

Coordination and subordination in second generation Australian Italian: a case study.

John J. Kinder

Bettoni has postulated an "attrition continuum" which plots the decline of Italian language skills between first and second generation, and within the second generation of Italian migrants in Australia and shows convincingly that Italian language attrition correlates, in the second generation, with birth order in the family. This paper explores another dimension of the complex dynamics of second generation Italian in Australia which depends, for its linguistic specificity, on the changing socio-cultural and socio-linguistic parameters of Italo-Australian reality, which are exemplified in the children of the family discussed here. The birth-order-based attrition continuum no longer applies and must be replaced with a "recovery continuum" which finds its non-linguistic correlates in the revived contacts with Italy and Italian typical of recent years. In fact what the recovery continuum plots is perhaps not so much a "recovery" of Italian language skills as a transfer of linguistic competence at various levels from the first-acquired dialect to Italian (which is acquired now as third language, with English intervening). The recovery continuum can be illustrated with reference to three parameters: (a) Code selection: from "Italianised dialect" (Berruto) to a form of standard spoken Italian approximating Sabaini's "italiano dell'uso medio"; (b) Code stability: measured by internal morphological consistency, with particular reference to consistency of use of forms from dialect or from Italian; (c) Code security: measured by repairs, appeals to interlocutor and marking of transference.

Finally, the usefulness of the recovery continuum as a descriptor of the recovery of language skills is illustrated by an examination of complex clause formation in the Italian of the family members interviewed. Halliday's functional model of complex clauses is used to show a continuum of use of forms and functions of coordinate and subordinate constructions. Here the paper hopes to suggest syntax as a fruitful area of investigation, in addition to morphology, in the field of Italian abroad.*

* The research reported here was supported by a grant from the Australian Research Council's 'Small Grants Scheme'.

1. Italian in Australia.

Language attrition among second-generation Italians in Australia has a convincing descriptive and explanatory model in the studies by Bettoni (1985, 1986, 1988, 1990a, 1990b). This model accounts well for "natural" attrition which accompanies widespread language shift, but it is also possible to observe in the Italo-Australian context signs of deliberate recovery by sections of the second generation. What are the linguistic characteristics of this recovery, and how might we measure language recovery in the migrant Italian context? This paper aims to suggest a model which describes another side of the complex and highly fluid situation of second-generation Italian and to propose a way of accounting for the linguistic attributes of at least some features of language recovery.

Bettoni's studies show that a progressive loss of language skills can be observed within the second generation itself, as well as between first and second generation. The 'attritional continuum' outlined in those studies correlates the decline in language skills with birth order in the family. As one descends through birth order, the Italian of the younger children is shown to be progressively more hesitant in delivery, more inconsistent in morphology, less hypotactic in syntax and more orientated to topic-comment order in information structure: in short, second-generation Italian is sliding along Givón's continuum from the syntactic pole towards the pragmatic one. This is explained principally in terms of rapid, and increasingly rapid, language shift towards English, in which a major role is played by the older siblings who bring English into the home and thereby help accelerate the invasion by English of even the home domain.

I would immediately draw attention to two aspects of these studies. First, the interviews on which they are based were carried out in 1984 and, second, they describe a situation of 'natural language attrition unchecked by any formal study' (Bettoni 1986: 64). Furthermore, the concept of 'language attrition' is glossed not so much as a forgetting or loss of language skills as a 'failure to acquire' (Bettoni 1986: 82). That is, it is accurate to speak of attrition only from a societal, inter-generational perspective, while from the point of view of the individual second-generation speakers what one is dealing with is not so much attrition and forgetting of skills as different levels of language skills attained by different speakers.

The type of language development in the second generation which I will describe here is set in a situation which differs from the one described by Bettoni precisely with respect to these two aspects, that is to say with respect to the socio-cultural context and the type of linguistic input. Briefly, my research is based on interviews carried out in the first half of 1991; and the second generation Italo-Australians I am observing have managed to check the process of attrition through study

and other means. These two factors mean that the cultural setting and parameters of ethnic self-identification are, for a significant number of Italo-Australian families, very different from what was the case even ten years ago.

Only seven years have passed between 1984 and 1991, but they have been years of dramatic change for the Italian communities in Australia (the linguistic consequences of these changes are alluded to also by Chiro and Smolicz 1990). In the early eighties, many young Italo-Australians still thought of Italy as the poor country their parents had been obliged to leave in order to start a better life in the New World. Now, in the nineties, most know that economic conditions in Italy have improved greatly and, in short, that 'noi qui stiamo bene, ma in Italia stanno meglio'. The number of students of Italian in Australian schools has increased dramatically in the last decade: by 68% between 1983 and 1988, according to official figures (Australia 1990: 21). The *Indagine sulle motivazioni all'apprendimento della lingua italiana nel mondo* showed that at the end of the seventies 72% of students of Italian in Australia was of Italian background (Vignuzzi 1986, though this proportion will have dropped during the eighties).

The rise in numbers of students of Italian is attributable to developments in the Italian communities in Australia and to changes in the image of Italy abroad (for an Australian overview see Bettoni and Lo Bianco 1989; cf. also Simone 1989). The social mobility and increased ethnic and cultural self-assurance of many second-generation Italo-Australians has led them to reclaim the high culture of Italy as theirs too (cf. Smolicz and Secombe 1986), a trend already evident in the survey of the late 1970s (Vignuzzi 1986).

Young Italo-Australians nowadays have relatively easy access to the 'new Italy' and the 'new Italian identity' that goes with it, through a variety of channels which were not nearly so readily available even a decade ago: study, multicultural radio and television, travel, student exchange schemes, visits from Italian relatives. These and other opportunities also have a positive effect on Italian language maintenance among the second generation. The crucial factor is schooling, for it is here that young Italo-Australians are exposed, in a formal learning environment, to the standard variety of a language with which they are in frequent contact - or of which they are regular speakers - in a non-standard form. Rubino (1987) has shown convincingly that children from dialect-speaking backgrounds studying Italian at upper primary level not only acquire very satisfactory levels of Italian competence, but also become remarkably skilled at managing their three linguistic codes in terms of different interlocutors, topics and situations.

