

Multilingual Map of Europe: identity and diversity

4th assignment: Linguistic diversity of Italy



Professor: Magdalena Wrembel et al.
Date: 26/3/21
Course code: AMU1500
Names: Batsiou Dafni, Buňhak Milena

Spoken languages and dialects

According to Wikipedia, there are approximately 34 native living spoken languages and related dialects in Italy, most of which are largely independent Romance languages.

Immigrant	Spanish, Albanian, Arabic, Romanian, Hungarian, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, Bulgarian, and Romani ^[5]
Foreign	English (34%) French (16%) Spanish (11%) German (5%) Other regional language (6%)
Signed	Italian Sign Language

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy>

The language family:

Indo-European>Italic>Romance>Italo-Western>Italo-Dalmatian

More analytical:

Indo-European (446)

Italic (44)

Romance (43)

Italo-Western (34)

Italo-Dalmatian (5)

- Istriot (A language of Croatia)
- Italian (A language of Italy)
- Judeo-Italian (A language of Italy)
- Neapolitano-Calabrese (A language of Italy)
- Sicilian (A language of Italy)

Italo-Dalmatian | Ethnologue

Languages in Italy

The official and most widely spoken language across Italy is, of course, Italian but, there are also around 50 languages spoken there (Albanian, Arbëreshë, Arabic, Algerian Spoken, Arabic, Egyptian Spoken, Arabic, Judeo-Tripolitanian, Arabic, Moroccan Spoken, Arabic, Tunisian Spoken, Arpitan, Bavarian, Bosnian, Catalan, Chinese, Cimbrian, Corsican, Croatian, Emilian, English, French, Friulian, German, Standard, Greek, International Sign, Italian, Italian Sign Language, Judeo-Italian, Kabuverdianu, Kurdish, Northern, Ladin, Ligurian, Lombard, Maltese, Mócheno, Neapolitano-Calabrese, Occitan, Piedmontese, Romagnol, Romani, Balkan, Romani, Sinte, Romani, Vlax, Romanian, Russian, Sardinian, Sardinian, Campidanese, Sardinian, Gallurese, Sardinian, Logudorese, Sardinian, Sassarese, Serbian, Sicilian, Slavomolisano, Slovene, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, Venetian, Walser).

<https://www.ethnologue.com/country/IT/languages>

People speaking and vitality

Italian is 27th in the chart of the 200 most spoken languages in the world, and the number of people that are speaking Italian comes up to 68M. As for the vitality, the language has more than 1,000,000 users. Also, it is institutional, it has developed to the point that it is used and sustained by institutions beyond household and community. Including Italian speakers in non-EU European countries (such as Switzerland, Albania, and the United Kingdom) and on other continents, the total number of speakers is approximately 85 million.

<https://www.ethnologue.com/guides/ethnologue200>

<https://www.ethnologue.com/vitality/IT>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy>



1. Depending on the region a different Italian dialect will be spoken.

The table below presents data from Ethnologue regarding the regional recognition of languages in Italy.

Region in Italy	Language (s) spoken
NORTH	
Piedmont	Piedmontese
Lombardy	Lombard*
Trentino-Alto Adige	Ladin ; Mocheno; Cimbrian
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	Friulian
Veneto	Venetian
Emilia-Romagna	Emilian; Romagnol
Liguria	Ligurian
MIDDLE ITALY	
Toscana	Judeo-Italian
Marche	?
Umbria	Italian; Italian Sign language
Lazio	Latin
Abruzzo	International Sign language
Molise	Slavomolisano (Molise Croatian)
SOUTH	
Campania	?
Puglia	?
Basilicata	Napoletano-Calabrese
Calabria	Arbereshe-Albanian; Calabrian Greek
Sicilia	Sicilian

Sardegna	Campidanese-Sardinian; Logudorese Sardinian; Gallurese Sardinian; Sassarese Sardinian; Sardinian
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*Lombard is the so-called Swiss Italian spoken natively by 350,000 people in the Italian-speaking area of Switzerland – Lombardy.

Only some of the dialects in Italy have **a standardised written form**. These are the following:

- Piedmontese
- Ligurian
- Sardinian
- Friulian
- Ladin
- Venetian

2. Geographic distribution and classification of Roman languages

(source Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Italy#Northern_Italy)

a. Northern Italy

Languages that are spoken in the northern part of Italy are defined as Romance languages. They can be divided into four groups:

- The Italian Rhaeto-Romance languages (Ladin and Friulan)
- The Istriot language
- The Venetian language
- The Gallo-Italian languages (Emilian, Piedmontese, Lombard, Ligurian)

The classification of Italic dialects is however difficult and not agreed upon since there is a dialect continuum throughout northern Italy. This means that the dialects are widely spread and there are no clear boundaries, both geographical and linguistic, between them.



(source: Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Italy#Northern_Italy)

b. Middle-Southern Italy

One of the classifications, proposed by Loporcaro 2019, provides the following grouping of middle-southern regional languages in Italy:

- Middle (Central Marchigiano, Umbrian, Laziale).
- Upper Southern (Marchigiano-Abruzzese, Molisano, - Apulian, Southern Laziale and Campidanian including Neapolitan, Northern Lucano-Calabrese).
- Extreme Southern (Salentino, Calabrian, Sicilian).

Other classification, proposed by Maiden 1997, is as follows:

Central and Southern:

- Tuscan (with Corsican).
- 'Middle Italian' (Marche, Umbria, Lazio).
- Upper Southern (Abruzzo, northern Puglia, Molise, Campania, Basilicata).
- Extreme Southern (Salento, southern Calabria and Sicily).

c. Southern Italy

The southern varieties of Italian language can be divided into two groups:

- The Italo-Dalmatian (Neapolitan, Sicilian, and Sardinian-influenced Sassarese, Gallurese)
- The Sardinian language (Logudorese, Campidanese) – a group of its own

The Sardinian language is considered as the most conservative language of all Romance languages.



3. Non-Romance languages spoken in some regions of Italy

- a. French is co-official language in Aosta Valley (NORTHERN-WEST)
- b. German is an unofficial language but often spoken language in Lysal (NORTHERN-WEST); Austrian German is the usual standard variety in Italy co-official in the province of South Tyrol (NORTHERN-EAST)
- c. Greek – in Apulia (SOUTHERN-EAST)
- d. Arberesh (Albanian language) – in Apulia (SOUTHERN-EAST)
- e. Slovenian – in Friuli-Venezia Giulia (NORTHERN-EAST)
- f. Cimberian and Mochoeno (Upper German dialects) – recognised in Trentino (NORTH)
- g. Serbo-Croatian (Slavic language) – recognised as Molise Croatian in Molise
- h. Slovene (Slavic language) - Gai Valley dialect; Resian; Torre Valley dialect; Natisone Valley dialect; Brda dialect; Karst dialect; Inner Carniolan dialect; Istrian dialect
- i. Italiot Greek (Hellenic Greek) – recognised as Griko (Salento) and Calabrian Greek in Calabria (SOUTHERN-EAST)

(source: Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Italy#Northern_Italy)

4. How frequent regional languages are used in Italy?

The map presents the frequency of use of Italian dialects based on geographic and regional distribution (ISTAT 2015)

(source: Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Italy#Northern_Italy)

