and easy generalizations.

Moreover, being the focus of this research on language ideologies, Critical Discourse Analysis, through the insights of Blommaert (1999, 2005, 2010) and Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982), has been a valuable tool to analyse how language ideologies can be intertwined in the dominant discourses of society at different layers from a micro to a more global level.

In line with an approach based on Critical Discourse Analysis, I opted for interviews to help me better explore how language ideologies can be embedded in the main discourses of society. Interviews are, in fact, not isolated or detached events, but offer a viewpoint that belongs to our world, to the social world we want to explore in our scholarship.

Despite the lack of long-term observation in my study, the interviews I carried out with the families represent an example of language socialization in progress. Parents’ assumptions and beliefs about languages expressed during the interview, their identifications, and their language choices and practices during the interview were observed and experienced by the children themselves. During that same event of the interview, children were, therefore, being indirectly and directly socialized into a language and through a language.

Finally, in answer to my research questions, the analysis of data has led to the following results. First of all, all of the families express their desire to keep the Italian language with their children. This is accompanied by pride for Italy and its cultural and
historical heritage. This positioning is expressed both by parents and children. Italian is also strongly valued as a language to keep family bonds, where, especially, the role of grandparents is perceived to be of great importance. Such attachment to family and cultural heritage goes beyond the present and finds an explanation in the history of Italy around this idea of Italicity: The existence of an imagined transnational community of Italic people, who share common values, such as familial and aesthetical values, going beyond the national borders of Italy.

Nevertheless, in the history of Italy such positive ideologies seem to have been challenged by the perceived lack of a political and economic power about the value of the Italian language, as well as by a mistrust against political institutions in general. This has led to contradictions and, at times, ambivalences as they emerged in the interviews, where feelings of pride for Italy and Italian could also be accompanied by a sense of shame. In two families in particular—Anna and Nicola and Thea—such ambivalence and contradictions, which are also characterised by feelings of nostalgia, seem also to translate into ambivalent socialization practices that indirectly favour English. For example, no direct activities have been put in place by these parents to maintain the Italian language, despite open complaints by parents that the children are struggling with Italian.

Secondly, the role of the Italian language in these families is further challenged by the prestige that they grant to the English language. Such prestige is explained not only because English is perceived as a global language and is one of the official languages of Canada, but also because it is highly valued in Italy. These attitudes are reflected in the families in Calgary, possibly impacting language socialization. Again, in Anna and
Nicola’s and Thea’s families, despite their complaints and desire to keep Italian, English is indeed favoured, and children show a preference for English in their choices and practices.

Thirdly, to make it even more challenging for Italian to be kept alongside English, all parents seem to be attracted by ideas that grant power only to a perfect way of using languages at a native speaker level. This is, for example, evident in the way parents assess their children’s Italian and the Italian of the Calgary Italian Club or School. In some cases, evaluations are expressed with sarcasm, frequent corrections, or negative comments, where the main reference remains the standard Italian, as it should be spoken in Italy. Thus, negative and judgemental feedback that favours only a standard and perfect way of speaking the language might indirectly socialize the children to shift to the language where they feel they can attain such standards, in this case English.

Finally, it could be argued that the personal history of each family can have an impact on language socialization as well. Luigi, for example, being a single parent, might have felt the need to struggle more to keep the Italian language.

The next section aims at analysing the implications of the results along with some recommendations that can be drawn in terms of what can be learned or changed to help immigrant families whose heritage language or languages are not supported by a strong and large community or by full immersion or bilingual schools.

**Implications**

In the present study, all families, both parents and children, highlight the importance of keeping the Italian language for family reasons. Family represents a strong value in the life of Italians, and there are historical reasons behind it. At the same time,
research has also shown how what happens in the family in terms of language socialization, can have a significant impact on the linguistic future of children, especially when there is little or no formal linguistic support from institutions. Therefore, in the case of Italians, my reflections led me to think that attachment to family values could potentially represent a powerful alternative discourse that could allow for a linguistic future for children, in which Italian and English can co-exist. Indeed, based on my experience and research, it is quite common that many second or third generation Italians, despite having shifted to English during childhood and adolescence, once adults, they feel the need to return to their Italian roots and reconnect with their family origins, some of them successfully relearning Italian. It is as if this attachment to family values is so strong that it could be argued that, in reality, the language is never completely “lost”. Ideally, though, we should not arrive to the situation in which the heritage language is completely put aside during childhood or adolescence. This situation raises issues on how an Italian family can maintain bilingualism or multilingualism, which is quite valued by the families, as it emerged from the present study.