2. Case study: one Sicilian family.

In this paper I want to examine the effects of recent developments, in particular as they converge in study of Italian at more advanced levels, on the linguistic skills of the second generation. I will discuss evidence from a case-study of one family. This family has a migration history common to many Italian families in Australia, and it will be interesting to compare this family with the 'Veneto family' of Bettoni (1985) and with the other Veneto families of Bettoni (1986). Their early history is very similar, in that the parents have similar socio-economic and educational backgrounds, migrated to Australia in the 1950s, spoke a dialect with their children but saw the children switch to English with the onset of schooling. However, their more recent history marks them off as different, in terms of visits to Italy and efforts to maintain and foster Italian language skills in their children.

The family has six members, two parents and four children aged between 27 and 19 years. Both parents were born in Italy and migrated to Australia in the 1950s. They have always lived in Perth and their four children were all born here. There are no relatives in Perth, but the family's friendship and work networks are predominantly Italian.

The parents are both from the province of Messina and have always spoken their mutually comprehensible dialects together. Sicilian dialect was the language of the home while the children were young, but in recent years the parents have begun to prefer Italian to dialect when speaking to the children, while the children speak to the parents in different mixes of their three codes, and use almost always English to each other, reserving dialect or Italian for metaphorical code-switching.

All children have studied some Italian. The eldest child, a son of 27 (who will be referred to as 1M27), studied Italian for only one year at secondary school, and now works as an auditor in a non-Italian work environment. He is married to a woman of Italian (not Sicilian) origin, and English is the language they speak to each other and to their new baby. The second child, a daughter of 24 (hence 2F24) studied Italian for two years at school and now works as a company secretary in an environment where she has frequent dealings with Italian-speaking clients. The third child, a son of 21 (3M21), is presently completing a university degree in Italian. The fourth child, a son of 19 (4M19), studied Italian for the five years of high school, under some duress, and now works in an Italian-owned business where all his work-mates are of southern Italian (but not Sicilian) origin.

Ten years ago, in 1981, the whole family spent a two-month holiday in Italy. Since then, 2F24 has been to Italy twice for two months each time, once with her father and once alone, and 3M21 has been once and is presently planning a second trip. The importance for the children of these trips to Italy in making their Italian-ness a living, present reality to them, rather than simply a memory or a part of their inheritance from a

previous generation, is illustrated by a popular family story. Before the family holiday in Italy, the youngest child (4M19), who was then aged 9, hardly ever spoke any Italian or dialect to anyone. It was made very clear to him that if he could not make himself understood to his Italian relatives, who did not speak English, they would not be able to give him things he wanted, like food, and he would very probably go hungry for the whole two months. It was reported separately by two of the other children that his Italian competence developed with astonishing speed.

The family were interviewed, using the traditional semi-formal, open-ended interview, by a 30-year-old woman who migrated from Milan to Australia eight years ago. The Italian she spoke in the interviews was standard spoken Italian with Lombard accent and intonation. In one sense, this tried and true data-collection method is particularly appropriate to this type of study, since it places linguistic demands on the informants not unlike those they will meet (and have already met) in encounters with non-dialectophone speakers of contemporary near-standard Italian.

The research project aims to examine syntax beyond the clause and aspects of textual cohesion, and so the interviewer made a deliberate effort to elicit narratives from the informants since they would provide evidence of syntactic linkage strategies at different textual levels.

I will now discuss the two major aspects of the informants' Italian to emerge from these interviews: first, the varieties of Italian used by the informants in the interview situation and, second, the types of clause-combining characteristic of the language produced by each informant.

3. The "recovery continuum".

The first finding is that the birth order of the children now bears little relation to their Italian language competence and we must now find a way of describing the new order of language competence which has resulted from their efforts at language maintenance and recovery. This recovery amounts to a kind of acquisition, but I will speak here of 'recovery' given that the processes involved are, it seems, more intra-linguistic than inter-linguistic, though this is a question which deserves much closer attention. I propose therefore to describe the 'language order' of the children and to discuss various aspects of it in terms of a 'recovery continuum'. All four children are fluent speakers and all would find themselves at the upper end of Bettoni's attritional continuum. We must therefore use different measures of their Italian linguistic skills. I will describe the recovery continuum in three dimensions: code 'selection', code 'stability' and code 'security'.

3.1. Code selection.

It is not easy to define unambiguously the variety of Italian spoken by each informant during the interview, but it is nonetheless clear that the four children are sufficiently different in their linguistic skills to be placed in order along a continuum which ranges from an Italianised dialect with switching to Italian, to standard spoken Italian free from overt dialect influence. It is tempting to assign a discrete label to each child's variety of Italian, choosing from the wealth of terminological proposals now available in the literature. But such labels would be reductive and simplistic, masking the fluid and complex mixtures of Italian and dialect (to say nothing of English) which characterize the second generation in a migration context. It is partly for this reason that I will suggest the criteria of code stability and security as well as selection in order to capture as much of this complexity as possible. The following examples are intended to be representative of each variety, a kind of 'median' token of each variety.¹

All the children, except 3M21, can be regarded loosely as having produced a variety of 'popular Italian', a category which permits of a range of variation. The eldest son's Italian ranges from an 'Italianised dialect' to an 'italiano popolare molto marcato' (Berruto 1989: 116), with constant and significant influence of dialect and transference from dialect of words and phrases, but not entire utterances. Phonologically the presence of dialect features is massive, including the retroflex consonants which are arguably as much 'stereotypes' as they are 'markers' in the Labovian sense (1972: 314). Hybrid word formations almost always consist of an Italian lexical morpheme combined with a dialect inflectional one, cf. *ricordu* (but *ricordo* also occurs) below: they may thus be classified as dialect (Berruto 1989: 115). Significant numbers of dialect lexical items also occur.

1M27

Com'è andata / il primo giorno a scuola

((laughter)) assai ghianù ((laughter)) ah // mi ricordu mi ricordu che / non non ci poteva domandare per l'acqua perché non capévamu che vulea dire ma / u primu annu non mi ricordu tanto bonu / I THINK / penso che dopo nu annu nu

1. Words spoken by the interviewer are in italics. English words are in capitals. Sicilian words are not specially marked in the text, since so many words are hybrids of one sort or another, often difficult and even impossible to assign to dialect or Italian with categorical confidence (cf. Bettoni 1990b), and this very indeterminacy, best rendered by a uniform typeface, is important to the argument being advanced here. In addition: / silent pause (short), // silent pause (long), ::: voiced pause, non-phonemic lengthening of the preceding sound, in proportion to the number of colons, (-) interrupted word.

misi o dui cominciari a ahm capire inglese / insegnare / ma non mi ricordu tantu

Dev'essere stato difficile

Sì / penso di sì perché mi ricordu che ghiancea perché / nuddu mi capea e vulea me mamma // u primu annu sulu mi ricordo

The two speakers in the middle of the continuum are the most difficult to separate, and it is sensible to consider their linguistic production from a number of points of view. I will attempt to distinguish between them in terms of code selection, but for a satisfactory account, code stability and security will have to be invoked as well. First is the youngest son, 4M19, who studied Italian at high school but unwillingly, has only been to Italy once, ten years ago, and works with non-Sicilian Italians with whom he speaks mostly English but also a flexible non-standard variety of Italian. In his interview dialect phonological features are heavily present, while morphology is predominantly Italian but inconsistent and frequently deviant. Hybridisms, which on morphological grounds may be catalogued as dialect, are numerous, more frequent than wholesale switches to dialect, since dialect presence at the lexical level is slight.

This variety of Italian exhibits many of the features identified by Bettoni as typical of second generation attrition, including a slow and hesitant delivery. Moreover, the speaker's imperfect command of Italian cannot be supported or compensated for by dialect since his active knowledge of that is even weaker. He uses the longest stretches of English. What emerges is a kind of popular Italian, whose non-standard morphology is attributable not so much to interference of dialect as to the simplifying processes associated with imperfect acquisition and attrition.

4M19

Quale città ti è piaciuta di più

Per dire la verità mi è piaciuto ahm // di più / di più / mi è piaciuto ah Ragusa / Ragusa siamo andati anche a Ragusa perché: / mi sembrava chi era come come Australia perché / eran / le strade erano larghi
Pulita forse

Sì sì / si non come l'altri YEAH città YOU KNOW paesi: siciliani perché / ci sono quelli che sono troppi sporchi sono i sono quelli che so' puliti so' quelli nto montagni

Hai detto prima che non ti è piaciuto il fumo dei camion eccetera no / c'è un'altra cosa che non ti è piaciuta dell'Italia

Solo chi era sporca ma / ma i i genti i genti / i genti chi sapeva io erano tutti bravi però c'e(-) c'erano quelli che erano //

Cattivi

sì erano babbi mi sembrava che erano troppo maleducati

The second-born, 2F24, also shows marked phonological features. Her Italian is fluent, for the most part smoothly delivered and at a good pace. Noun and verb morphology is far more consistent and on the whole more correct than 4M19. Hybrid formations are present but deviant ones are less frequent than in 4M19; 2F24 knows the dialect better than her younger brother and so prefers to switch to dialect even for a single word. She has a reasonably good command of both systems and during the interview does move somewhat along the continuum between a 'medium' popular Italian ('medio', Berruto 1989: 116) and something close to regional Italian. The long excerpt following illustrates this range.

2F24

però erano quando era ahm / nta scuola / più alta / mi d(-) / dicevano che erano a gruppa di / di storti perché fumavamo per dire ne facevamo como ne piaceva a noi e / non facevamo sempre il bravu como volevano loro

Sentivi che c'era una differenza tra i ragazzi / i ragazzi nella scuola di origine australiana e quelli di origine italiana

Sì era brutto perché / i i miei amici / quelli australiani volevano uscire sempre YOU KNOW per andare / al cinema mm / prendere il caffè qualcosa così / e il mio padre mai / mai mi faceva ne(-) uscire / forse / per dire la verità mi faceva uscire di più quando aveva / sedici anni / e no quannu era ahm / che che lavorava / il mio padre è è difficile così perché: ancora ave la testa di:: di quannu lasciau ahm Italia trent'anni fa / e era difficile mo dico sempre / apposta forse era troppo ribella perché / è / tro(-) iera troppo difficile per essere / australiana a scuola / e siciliano italiana a casa / troppo difficile

Finally, at the most Italian end of the continuum, is the third-born, the university student. After three years of university study, his speech is free of the most stereotypical dialect features, and morphology and syntax are substantially Italian. His command of a formal register of Italian is not strong and the strain shows in some awkward expressions and hypercorrections. We may consider this variety as approaching standard spoken Italian (italiano 'dell'uso medio', Sabatini 1985 or 'neo-standard', Berruto 1987):

3M21

Ahm: // c'era // c'era questa: / conoscenza della differenza fra i genitori / e: / i maestri che / eh non capiva quel punto / ah perché: / i miei genitori non capivano / quello che dicevano i maestri che / non non si potevano / comunicare bene perché avevano questa: diversa lingua / ah e: solo qu(-) si si quando quando c'erano delle / ahm / STUDENT TEACHER ah TEACHER AND PARENT NIGHTS ah / c'era: // quella: // mm realizzazzione [sic] della della di: / della differenza che si vedeva

The four children may thus be ordered as below, with an approximate indication of the kind of Italian they used in the interview. This ordering may usefully be superimposed on the categories elaborated by Chiro and Smolicz (1990: 207-209), which combine measures of linguistic competence with an assessment of cultural-linguistic attitudes vis-à-vis 'ethnic' cultural values. The four children of the 'Sicilian' family can be described in these terms as: 1M27 'bilingue (sicuro) popolare'; 4M19 and 2F24 'biculturalizzati (marginali) d'élite'; and 3M21 'biculturalizzato (sicuro) d'élite'. A full discussion and justification of this ordering of the four children can not however be based solely on the notion of competence in one or other codes, but must also take account of the notions of 'code stability' and 'code security', to be explained in the following sections.