First of all, if we examine in particular the two families, Anna and Nicola and Thea, where English is more dominant, it can be seen that despite parents’ willingness to have their children bilingual, they seem to be unaware that demanding a “perfect” knowledge of Italian from their children, accompanied by sarcastic or judgmental comments, might actually lead the children to monolingualism. Moreover, it seems that parents struggle to acknowledge or are even unaware that multilingual individuals have more complex mental arrangements, which cannot be compared with monolingual speakers, and that
multilingualism does not involve a perfect knowledge of the languages. All of these approaches lead them, for example, to deny the contributions of the Calgary Italian School, even when, in some cases, it might be of help. In the meantime, the shift to English is occurring quite fast, if one considers, for example, the cases of Monica or of Isabella and Fulmine, where after only three years in Calgary, English is favoured in several situations.

This lack of awareness from parents raises questions on how parents can be helped to obtain a different perspective on bilingualism and become informed about effective strategies to help children with the heritage languages. While surely there are several books accessible through libraries on these topics, the reality is that parents do not seem to have the time to read these books, and Anna mentioned the lack of time as a general problem for her. This issue is also raised by Ajsic (2013) in his recent study on family language policy in Bosnian families in the USA, in which one of the major obstacles in maintaining Bosnian was the lack of time and the difficulty of dealing with the competing demands of two or more languages. In the case of the Italian families of the study, if the references are the high standards of native speakers, surely time can represent a problem, and conveying the language becomes more like a burden. During the conference I attended, when Ajsic (2013) presented his research at the University of Calgary, the audience cited the need of informing parents with direct, practical, and simple suggestions on maintaining the heritage language, for example, from libraries, teachers, or even family doctors. These institutions are among the first to have direct access to families. Information on bilingualism should be made more accessible to parents in an easy, accessible format, such as leaflets left at libraries or at schools. Parents might want to foster bilingualism, but they might not know
exactly how or they might still have an idealized view of bilingualism, where all languages must be spoken perfectly.

On a final note, the problem lies on answering the question: Who has the power to create counterdiscourses that could favour the acquisition and transmission of languages other than the dominant ones in a given context? Blommaert (2005) reminds us that in order to become dominant, ideas need to be “picked up by power-regulating institutions”, such as the state, but also the media, the church, interest groups, and certainly the education system (p.163). As much as education can be a tool used by the dominant group to perpetuate and institutionalize discrimination, to me education can also be a powerful site to positively change discourses in the long term, especially if we act on the younger generations. Nevertheless, when I refer to education, I do not necessarily refer to the creation of bilingual or immersion schools. Although this would an ideal solution, practical and economic constraints might pose huge challenges. Instead, given the linguistic and sociocultural variety in Canadian classroom nowadays, Armand and Dagenais (2005) report examples of how teachers, in their everyday practices, can organise simple activities, which encourage students to explore linguistic and sociocultural diversity, different languages or accents, and learn to appreciate and acknowledge such diversity. Along similar lines, Roessingh (2011) proposes projects for the creation of dual-language books in the classroom by children and parents, whereby families and their children can have a space to express and feel proud of their culture and language. Roy (2013) also suggests how teachers in mainstream classrooms should be careful to assess and evaluate multilingual students in the same way as monolingual ones; more guidance should be given
to English learner students, during assessment, such as giving them more time during tests or offering alternative assessment methods, more suitable with their multilingual background.

All such projects and research can gradually help to develop ideologies that can foster a better appreciation of languages other than the dominant ones. Indirectly, such ideologies can also be conveyed to the families whose heritage languages are not among the dominant ones, like Italian, leaving them with the feeling of being recognized and valued in the host society. In this regard, it must be remembered that the families of this study have a great appreciation of Canada. They consider it a multicultural and tolerant country, which is open to diversity. This positive ideology could be further exploited, for example, by the education system, to bring students or society to reflect deeper on what it really means to live in a multicultural society like Canada, what place languages, other than the dominant one, have, and what resources these languages can bring to the Canadian society.

**Limitations**

Reviewing the steps and the processes which led to these final results and conclusions, there are few limitations involving the research process and my role in the research that need to be acknowledged.