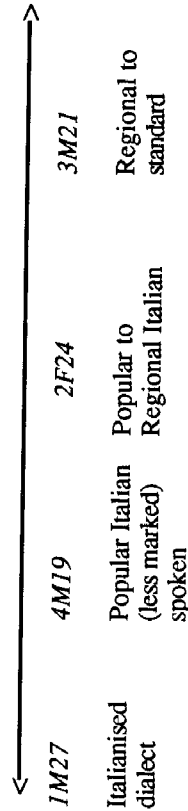


Figure 1. Code selection.

3.2. Code stability.

Under this heading I examine the extent of alternation between dialect and Italian morphological forms. Because the four children are (with the exception of the youngest 4M19) fluent speakers, towards the upper end of Bettoni's attritional continuum, the kinds of variation in nominal and verbal morphology documented by Bettoni are not, alone, enough in evidence to be useful measures. I examined, instead, possessive adjectives, choice of auxiliary with compound verbs and the choice of past tense between simple (dialect) and compound (Italian) forms. There is a clear difference between the two children at the extremes of the continuum and the two in the middle. The 'most Italian', third-born uses exclusively Italian forms but the 'most dialect', first-born uses predominantly, though not entirely, dialect forms. The middle two children show significantly less stability in their choices: 4M19 uses twice as many Italian possessives as dialect ones, prefers the more Italian *passato prossimo* and handles auxiliary choice correctly most of the time. 2F24 uses only Italian possessives, but uses the two past tenses in roughly equal proportions and chooses the correct auxiliary for the *passato prossimo* only half of the time. Code stability thus patterns as below:

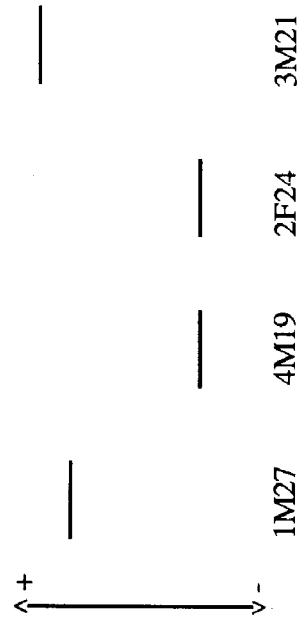


Figure 2. Code stability.

3.3. Code security.

A third measure of the language skills of the children is their pragmatic behaviour, which is interpreted here as an indicator of their linguistic security. I examined certain features which can be understood within the context of the 'marking' of transference or code-switching (Kinder 1985): direct appeals to the interlocutor commenting metalinguistically on one's own speech, markers of switches to English, and self-initiated repairs from dialect to Italian. Here, as with 'code stability', there is a clear difference between two pairs of children, but the pairs are different. The two children on the more dialect side of the continuum show considerably greater security in their utterances, with very few appeals to the interviewer or marking of English items, while the two on the more Italian side exhibit behaviours typical of those speaking a language variety more prestigious than the one in which they are most comfortable, one which they aspire to master but in which they are conscious of their inadequacies.

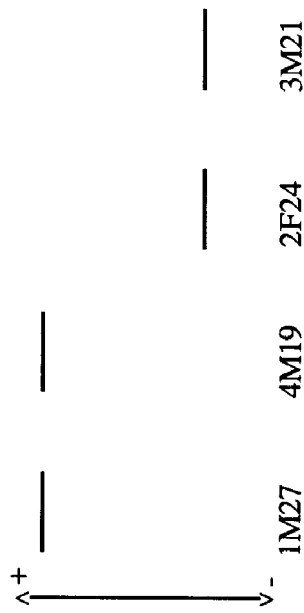


Figure 3. Code security.

At the least standard end of the continuum the eldest child uses a mixed, but stable variety with confidence. As the code becomes less stable insecurity sets in and remains even in the case of the most standard speaker, who has reached a reasonably stable variety of Italian, but who is most aware of the model to which he aspires and of his own shortcomings in matching the model.

The three dimensions discussed above seem to be the most important in an attempt to capture something of the complex dynamics of language recovery (from non-standard variety to standard variety) in a migration context. In turning now to the data which emerged from the interviews I will give prominence to the 'code selection' dimension: this corresponds most closely to a traditional acquisition-testing approach; and, to some extent, it is the particular variety the speaker attains which determines or at least influences the other two dimensions, code 'stability' and 'security'.

4. Coordination and subordination along the recovery continuum.

The attritional slide reported in cases of 'natural language attrition unchecked by formal language study' has been arrested in this family, through the combined effects of study of the language and contact with the standard or near-standard varieties of the homeland language.

Apart from the many social factors involved in this, from a linguistic point of view I would point to the crucial function played by literacy in making standard language recovery by dialect speakers possible. I now wish to consider whether this component in the language recovery process has had any effect on the type of Italian which is produced by this process.

There is ample evidence, from many languages in different parts of the world (cf., among many others, Pawley and Syder 1983), that the development of literacy leads to adaptive changes in the grammar of languages. In a particularly clear illustration of this, Mithun (1988) suggests that, for certain parts of the grammar, development from a predominantly pragmatic mode to a predominantly syntactic mode is facilitated and accelerated, indeed even made possible, by contact with written language.

Such contact may involve the language developing its own written form or it may involve the speakers of that language becoming bilingual in another language with a written tradition: the effect on the language in question is essentially the same, though it may differ in degree. Mithun argues further that the written language can influence the spoken language, citing evidence from many languages in which clause coordination became grammaticized only after contact with European languages with literary traditions.

The arguments referred to in the preceding paragraph are made principally on a diachronic, philogenetic level. Others have referred to

the influence of written norms on the development of language at the ontogenetic level, in individual speakers, and not necessarily in contexts where the difference between the two linguistic varieties is as extreme as that considered by Mithun. Greenfield (1972: 169) speaks of children, through schooling, 'learning to speak a written language' (cf. also Olson 1977). The influence of writing can also be hypothesized in the case of second generation speakers in the process of language recovery.

It is my contention here that speakers at the 'more dialect' end of the continuum, especially of the second generation, have been exposed to a predominantly non-written tradition and will therefore tend to operate at the pragmatic end of Givón's continuum of communicative modes. Speakers who have reached the 'more Italian' end of the continuum have done so through contact with written registers of their home language or, more exactly perhaps, with registers which also have a written expression, and these speakers will therefore develop competence in the syntactic mode. My argument is that contact with the written language has influenced the spoken language of these speakers.

One factor facilitating the influence of written Italian on the spoken language is, paradoxically, the fact that in recent years the distance between written and spoken Italian has decreased as written Italian has become more open to structures once 'banished' to oral registers (Sabatini 1985).

The convergence of spoken and written norms has made the emerging new standard a more viable model for those who, like the children of the Sicilian family, seek to recover the language of the parents in a contemporary, valid form.

Just as Italian language attrition is accompanied by a slide towards the pragmatic mode, I will attempt to show here that Italian language recovery is accompanied by a recovery or acquisition of the syntactic mode. In documenting the attrition of second generation Italian toward the pragmatic mode, Beitoni examined five structural properties: (i) speed and fluency of delivery, (ii) simplification of grammatical morphology, (iii) internal variation, (iv) clause combining (coordination vs. subordination), (v) information structure (topic-comment vs. subject-predicate).

I wish to say nothing on (v) here. I have dealt briefly with (i) and (iii) above. Given the competence and fluency of the children in the Sicilian family, grammatical morphology and syntax within the clause, (ii) and (iii), are not the useful measures of linguistic skills they are in cases of more advanced attrition, though, as the extracts above have shown, there is much to be said on morphological attrition here too.

It is, however, much more valuable to look at (iv) syntax between clauses, to see if, and to what extent, language recovery of the kind described here means a recovery of the syntactic dimension of language structure and use.

In language attrition, taxis becomes increasingly loose as coordination becomes preferred to subordination. As birth order increases, speakers use fewer subordinate clauses, less second-degree subordination and a smaller range of subordinating conjunctions.

With language recovery, one would expect these trends to diminish and to develop in the reverse direction, as speakers move beyond a merely pragmatic, discourse-based competence and elaborate syntactic strategies and structures. Reviewing studies of functional explanations of language development, Romaine (1988: 62) writes: 'explicitly marked clauses would be more likely to be found in what Givón calls the syntactic rather than pragmatic mode of communication'.

To examine the incidence of coordination and subordination in the Sicilian family corpus, I counted one hundred 'clause linkage points' for each speaker.

I ignored all turns consisting of a single clause (though it will be interesting to examine in more detail the number of single clause turns, the average number of clauses per turn and other phenomena, in the informants). 'Clause' is defined here quite traditionally, as a group of words having its own subject and predicate.

The question of what status the notion of 'sentence' might have in a description of spoken language I will leave for another paper.

Only clauses with finite verbs have been counted for this study. Table 1 presents the number of different types of clause linkage in the one hundred counted for each speaker, and shows that there is a clear progression, from one end of the recovery continuum to the other, in the increasing use of subordinating strategies for combining clauses. I will now discuss each type of clause complex in turn and comment on their incidence in the corpus.

A word first on the categories of 'coordination' and 'subordination' and their sub-categories. These concepts are used here quite traditionally, with coordination including both asyndeton and grammaticalized coordination, and subordination covering both hypotaxis and embedding. Subordinate clauses have been classified here simply as either 'adverbial', 'nominal' or 'relative', representing, in this order, increasing levels of grammatical integration between the clauses realized at ever lower syntactic levels (cf. Lehmann, 1988:183-192). That is, adverbial clauses are not embedded at all but are hypotactically subordinated to the main clause, nominal clauses are complements of verbs (usually embedded in VPs as objects) and relative clauses are embedded in NPs (one recalls Benveniste's description of the relative clause as a kind of 'adjectif syntactique'). This classification, though useful in the present context, does blur some important distinctions which will be clarified during the following discussion.

	1M27	4M19	2F24	3M21	Totals
Asyndeton	41	30	21	11	103
'e'	20	11	21	12	64
Other coordinating conjunctions	12	18	10	25	65
Coordination	73	59	52	48	232
Adverbial	18	25	33	36	112
Nominal	7	5	11	6	29
Relative	2	11	4	10	27
Subordination	27	41	48	52	168
Total Clause Linkages	100	100	100	100	400

Table 1. Types of clause linkage.

4.1. Coordination.

Coordination consists of the two broad categories of asyndeton and syndeton, with the very few cases of direct speech assigned to the former here. Asyndeton is the lack of a formal linking word between two clauses but this must not be understood as the lack of a linking element altogether. Chafe (1988) shows how frequently prosody alone is used to join what he calls 'intonation units' (which may be full clauses as well as verbless phrases): he discusses volume, pause but principally of course

intonation. English has no fewer than four non-final intonation contours which signal overtly that the present clause is to be followed by another, and that the speaker wishes the two to be understood by the hearer as being in some sense linked. For Italian, Canepari (1985) provides evidence of the wide range of 'suspensive' contours occurring in regional varieties of Italian; and recently Voghera (1992) has elaborated the five-fold repertoire of intonation contours proposed by Lepschy (and derived from Halliday) in a study which lays the foundations for future investigation of the function of intonation in providing much of the "syntactic" structure of spoken Italian. Suffice it here to say that in the Sicilian family corpus, non-final, i.e. linking, intonation is realized by rising, falling and level contours.

At the 'most dialect' end of the continuum, 40% of clause linkages are realized by intonation, while at the 'most Italian' end, the number drops to only 9%. In fact I think this is unrealistically low and represents the speaker's perception of the formality of the situation.