Firstly, although field notes of what I observed during the home visits were taken during and soon after the interviews, it could be argued that the present research project should also require extensive ethnographic work with ongoing observations on the field over a certain period of time.
Duff (2008b) highlights, however, the intrinsic challenges of ethnographic studies from an ethical point of view, one of my main concerns during the research process. Spending long periods of time within a family and observing their linguistic behaviour at home might be perceived by the participants as suspicious and intrusive, making it difficult to access their world and obtain “emic insights” from participants (Duff, 2008b, p.116). Despite belonging to the same group as my participants, it is exactly the fact of knowing the limits and potential of my own “culture” that made me opt for in-depth interviews rather than long-term observations. The family environment is perceived by most Italians as quite a private domain. I felt, therefore, that focusing on interviews would be more appropriate at this stage of the research. Moreover, the participants of my study belong to a generation of Italian immigrants which has not been widely researched in sociolinguistics, and in-depth interviews could still represent a valid starting point to explore this new field.

Secondly, reviewing the questions I posed to the participants, although all efforts were made to elaborate “neutral” questions not leading the participants to a specific answer, it could be argued that some questions were not fulfilling these criteria. An example is found in Appendix A, whereby the question, “What would be the advantages, if any, for your children to speak Italian?” could have been phrased differently. A possible question could have been, “What are the advantages and disadvantages for your children to speak Italian?” avoiding therefore the participants to go only in the direction I was indirectly suggesting.

Thirdly, following this last point, I must also acknowledge how my interview style changed throughout the four interviews while acquiring more experience with the interview
techniques. Gradually, I acquired an interview style where I learnt to listen to the participants without excessively intervening. This was harder in particular at my first interview with Thea’s family, whereby the passion and interest for the topic and the lack of experience in the research field led me to have a less detached positioning during the interview.

Finally, another limitation relates to the possibility of including a wider range of contexts experienced by the Italian community, than just the Calgary Italian Club and School, such as observing what happens at the Italian grocery stores or markets in Calgary, what languages are spoken there, by whom, and so forth. This choice would have provided me with further insights to complement the interview data and obtain a broader perspective on the language socialization of the families.

**Future Research**

Given the paucity of sociolinguistic research on the latest generation of Italians, the next step would be to develop further studies that deal with this group, especially in different contexts as well. It would be fruitful to compare the context of Calgary, where the language is not supported by schools or a large Italian community, with that of other areas, such as Toronto or New York, who have large Italian communities.

Moreover, sociolinguistic research on Italians has been lacking a focus on language socialization and, in particular, on language ideologies. Other studies could focus on this perspective in order to better appreciate to what extent language ideologies are related or can have an impact on the language socialization of Italian families or other groups and what are the implications. Along the same lines, a focus on language ideologies could also
lead to further reflections on the role of the Italian language in the world and what can be done to augment its value and prestige in the family domain.

Another question that I developed during my research, but was unable to answer for lack of a long-term case study approach, is related to the role that children’s ages play and how age affects socialization into the heritage language. It could be argued that in very young children, it might be more feasible to support their socialization into the heritage language, as the parents have more time to spend with them, but what happens when they approach pre-adolescence or adolescence? What is, for example, the role of peers and media (e.g., social networks) in the language socialization of the children? As they grow, children tend to spend more time with their friends or on the computer than with parents, even when family values are strong. Long-term ethnographic case studies would be more suitable to examine language socialization, keeping into account other factors that go beyond the family environment and how identity issues might also change over time and why.

Another question that arose during my research refers to the possibility of analysing the differences in the socialization practices between Italian families whose children are born in Canada and those families whose children, instead, spent their preschool years in Italy. For example, ironically, at least for now, Luigi’s family is more successful in socializing the children in Italian, despite the children being born in Canada, in comparison with the other families in which, it could be argued, possessed a stronger foundation of Italian thanks to few years spent there.
Finally, this study can be replicated to include participants who belong to a wider range of educational and socio economic backgrounds than included in my research. All of the participants of my study are highly educated and express positive ideas about multilingualism, where the knowledge of different languages can open the mind and broaden the perspectives. They perceive Canada as an open-minded and tolerant country. Such views were also found in a recent study from Guardado (2010), where the Spanish speaking families possessed a high educational background. While I believe that such positive ideas about Canada and multilingualism can potentially represent an ideology that could promote different languages other than English, are such ideas perceived by all educational and socioeconomic backgrounds and if not, why not? If not, why do some families not feel accepted and perceive the host country as unwelcoming and how does this attitude affect the language socialization in the family?

Undoubtedly, more research into the socialization and maintenance of the Italian language among new generations of Italian immigrants needs to be conducted. My research, I believe, has broad implications for safeguarding heritage languages in any culture, especially from an ideological perspective. Continuous and enriching reflections and studies, which could challenge our taken-for-granted ideas and beliefs about languages, become imperative in all domains—especially in our society, where multilingualism is becoming more the norm than the exception.
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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS TO PARENTS

Background Questions

1. Age.
2. Job Title.
3. Educational background.
4. Reasons for being in Canada.
5. How long in Canada? Where else did you live in Canada?