The major category of coordination covers clauses linked grammatically, by a conjunction. It is useful to distinguish, with Halliday (1985b:83), between traditional additive coordinating conjunctions ('and/or'-type complexes) and others which encode a circumstantial relationship ('then/so/but'-type complexes). Here there is a clear difference between the two speakers at each end of the continuum: 1M27 uses a simple, coordinating *e* 20 times, and other conjunctions only 12 times, particularly (8 out of the 12) temporals *poi, dopo, e dopo*. 3M21, on the other hand, uses 'then/so/but' conjunctions twice as often as simple *e*, and uses a wider variety of them.

It may be appropriate here to recall the fact that what differentiates these two speakers from a sociolinguistic point of view is not level of formal education - both are university (near-) graduates - but level of formal education in Italian as well as exposure to the language in other domains. The progression is not regular however as the intermediate two speakers present values difficult to explain fully.

We should not expect too much from such a small sample, nevertheless a partial explanation can be suggested. 2F24 produced by far the longest stretches of continuous narrative, uninterrupted by the interviewer, and used *e* to begin new 'sentences'. That is, she will pause at the end of an episode in her story and then use *e* to open a new episode. 4M19 on the other hand needed much more prompting and produced the shortest stretches of continuous speech, with little scope for the 'sentence-linking *e* as used by 2F24.

He did however use *ma* 17 times and *però* once: this idiosyncratic preference is a little baffling, since many times the *ma* seems to express no adversative content at all but is used as a pragmatic, rather than semantic, connective (cf. Berretta 1984).

4.2. Subordination.

Turning now to 'subordination', this term is used here to subsume the two non-paratactic types of clause combining distinguished by Halliday's functional model of English complex sentences (1985a: esp. chapter 7): hypotaxis (clause combining proper) and embedding, which involves a clause being dependent on a constituent of another clause rather than on another clause as such and in English includes restrictive relative clauses and subject and object complements. I do not deny that the embedding relation is structurally different from the hypotactic one, but what can be said to be common to them are the attributes of dominance and dependency. In the corpus this distinction only affects a small number of possibly non-restrictive relative clauses and clauses of reported speech, which have been subsumed under broader headings, a categorization which deserves some comment.

The few cases of reported speech have been grouped with nominal clauses. The exact grammatical status of such clauses is a matter of contention (cf. Munro 1982), nevertheless for the sake of convenience and in the absence of any evidence that reported speech poses any more acquisitional problems than other clause-complement types (cf. Bloom *et al.* 1989), I will count them here as objects on a par with other nominal clauses (cf. Noonan 1985).

Turning now to relative clauses, these are divided into the two classes of non-restrictive and restrictive, the former considered by Halliday a case of hypotaxis, the latter of embedding. However there were no cases, in the corpus, of clauses which could be classified on prosodic grounds as unequivocally non-restrictive relatives, rather than restrictive relatives or generic subordinating uses of *che*. It is interesting to note that in a recent study of American English conversation, Fox & Thompson (1990) found it similarly impossible to identify non-restrictive relatives purely on intonational grounds. There was a (small) number of indeterminate cases in my corpus and it seemed safest to classify them as adverbials. For 'relative' therefore read 'restrictive relative'.

This is a convenient solution but not an ideal one by any means, particularly since the distinctions are not unambiguous between relative and non-relative uses of *che* nor between different functional values of generic *che*. With respect to the first pair of terms, Bernini (1989) speaks of a 'continuum' between relative and non-relative uses of *che*. With respect to the second, it is clear that many cases of generic *che* lie uneasily between subordination and coordination (this is also true of some types of non-restrictive relatives, which are not for nothing called 'appositive'). For some cases, Somicola (1981: 71) invokes the concept of 'parahypotaxis', which she describes suggestively as a 'stadio di sviluppo intermedio tra vera e propria coordinazione e subordinazione'. She also interprets the frequent use of *che* in certain types of text as 'la spia di un certo livello di sviluppo nella progettazione del discorso dalla

paratassi all'ipotassi' (74). This is certainly borne out in the sample, by the distribution of cases of the all-purpose ('pivalente') *che*, i.e. not introducing clearly relative or nominal clauses, and which were here classified as adverbial. There are only 14 cases in the sample, but their incidence increases steadily from the 'dialect' to the 'Italian' end of the continuum.

Turning now to the overall incidence of subordination, we see that there is a steady increase in the incidence and range of subordinating constructions as we move up the recovery continuum, such that 3M21 uses twice as many subordinating constructions as 1M27. The numbers in each category are too small to permit strong conclusions, but some tentative comments may be offered. Out of the total 168 conjunctions the most frequently used are causal *perché* (54 occurrences), relative *che* (30), temporal *quando* (25) and complement *che* (24), followed by a large number of conjunctions each used only a few times: these four were also the most common in Bettoni's sample (1986: 77), and in the same order except for the last two which were inverted.

Voghera (1985) similarly cites *che*, *perché*, *se* and *quando* as the most frequent conjunctions in a corpus of written and spoken Italian in Italy, a result confirmed in Voghera (1992: 221-229) with the appearance of *come* between *se* and *quando*. The low incidence of *se*, third in Voghera's lists and fifth in Bettoni's, is probably due to the fact that my corpus consists almost entirely of narratives. The causal *perché* is preferred by those at the 'Italian' end of the continuum, while those at the dialect end prefer the temporal *quando*. Nominal clauses depend on, in the following order, propositional attitude predicates: *pensare*, *sembrare*, *credere*, *parere*, *essere* [*non è che* ...], predicates of knowledge or acquisition of knowledge: *capire*, *ricordarsi*, *scordare*, *vedere*, 'commentative' or factive predicates: *piacere*, *accettare*, as well as the 'utterance predicate': *dire* (Noonan 1985). It is worth noting that there were no cases of nominal clauses without *che*, as was on the contrary reported by Bettoni (1986: 77), and as might be expected as a result of simplification or of transference from English, in which the complementiser is often optional in object clauses.

The relative clauses all used *che* except for two from the university student 3M21 introduced by *in cui*. There was only one case of a resumptive pronoun, which is perhaps a reflection of the careful speech elicited by the semi-formal interview situation. All but two of the relative clauses are relativized on the object of the matrix sentence. Of these 25 object-embedded relatives, twice as many relativized the subject of the relative:

mia mamma c'ha un frate che è chiu granne (1M27)

as did the object:

penso che aveva venuto con gente che canosceva di Sicilia (2F24).

There were 17 OS relatives, and 8 OO. This overall preference for object-embedded relatives and for subject-focus relatives can be interpreted as a preference for a more iconic, right-branching clause order.

Similar trends were found by Romaine (1984) in the production of English relatives in children. Object-focus relatives, less transparently right-branching, were absent in the speech of 1M27 and increased regularly, along the recovery continuum, from 4M19 to 2F24 and 3M21.

Along with the increase in incidence and range of subordinating devices goes an increase in the depth of subordination.

The examples given in the first part of the paper show that second-degree subordination is already frequent in 1M27 and clause complexes of fourth-degree subordination are not infrequent in 2F24 and 3M21. The overall balance between coordination and subordination in the speech of the four children can be shown graphically in Figure 4.

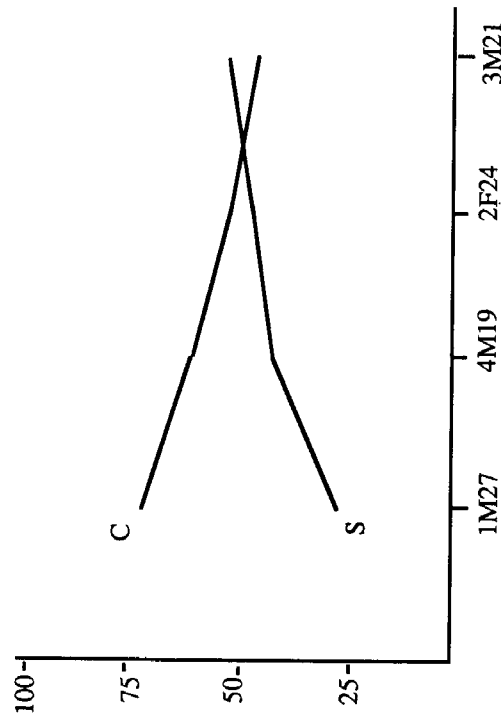


Figure 4. Coordination and subordination.

5. Conclusions.

Conclusions must of necessity be tentative, until analysis of a larger and more diverse sample permits greater confidence in results. The first results of this case-study however point to some of the modalities of language that emerge during language recovery and maintenance in the Italo-Australian context.

The language recovery discussed here is in many respects a mirror image of the attrition documented by Bettoni. Just as attrition is the result of lack of contact with the country of origin and with the new standard varieties of the homeland language, so renewed contacts with Italy have brought exposure to the contemporary standard language. Just as lack of effort to maintain the language leads to deterioration in language skills within the second generation, so a set of social incentives for learning the standard variety of the language and specific action in the form of schooling can arrest the decline with positive results.

In its early stages, language recovery needs to be described from a number of angles (cf. the 'dimensions of second language acquisition' in Klein 1986: Chap. 2).

I have suggested three features of verbal production which are useful in having speakers on the recovery continuum: code selection (on a continuum from non-standard to standard), stability (internal consistency of morphology) and security (pragmatic behaviour vis-à-vis the interlocutor). As morphology becomes more standard and more consistently standard along the recovery continuum, so inter-clause syntax becomes more grammaticized and more varied in form.

As well as claiming that this recovery has taken place and can be described in the ways suggested, my argument in this paper has been that the role of written language is an important element in the success of the recovery and decisive in the linguistic form that this recovery takes.

If language recovery arrests the increasingly pragmatic erosion of linguistic skills and renews language development in the direction of more syntactic structures, then this is due in no small part to the role of writing in the recovery process. The variety of Italian which emerges from this process depends on many factors including, principally, access to the language, and individual motivation and propensity. In addition, contemporary developments in the home country of the target language, involving the appearance of varieties of acceptable status in situations of medium formality both spoken and written, mean that second generation speakers who aim at Italian recovery and maintenance have a model which is closer than previous written-based ones to the predominantly spoken registers which they have acquired as children and which, left unaided, would otherwise suffer the certain fate of attrition and death. This has certainly shortened the leap to be made by such speakers in turning attrition into recovery and a moribund non-standard register into a vital standard one.

This is not to imply that either written or spoken language is more complex than the other: Halliday (1985b) makes clear the different types of complexity which characterize the two diamesic varieties and Beaman (1984) shows that spoken and written corpora of American English, from a homogeneous sample, exhibit comparable amounts of

subordinate clause formation but different patterns of types of subordination.

What is clear, however, from the evidence of the Sicilian family interviewed for this study is that speakers at the more standard end of the recovery continuum develop an increasingly wide range of subordinating strategies and in their narratives they use them far more than speakers at the less standard end of the continuum.

Address of the Author:

John J. Kinder
Department of Italian
University of Western Australia
Perth W.A. 6009
Australia
e-mail: jkinder at arts.uwa.edu.au

References

- Australia. (1990), Australia Department of Employment Education and Training. National Survey of Language Learning in Australian Schools, 1988, Canberra.
- Beaman, K. (1984), "Coordination and subordination revisited: syntactic complexity in spoken and written narrative discourse", in D. Tannen, ed., *Coherence in Spoken and Written Discourse*, Norwood (New Jersey), Ablex: 45-80.
- Bermi, G. (1989), "Tipologia delle frasi relative italiane e romanze", in F. Foresti, E. Rizzi & P. Benedini, eds., *L'italiano tra le lingue romanze*, Roma, Bulzoni: 85-98.
- Berretta, M. (1984), "Connettivi testuali in italiano e pianificazione del discorso", in L. Coveri, ed., *Linguistica testuale*, Roma, Bulzoni: 237-254.
- Berruto, G. (1987), *Sociolinguistica dell'italiano contemporaneo*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia.
- Berruto, G. (1989), "Tra italiano e dialetto", in Holtus et al. (1989): 107-122.