Perceptions and Positioning vis-à-vis Italian and English

1. What does it mean for you to be Italian? What is for you the Italian identity? How do you express it now that you are in Canada, if you do?
2. What does it mean for you to speak the Italian language? What does it represent? Which Italian?
3. What is Italy for you now? Would you plan to go back one day?
4. Recent elections in Italy: How do you see the future for Italy at this moment?
5. In your opinion what would be the advantages, if any, for your children to speak Italian?
6. How do you think the Italian language and Italy are valued within the Canadian society? Why? What kind of comments do you receive when you say you come from Italy or when people hear you speaking Italian? How does it make you feel? Can you provide some examples, please?
7. What does it mean for you to be able to speak English in the Canadian society?
What does it mean for you to be fluent and proficient in English? What does this language represent for you?

8. What has been your experience with using and learning English? How did you find it (e.g., challenging, easy, etc.)? How did you perceive the reactions of Canadians in your attempts to use the language? Can you give me some examples please?

9. Do you intend to obtain the Canadian citizenship? Why? What does that mean for you? If one day, you have to choose between the Italian and Canadian ones, which one would you choose? Why?

Family Language Practices and Choices

1. What language do you speak with your children? How often during the day do you speak English, Italian, or other languages? When?

2. How important is it to convey that language? What strategies and resources do you use to convey that language? Why?

3. Do you happen to switch from one language to another when you speak to your children?

4. What language do your children speak with you? If your children are speaking to you in a language other than Italian, what are your reactions? Would you accommodate their choices? Or would you insist on speaking Italian and in this case what strategies would you use? Why?

5. (To parents with more than one child) What language do your children speak among each other? If Italian is not spoken, would you invite them to speak Italian or do you prefer not to interfere?

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6. If Italian is used by parents to speak with children: What would it be lost, if one day
the children completely shift to a language other than Italian? Why?

7. How do you perceive the level of Italian spoken by your children? What kind of
Italian do you expect they will learn in the long term? At what level do you want
them to speak Italian? Do you feel you have to correct their Italian now?

8. Do you try to go back to Italy regularly with your children? Why? What do these
trips to Italy mean for you?

9. When you are in Italy, in what language do people speak to your children? What
kind of questions do they ask you about the languages your children use? What are
your reactions? Could you give me some examples please?

10. In the long term, would you dream your children to live and work in Italy or do you
see them in Canada or elsewhere?

11. When you are in presence of people, who speak a language other than Italian, for
example English, do you keep speaking Italian with your children, or do you switch
to English (or another language)? Why? Has anyone ever told you explicitly to
switch to English or have you ever perceived that people felt uncomfortable with
you using Italian? Can you give me some examples please?

12. How do you convey to your children the cultural elements of the Italian language
(e.g., important dates, children’s folkloric events, etc.)? Do you think it is important
to convey this cultural side? Why? Is there anything that would prevent you from
not celebrating such events?

13. French is the other official language of Canada. In Calgary there are quite a few
French Immersion schools and Francophone schools. Have you ever thought of enrolling your children in these schools? Why? Do you think it would be an added advantage for them to learn French?

14. How do you see the language future of your children? Do you expect them to become bilingual (or trilingual)? What does that mean for you? Why?

**External Factors in the Language Socialization**

1. Do you feel that the education system, the school, the community can do something to promote the Italian language? What do you think it should be their role?

2. Have you ever received suggestions/comments from teachers or educators about what languages you should use at home? What were your reactions? Why? Can you give me some examples please?

3. What are your relations with the Italian community in Calgary (e.g., the Calgary Italian Club)? Do you attend any Italian related events?

4. Do you send your kids to the Calgary Italian School? Why? Do you think they would benefit from it?

5. Do you think that the Italian communities in Calgary (e.g., Calgary Italian Club, Calgary Italian School, etc.) are doing enough to promote the Italian language? Why? If not, what do you think it would be useful, for example, to help your children preserve the Italian language?

**Final Question**

1. Is there anything that I did not ask you and that you would have liked me to ask you?
APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS TO CHILDREN

Background Questions

1. Age.

2. Educational background.

3. Place of birth.

Perceptions and Positioning vis-à-vis Italian and English

1. What is Italy for you? What does it represent? What does it mean for you to speak Italian?

2. What is Canada for you? Do you like living in Canada? What do you like and what you do not like?

3. Among the languages you know, what is the language you enjoy the most or you feel most comfortable to speak? Why? What is the one that instead you do not like or you feel uncomfortable with? Why?