- Bettoni, C. (1985), "Italian language attrition: a Sydney case study", in M.G. Clyne, ed., *Australia: Meeting Place of Languages*, Canberra, Australian National University Press: 63-79.
- Bettoni, C. (1986), "Italian language attrition in Sydney: the role of birth order", in Bettoni (1986): 61-85).
- Bettoni C., ed. (1986), *Altro Polo. Italian Abroad*, Sydney, May Foundation (University of Sydney).
- Bettoni, C. (1988), "Tra lingua, dialetto e inglese: la seconda generazione italiana in Australia", in F. Schino, ed., *Cultura nazionale, culture regionali, comunità italiane all'estero*, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana: 194-208.
- Bettoni, C. (1990a), "Italian language attrition: patterns of code choice", in G. Rando, ed., *Language and Cultural Identity*, Wollongong, Dante Alighieri Society: 47-56.
- Bettoni, C. (1990b), "Italian language attrition in Sydney: the role of dialect", in M.A.K. Halliday, J. Gibbons & H. Nicholas, eds., *Learning. Keeping and Using Language*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, vol. 2: 75-89.
- Bettoni, C. (1991), "Language shift and morphological attrition among second-generation Australians", *Rivista di Linguistica* 3: 369-387.
- Bettoni, C. & J. Lo Bianco. (1989), "Introduction", in Bettoni & Lo Bianco (1989): 1-5).
- Bettoni, C. & J. Lo Bianco, eds. (1989), *Understanding Italy. Language, culture, Commerce: an Australian Perspective*, Sydney, May Foundation (University of Sydney).
- Bloom, L., M. Rispoli, B. Gartner & J. Hafitz (1989), "Acquisition of complementation", *Journal of Child Language* 16: 101-120.
- Canepari, L. (1985), *L'intonazione*, Napoli, Liguori.
- Chafe, W. (1988), "Linking intonation units in spoken English", in Haiman & Thompson (1988): 1-27).
- Chiro, G. & J.J. Smolicz (1990), "La conservazione e l'erosione della lingua italiana tra i giovani australiani con background linguistico veneto", in G. Padoan, ed., *Presenza, cultura, lingua e tradizioni dei veneti nel mondo. Parte II: I paesi di lingua inglese*, Venezia, Giunta regionale del Veneto: 189-213.
- Fox, B.A. & S.A. Thompson (1990), "A discourse explanation of the grammar of relative clauses in English conversation", *Language* 66: 297-316.
- Greenfield, P.M. (1972), "Oral and written language: the consequences for cognitive development in Africa, the United States and England", *Language and Speech* 15: 169-178.
- Haiman, J. & S.A. Thompson, eds. (1988), *Clause Combining in Grammar and Discourse*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins.
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1985a), *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, London, Edward Arnold.

- Halliday, M.A.K. (1985b), *Spoken and Written Language*, Geelong, Deakin University Press.
- Holtus, G., M. Metzlein & M. Pfister, eds. (1989), *La dialettologia dell'italiano oggi*, Tübingen, Gunter Narr.
- Kinder, J.J. (1985), "Strategie verbali per segnalare l'interferenza nell'italiano della Nuova Zelanda", *Rivista Italiana di Dialettologia* 9: 103-128.
- Klein, W. (1986), *Second Language Acquisition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Labov, W. (1972), *Sociolinguistic Patterns*, Philadelphia, University of Philadelphia Press.
- Lehmann, C. (1988), "Towards a typology of clause linkage", in Haiman & Thompson (1988: 181-225).
- Mithun, M. (1988), "The grammaticization of coordination", in Haiman & Thompson (1988: 331-359).
- Munro, P. (1982), "On the transitivity of 'say' verbs", in P.J. Hopper & S.A. Thompson, eds., *Syntax and Semantics 15: Studies in Transitivity*, New York, Academic Press: 301-318.
- Noonan, M. (1985), "Complementation", in T. Shopen, ed., *Language Typology and Syntactic Description. Vol.2: Complex constructions*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 42-140.
- Olson, D.R. (1977), "From utterance to text: the bias of language in speech and writing", *Harvard Educational Review* 47: 257-281.
- Pawley, A. & F.H. Syder (1983), "Natural selection in syntax: notes on adaptive variation and change in vernacular and literary grammar", *Journal of Pragmatics* 7: 551-579.
- Romaine, S. (1984), "Relative clauses in child language, pidgins and creoles", *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 4: 257-281.
- Romaine, S. (1988), "Contributions from pidgin and creole studies to a sociolinguistic theory of linguistic change", *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 71: 59-66.
- Rubino, A. (1987), "Code-mixing and code control in Italo-Australian children", in C. Bettoni, ed., *Italian in Australia - Applied Linguistics. Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* Series S, 4: 128-153.
- Sabatini, F. (1985), "L'italiano dell'uso medio: una realtà tra le varietà linguistiche italiane", in G. Holtus & G. Radtke, eds., *Gesprochene Italienisch in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Tübingen, Narr: 154-184.
- Simone, R. (1989), "The international destiny of Italian", in Bettoni & Lo Bianco (1989: 157-167). [Original = "Il destino internazionale dell'italiano", *Italiano e oltre* 4, 3 (1989) : 105-109.]
- Smolicz, J.J. & M.J. Secombe (1986), "Italian language and culture in South Australia: a memoir approach", in Bettoni (1986: 27-59).

- Sornicola, R. (1981), *Sul parlato*, Bologna, Il Mulino.
- Vignuzzi, U. (1986), "Why study Italian? A survey of the English-speaking world", in Bettoni (1986: 171-204).
- Voghera, M. (1985), "Alcune considerazioni statistiche e funzionali sulla subordinazione nell'italiano contemporaneo", in A. Franchi de Bellis & L.M. Savoia, eds., *Sintassi e morfologia della lingua italiana d'uso. Teoria e applicazioni descrittive*, Roma, Bulzoni: 421-426.
- Voghera, M. (1992), *Sintassi e intonazione nell'italiano parlato*, Bologna, Il Mulino.