4. How easy or difficult is it to speak in Italian? In English? Or other languages?

5. How well do you think you speak Italian? How well would you like to know it?

6. Would you like to go and live in Italy one day? Why?

7. Do you like going back to Italy for your holidays? What do you like or do not like of Italy?

8. What does it mean to you to be able to speak English?

9. How well do you think you speak English? How well do you want to learn them?

10. How do you see yourself? Italian – Canadian – Italian/Canadian? What do you answer when people ask you about your nationality?
11. If you had to fill a form, where you are asked what your first language is, what would you say?

Language Practices and Choices

1. In your family with whom do you speak Italian?
2. What languages do your parents use with you?
3. Do you speak other languages at home with your parents, siblings? Why?
4. Do you read or watch films in Italian?
5. If they go to Italy: When do you go to Italy, what language do you use, and why? In what languages do people try to speak to you? What are your reactions?

External Factors in the Language Socialization

1. Outside home, do you have opportunities for speaking Italian or speaking about Italy? With whom? Would you like to have more opportunities to share your Italian background?
2. Do you feel lucky or do you think you have an advantage in relation to your friends, who only speak one language?
3. If children attend the Italian School: Do you enjoy going to the Italian school? Why?
4. How do you think Italy and the Italian language are viewed by your peers or by the people you meet? What do they say?
APPENDIX C: QUESTIONS TO THE CALGARY ITALIAN CLUB

1. How would you define yourself and your role/mission within the community in Calgary nowadays, in the context of today?

2. What do Italy and its languages mean to the Calgary Italian Club? What do they represent?

3. What kind of events do you organize? Are they specifically related to Italian themes or are they varied? Why?

4. Who normally attends the events at the Calgary Italian Club (e.g., different generations of Italians, anyone from the community, etc.)? Who are the target people for the activities, which are organized?

5. Who worked and decided on the content of the website? A single person, a committee, etc.?

6. In the website, in the History section, it is stated that the Calgary Italian Club does not want to be an “ethnic enclave” and that it wants to be “active not only within the Italian Canadian community but within the greater Calgary community as a whole”. Can you please give me some examples? Is it still your position nowadays? Why?

7. I have noticed that the website is only in English. Is there a specific reason for that? What about an Italian family newly arrived in Calgary, who does not speak enough English to understand it? What is your opinion on that?
8. Going back to the history of the Club, what are the ideological differences between the *Loggia Giovanni Caboto* and the *Associazione Italo-canadese*? Why are they defined “competing groups” in the website?

9. What is the role of the Italian government?

10. What is the role of Alberta/Canada?

11. Is there anything that I did not ask you and that you would have liked me to ask you?
APPENDIX D: QUESTIONS TO THE CALGARY ITALIAN SCHOOL

1. What are the mission and the objectives of the school? What does it mean to promote the Italian language in Calgary?

2. Who are the target students? What is their background? Where do they come from?

3. Why are families interested in enrolling their children into the Italian school? Why choosing Italian in your opinion? What does it mean to them?

4. How many children enroll each year roughly? How many this year? Did you see some changes over the last years in terms of the number of students, such as a decrease or increase?

5. For children, I can see from the website that the school is organized according to levels, from level A to level 7. Do these levels refer to specific age groups? How is it decided that a student must belong to a certain level?

6. What is the focus of your activities in Italian (e.g., grammar, communication activities, history, etc.)? Can you give me some examples please?

7. Are students exposed to the varieties of the Italian language, different dialects, accents, regional differences, etc.? How? Why?

8. What language/s are used in class? When? Why?

9. I see on your website that you use a textbook “Scopriamo l’italiano” available for consultation. Would it be possible to have a quick look please?
10. From the About document on your website, I seem to understand that you frame yourself as an institution, which offers Italian as a Second Language within the Alberta Curriculum. Is that correct? However, if you have for example a six-year old kid, just arrived from Italy and the parents want to enroll him/her in one of your classes, do you have something that would suit his/her situation (i.e., maintaining Italian as a first language)? If not, would you be interested in promoting this type of classes, which try to maintain Italian as a first language for the child? What is your opinion on that? Why?

11. Who worked and decided on the content of the website? A single person, a committee, etc.?

12. Is there anything that I did not ask you and that you would have liked me to ask you?
APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIPT CONVENTIONS

I mainly referred to the transcript conventions as used by De Fina and King (2010, p. 188).

(.) Micro-pause

[ ] Overlapping speech

(( )) Transcriber’s comment

:: Elongated sound

“ ” Reported speech

@ Laugh